

LearningHerbs® presents

THE
CREATIVE
HERBALIST

13 uncommon
Remedies & Recipes

by Rosalee de la Forêt

The Creative Herbalist: 13 Uncommon Remedies & Recipes

Text and photos by Rosalee de la Forêt.



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Dear Reader,

The Creative Herbalist celebrates LearningHerbs' 10th year of free online herbal remedies and recipes.

In early January 2005, my wife Kimberly wrote the very first LearningHerbs newsletter, then called *Herbal Branches*. They were “add on” lessons to the original Herbal Remedy Kit. When HerbMentor.com launched in 2008, these free lessons became known as *HerbMentor News*. Well over 100 were published, and most of them were written by our education director, Rosalee de la Forêt.

Rosalee continues to inspire and educate us with her lessons on LearningHerbs, which we now simply call *Remedies & Recipes*. *The Creative Herbalist* contains 13 of Rosalee's hand-selected lessons.

Simple lessons, step-by-step photos, and information about all the herbs in the recipes have been our trademark since Day One.

At LearningHerbs, we believe that learning about herbs should be as simple as following a recipe. We also believe that anyone can learn about herbs and bring their nourishing and healing gifts into their lives. We focus on fostering and maintaining good health on LearningHerbs.

There is no better way to learn than by having experiences with herbs. Plant to plant, remedy to remedy, recipe to recipe... the more experiences you have, the more you will know.

We are extremely proud and honored to share some of Rosalee's most creative remedies and recipes with you.

I hope you will continue to learn with LearningHerbs as one of your herbal mentors.

Yours in health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Gallagher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Gallagher, L.Ac.

LearningHerbs co-founder



BODY BUTTER

We start with a decadent herbal gift that has become one of my favorite herbal creations. I know I am a little late to the party when it comes to appreciating herbal body butter. Honestly, I never understood why someone would want to rub a thick cream on their entire body. I thought that the end result was inevitably to feel like a greased up french fry!

But I was wrong, soooo wrong! What I learned is that besides needing a high quality body butter, you also need to apply it at the right time (more on that later).

I fell in love with body butter after a friend gave me an incredible body butter from a

great company. After I went through the jar I went to buy more but was immediately stopped by the high price. *Yikes!*

So, I did what I always do – I went in search of recipes to create my own version at a better price. I searched and searched online, but couldn't find anything that was even close to the body butter I had fallen in love with. So, I started experimenting. I had several batches turn out poorly before getting closer and closer to that perfect consistency.

Before we get to the recipe, let's take a closer look at our ingredients..

Shea Butter

Shea butter is processed from a nut that grows in Africa. Most of the shea butter you buy has been hand processed by African women – be sure to buy from a good source that pays these artisans a fair wage!

Shea butter is incredibly nourishing to the skin. It can be used to heal damaged skin as well as to further support healthy skin.

Shea Butter is an intense moisturizer, and is a wonderful product for revitalizing dull or dry skin on the body or scalp. It promotes skin renewal, increases circulation, and accelerates wound healing.

- Mountain Rose Herbs



Mango Butter

Mango butter is a semi-hard butter that is wonderfully rejuvenating. It is often recommended to revitalize damaged and rough skin. I often include it in pregnant belly balms to help the skin stretch without leaving lasting marks.

Coconut Oil

Coconut oil, as with the butters, forms a thin protective layer on the skin to keep moisture in. This light oil is also wonderfully soothing to the skin.

Herb-infused oil

You can use any liquid oil for this. My favorites are grape seed oil, almond oil, jojoba oil and apricot kernel oil. You don't need to infuse herbs into the oil. However, if you would like to try an herbally infused oil you can [see instructions on how to do that here](#). I love using calendula-infused oils for my body butters.

Olive oil can also be used but the end result will be a heavier body butter that may be a bit greasy.

Hydrosol

Hydrosols are made from steam-distilled herbs. They have a mild but wonderful scent and they contain all the health benefits of the herb they were distilled from. Rose hydrosol, calendula hydrosol and lavender hydrosol are some of my favorite hydrosols to use in body butters.

Aloe vera

Aloe vera is wonderfully nourishing to the skin. It can help soothe dry and inflamed skin as well as add elasticity to healthy skin. It is often used for skin problems such as sunburns and bug bites.



Aloe Vera growing in the Yucatan, Mexico

Phew! I feel like I've just tried to say rejuvenating, soothing and healthy skin in twenty different ways! You can see from the ingredients that this blend combines all sorts of butters and oils that are wonderfully nourishing and supportive to the skin!

I've been making this body butter all year and giving it out to friends and family to see what they think of it. The feedback has been super positive with many friends repeatedly asking for more. Here's what my friend Rebecca said:

Your body butter has THE most beautiful consistency. It's like rubbing on a cloud.

—Rebecca Altman



The following recipe is the basic recipe. You can experiment with using different hydrosols, different essential oils and different herb-infused oils. This year I've made a calendula body butter with calendula-infused oil and calendula hydrosol; rose

body butter with rose petal infused oil and rose hydrosol; and lavender body butter with lavender essential oils, lavender hydrosols and lavender-infused oil. You can mix and match any of these, use different herbs etc. So many possibilities!



Ingredients

The butters, oil and wax

- 3 oz of shea butter
- 2 ounces of mango butter
- 1 ounce of coconut oil
- .5 ounce beeswax
- 3 ounces of infused oil

The water portion

- 2 ounces of hydrosol
- 1 ounce of aloe vera
- essential oils of your choice (optional)

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...



Begin by slowly melting the butters and wax in a double boiler or in a pan on very low heat.

Once it has all melted, turn off the heat and slowly add the oil. When you add the oil, you might notice parts of the liquid become solid again. Sometimes, you can just give it a little stir and everything will melt again. If not, it may need a tiny bit more heat to ensure that it all melts together.



Once the butters, wax and oil are combined, you'll need to pour the blend into the container you are going to mix it in. If you are using a blender, pour the mixture into the blender and set it aside until it is at room temperature. If you are using a cake mixer or immersion blender, place it in the bowl you will use to whip it up.

While waiting for the butter mixture to cool, mix together the hydrosol, aloe vera, and the essential oils.



Once the butter mixture has cooled, use a blender or handheld mixer to begin mixing it.

Slowly add the hydrosol, aloe vera, and essential oils.

See how the mixture has changed in appearance as it cooled?

When all the hydrosol mixture has been mixed in, it can be poured into jars and labeled.



Storage and Shelf Life

I store my body butter at room temperature and have never had a batch go bad. If you think you are going to have a batch last longer than six months, you may want to store it in the fridge for prolonged preservation.

How to use it!

Now here's the trick about body butter. It's best to rub in a light layer of body butter just after a hot shower while the pores of your skin are still open. It may feel a little greasy just after application, but within minutes, it will soak into your skin. The result is soft and glowing skin (not greasy!). Remember that body butter is thick and luscious. A little bit goes a long way!

When I apply body butter just after a shower, my skin feels moisturized and softened for the entire day! Also, my skin feels like, well, my skin! Not like I've just rubbed some greasy potion over it.

Your friends and family will love this luxurious present. The best part is that it was made by you!

Body Butter



INGREDIENTS:

- 3 oz of shea butter
- 2 ounces of mango butter
- 1 ounce of coconut oil
- .5 ounce beeswax
- 3 ounces of infused oil
- 2 ounces of hydrosol
- 1 ounce of aloe vera
- essential oils (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Slowly melt butters and wax in double boiler or pan on very low heat.
2. Turn off heat and slowly add oil, ensuring it all melts together.
3. Pour into mixing container and wait for it to cool to room temperature.
4. While butter mixture cools, mix hydrosol, aloe vera, and essential oils.
5. Use a blender or handheld mixer on the butter/oil mixture. Slowly add the hydrosol mixture.
6. Pour into jars and label.



NATURAL VINEGAR CLEANER

When I think of spring, I think of hyacinths, violets, red-winged blackbirds, apple blossoms and cleaning. Yes cleaning.

I know that cleaning doesn't hold the same excitement as pink hyacinth flowers, but the ritual of spring cleaning may be as old as spring itself. Opening the windows, cleaning under the bed and letting freshness sweep out the staleness of winter just feels good.

We all want to bring freshness into our homes but would be silly to attempt to accomplish this while using harsh chemical cleaning agents. Yet this is what many people do in an attempt to create a sterile

home environment. I avoid walking down the cleaning aisle at the grocery store, otherwise that harsh cacophony of scents assuredly reddens my eyes and gives me a headache. No thank you!

Even "natural" cleaners you buy at the grocery store can include not-so-natural chemicals as well as cost a pretty penny. This cleaner will undoubtedly cost you less than \$5 for a year's supply! Though a bit different, this recipe was inspired by the Village Herbalist series on HerbMentor.com.

Before we get to the recipe, let's learn more about our ingredients.

Vinegar

In this recipe, we'll be using distilled white vinegar. You can buy this at grocery stores and is fairly cheap at \$2-4 a gallon. Vinegar could be the only cleaner you'll ever need. It can clean practically everything from the toilet to the windows (just switch out rags in between). I don't get caught up worrying about germs, but if that is a concern for you, white vinegar is even a natural disinfectant.



Lavender

Its lovely scent is sweet enough for linen sachets and calming enough to relieve stress. I'll admit that the soothing smell of lavender makes cleaning all the happier. The word lavender comes from 'to wash' and it has been used for bathing for eons. It is also antimicrobial, making it another wonderful addition to our cleaning crew.



Thyme

Many of us think of thyme as simply a culinary herb, but thyme has a well-deserved place in our medicine cabinet as well. Thyme tea is fabulous for lung congestion and coughs. I've used it for productive coughs (to loosen and expel mucus) as well as for dry spasmodic coughs (to lessen the cough). Anti-microbial in nature, it has been used for centuries to clean wounds and kill parasitic fungi on the skin. These anti-microbial properties make it great for cleaning your house as well.



Ingredients

- 1 quart of vinegar
- 1 cup of dried thyme leaves and flowers
- 1 cup of dried lavender flowers
- quart jar

Place the dried herbs in a quart jar.

Fill the jar with vinegar.

Let this sit for 24 hours. The next day the vinegar should be a lovely red color (This red color comes from the thyme).

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...



Strain out the vinegar well, and then place it in a spray bottle.

Voila! You have your own super cheap, super effective herbal vinegar cleaner.

We use this exclusively in our house to clean the stove, countertops, the kitchen sink, toilet, windows, etc. It cuts through grease and leaves a pleasant scent. If desired you could even add some essential oils to the vinegar as well.



Natural Vinegar Cleaner



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 quart of vinegar
- 1 cup of dried thyme leaves and flowers
- 1 cup of dried lavender flowers
- quart jar

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the dried herbs in a quart jar.
2. Fill the jar with vinegar.
3. Let this sit for 24 hours.
4. Strain out the vinegar well and then place it in a spray bottle.



REAL HERBAL COUGH DROPS

Most of us grew up in a culture ruled by western medicine. In this paradigm, people get diagnosed with a condition and then are given the pill for that condition. If a person has allergies they might take Benedryl™. If someone is in pain they might take Tylenol™. If someone has a cold, they take Nyquil™.

When people start studying about herbs their questions often reflect this western medicine paradigm.

In the HerbMentor.com forums I often hear people ask “I have a _____, what herb helps with that?” But the art of herbalism goes far beyond the this-herb-for-that-disease strategy.

Herbalism is a sophisticated study of matching herbs to people. Instead of asking ourselves “What herb is good for coughs?” We investigate the type of cough and the person who has the cough in order to find the best herbs for this particular kind of cough.

Not all coughs are created equal

If you’ve ever been sick, you’ve probably noticed that not all coughs are the same. Some are deep lung coughs that bring up a lot of mucus. Some coughs are relentless, dry hacking coughs. Some coughs are weak, some are strong. Some coughs are worse in the morning and some are worse at night.

As herbalists we are detectives and our mission goes beyond naming general herbs that are good for coughs.

When thinking about coughs another important consideration is that we rarely want to outright suppress a cough. Instead, we understand that coughs are happening for a purpose. Our goal is to recognize what is causing the cough and then help to support or correct this.

Oftentimes, coughs are the body's attempt to expel mucus from the lungs. If there are copious amounts of mucous in the lungs, we may want to help thin the mucus so that we can expectorate it (get rid of it) more easily.

Sometimes, coughs are caused by dryness and irritation. In this instance, we may want to moisten the lungs and soothe inflammation. Using herbs in this way makes us more effective at helping people.

As you can see, the art of matching herbs to a cough is quite complex!

When the coughing has to stop

Persistent coughs are often one of the most difficult aspects of dealing with a cold or flu. These coughs can keep a person up at night and, if they continue for any length of time, they can be quite painful. And while we rarely want to outright suppress a cough, if a cough

if keeping someone from sleeping, then suppressing a cough is beneficial (sleep and rest is one of the most important medicines when sick!).

Drinking a lot of herbal tea before bed is not always the best way to ensure someone gets restful sleep. Instead, we may look to tinctures, pastilles or cough drops since these contain less liquid.

Herbal Cough Lozenges

This recipe is for a hard candy cough drop. The recipe you see below took me five attempts to get just right! Many similar recipes call for corn syrup as part of the ingredients. At first, I tried simply omitting the corn syrup but the result was a grainy substance that didn't really hold together.

Finally, I had the idea to use black strap molasses in place of the corn syrup. Once I used this rich dark sweetener, the recipe turned out just right. Black strap molasses are a mineral-rich and bitter-sweet substance that comes from cane sugar. It contains iron, calcium, manganese and magnesium.

Let's take a closer look at the herbs in this recipe. Keep in mind that there are many different herbs that you could use in this recipe – feel free to experiment.



Sage (*Salvia officinalis*)

Sage is antiseptic and astringent, helping to soothe swollen tissues (like a sore throat).



Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*)

Hyssop has a strong affinity for the lungs. It is warming and can help expel mucus. Herbalists use it not only for colds and the flu but also for some types of asthma.

“Wise Grandmothers have long used hyssop as a nourishing medicinal tea for those dealing with any type of pulmonary distress, lungs or sinus congestion.”

- Gail Faith Edwards



Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

We often think of thyme as a simple culinary spice, but this delicate plant packs quite a punch. It also has a strong affinity for the lungs and is used to loosen phlegm and open up the bronchioles.

Our recipe for cough drops

These cough drops are great for those dry coughs that tickle your throat at night and that prevent you from sleeping.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon dried sage leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried hyssop leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme leaves
- 2 cups of organic sugar
- 3/4 cups of organic black strap molasses



To begin, prepare your hard candy molds for the mixture OR lightly grease a cookie sheet or casserole dish. I use melted coconut oil in my glass casserole dish. I assume olive oil would also work.

If you don't have a candy thermometer then you'll need a small cup of cold water nearby.

Next we'll make a strong brew of tea by combining the sage, hyssop and thyme with one cup of water. Let this steep for 15 minutes (covered) and then strain off the herbs. We'll use 1/2 cup of this strong tea.



Supplies

Something to pour the hard candy mixture into. I use a 9X13 glass casserole dish. A cookie sheet or a hard candy mold will also work. I recommend using a hard candy thermometer, but this is optional.



Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...

Next combine all the ingredients in a medium to large saucepan.

This includes a 1/2 cup strong herbal tea.

Add the sugar...



...and the black strap molasses.



If you are using a candy thermometer attach it to the side of the pan.

Turn the burner to medium high heat and stir this mixture constantly until it reaches 300° F.



If you aren't using a candy thermometer, you can periodically test the mixture by dropping a small amount in a cup of cold water (but keep stirring constantly so the mixture doesn't burn!). When the mixture solidifies when dropped into the cold water then it's done. It takes me about 15 minutes for the candy to reach 300° F.

Once it is ready, pour into the hard candy moulds (or greased cookie sheet).

If you are using a cookie sheet or casserole dish, you'll need to start cutting the cough drop squares immediately. If you wait too long the mixture will solidify.



Keep in mind how big a cough drop generally is. The first time I made this recipe I cut the squares way too big which made them uncomfortable to use.

To cut out the lozenges I use the end of a spatula to make lines across the dish in both directions. I keep going over and over the lines until the mixture completely hardens. You could also try using a knife or a pizza cutter. This takes me about fifteen minutes.

You'll notice that the pan you cooked these in is now coated with a super hard candy coating. To clean my pan, I simply fill it half full of water and then bring it to a boil. The mixture will dissolve in the water, making it an easy clean up job.

Once the mixture hardens, you can store your cough drop pieces in an airtight container and keep them in a cool place.



I have some batches that are 8 months old and are still good. If you live in a warm or humid environment, you can also cover the pieces with an herbal powder (rose petal powder is nice) to keep them from sticking to each other.





The sugar issue

You might have noticed that this recipe calls for a lot of sugar. If you've been following LearningHerbs for a while this might surprise you, since you'll know I am not a big fan of sugar.

However, as far as I know, there is no other way to make a hard candy except with sugar. In this case, the sugar adds to the recipe by helping to coat the throat and quell the coughing. If someone is diabetic or has severe blood sugar imbalances this recipe would not be a good recipe for them.

I know someone is going to ask me if they can use honey instead of the sugar.

I'm not sure if honey will form a hard candy like sugar will. I tried using honey as the

main ingredient once and it never solidified. There are lots of ways to quell those irritating nighttime coughs. Marshmallow tea drank throughout the day can help prevent the cough and anti-spasmodic herbs like California poppy and valerian can be taken as tinctures to stop the coughing.

As we enter into the winter months, I have two pieces of advice for our readers. First, it's far easier to prevent illness by using nutrient-dense foods, herbs and healthy lifestyle habits than it is to treat illness using herbs. And second, stock up your herbal medicine chest BEFORE illness hits so that you can easily reach for herbal remedies when you need them.

Real Herbal Cough Drops



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon dried sage leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried hyssop leaves
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme leaves
- 2 cups of organic sugar
- 3/4 cups of organic black strap molasses

INSTRUCTIONS

(Version with a candy thermometer. Make sure you use above instructions the first time you try this.):

1. Prepare your hard candy molds for the mixture OR lightly grease a cookie sheet or casserole dish.
2. Make a strong brew of tea by combining the sage, hyssop and thyme with one cup of water.
3. Let this steep for 15 minutes (covered) and then strain off the herbs. We'll use 1/2 cup of this strong tea.
4. Next, combine all the ingredients in a medium to large saucepan. This includes a 1/2 cup strong herbal tea ,the sugar and the black strap molasses.
5. Turn the burner to medium high heat and stir this mixture constantly until it reaches 300° F.
6. When the mixture solidifies when dropped into the cold water, it's done. It takes about 15 minutes for the candy to 300° F.
7. Once ready, pour into the hard candy molds (or greased cookie sheet).
8. If you are using a cookie sheet or casserole dish, you'll need to start cutting the cough drop squares immediately. If you wait too long, the mixture will solidify.
9. To cut out the lozenges, I use the end of a spatula to make lines across the dish in both directions.

TURMERIC SCARVES

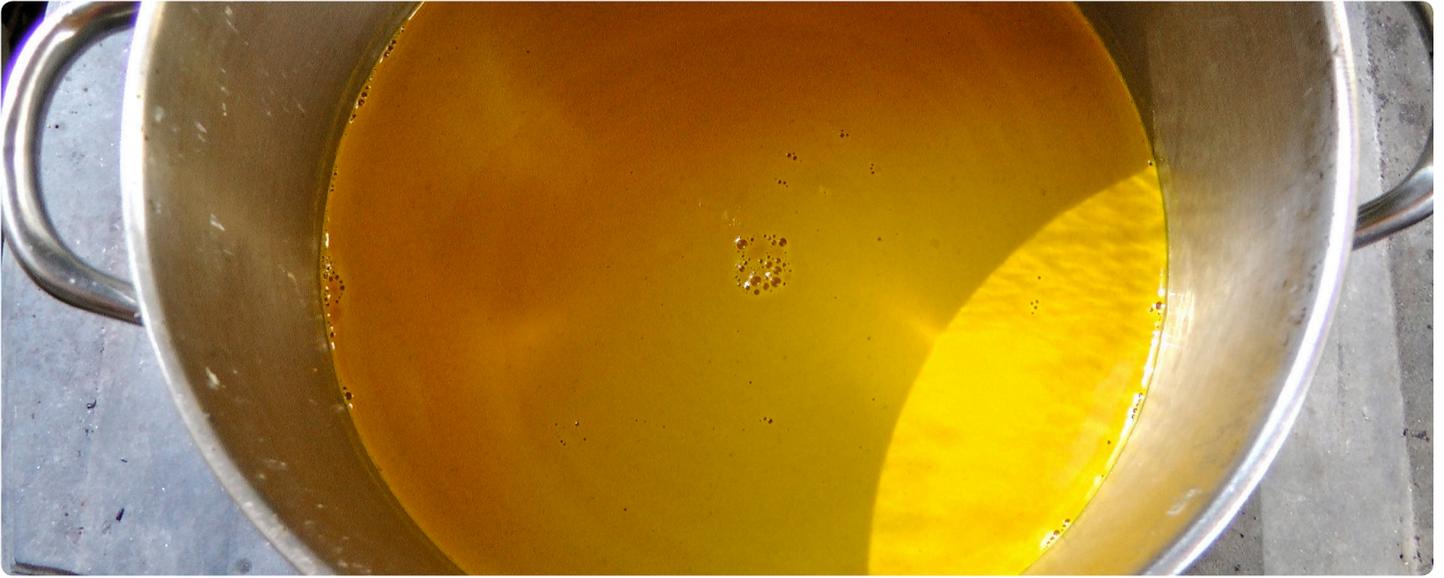


I absolutely love playing with plants! I love cooking with them, creating medicine from them, cleaning with them, going on long hikes to look at them closely, learning their botanical features and on and on and on.

Inspired by Kristine Brown of the Herbal Roots Zine, I've found another way to play with plants.

Dyeing!

Of course, everyone knows you can use plants to dye things. I've known this, filed it away as an interesting idea and then went on my way. But a couple months ago, I was with my young friend and we were learning about turmeric using the Herbal Roots Zine as a guide.



As part of the crafts section, Kristine had dyed some play scarves using turmeric. My young friend's eyes lit up and she exuberantly exclaimed that she wanted to do that.

How could I refuse such enthusiasm?

So I ordered the scarves, got a dye pot and took the turmeric off the shelf. I was a little nervous about the procedure. I'd never dyed anything before. But following Kristine's easy instructions we created our first turmeric scarves.

I do feel it's my duty to warn you about this whole dying thing. It's addictive!

I couldn't just stop with turmeric scarves, oh no! Since then, I've had to try black walnut and elderberry as well. I've ordered lots more scarves and I hope my friends and family enjoy them, because I am cooking up all my gifts for the entire year. I just can't help myself!

Are you ready to make beautiful scarves using plants as a dye?

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup turmeric powder
- large dye pot (we used stainless steel)
- 1-2 scarves (You can search for habotai scarves online, which are popular for dyeing.)

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...



Fill your dye pot half full of water and bring this to a boil.

Add the turmeric powder and continue boiling for an hour.

Add the scarves to the boiling mixture stirring them in. Use a spoon that you don't mind staining yellow. (Turmeric will stain anything it touches an orange/yellow color!)

Continue to boil the turmeric powder and scarves for an hour.

You can check them every twenty minutes or so to check on the color. (Remember, the color will lighten when the scarf dries. I've done several batches of turmeric scarves and I have preferred the color after an hour, but please experiment!)



Once you are satisfied with the color, take the scarves out of the mixture using tongs.

Place them in a bowl and then rinse the scarves with running water until the water runs clear.

Dry these, et voila!

You have beautiful hand-dyed scarves which make wonderful gifts.

You can use a variety of plants as a dye.

Walnut makes a rich brown color and can be done in the exact same way as the turmeric scarves.

Turmeric Scarves



INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 cup turmeric powder
- large dye pot (we used stainless steel)
- 1-2 scarves

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fill your dye pot half full of water and bring this to a boil.
2. Add the turmeric powder and continue boiling for an hour.
3. Add the scarves to the boiling mixture stirring them in.
4. Continue to boil the turmeric powder and scarves for an hour.
5. Check them every twenty minutes or so to check on the color.
6. Once you are satisfied with the color, take the scarves out of the mixture using tongs.
7. Place them in a bowl and then rinse the scarves with running water until the water runs clear.
8. Dry the scarves.



CAYENNE SALVE

The health benefits of cayenne are truly astounding!

From its heart-protective qualities to boosting the immune system, it will even stop bleeding from a cut or wound!

History of cayenne

Cayenne comes from the Capsicum genus which also includes bell peppers, chilies, paprikas and habaneros.

This genus is from the Americas and has been cultivated for use for at least 7,000 years. Some of the early european explorers brought the seeds from South America back

to Europe and they quickly spread around the world.

The etymology of the word Capsicum is believed to have been derived from Greek, meaning “to bite”.

If you master only one herb in your life, master cayenne pepper. It is more powerful than anything else.

- Dr. Richard Schulze

What makes it bite?

Cayenne has a hot and acrid taste. This “bite” or heat is caused by the constituent capsaicin. The more capsaicin a pepper has, the more heat or bite to it. This amount varies greatly between species and varieties.

One method of measuring this bite or heat is the Scoville heat units (SHU). Cayenne has around 30,000 – 50,000 SHU. In contrast, bell peppers have 0 and habaneros have more than 100,000.

Cayenne for Pain

Cayenne is famous for reducing many types of pain. It works by effecting your nervous system. Substance P is a neurotransmitter that relays information and results in what we call pain. Capsaicin, a major constituent of cayenne peppers, blocks substance P and therefore reduces pain.

When cayenne is used topically, it can relieve many different types of pain, including pain from: diabetic neuropathy, shingles, migraine headaches, back aches, arthritis, menstrual cramps and bruises.

Cayenne Salve

This super simple salve can be made up very quickly and bring big-time pain relief.



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Two heaping teaspoons of cayenne powder (or 15 grams).
- 1/2 ounce of beeswax
- Double boiler (Don't have one? Try a local thrift store.)
- Cheesecloth (Available in supermarkets.)

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...

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Begin by infusing the cayenne into the olive oil over a double burner.

I heat the oil and cayenne until it is warm, turn off the heat and let it sit (warmly) for about 20 minutes, then turn the heat on again.

I do this for at least one hour to a couple of hours, you could do it for 24 hours if desired.

Once the cayenne and olive oil have been

infused, strain off the powder through a cheesecloth. Reserve the infused oil.

Heat the beeswax until it is melted. Stir in the infused oil until the beeswax and oil have thoroughly melted together and combined.

Immediately pour this mixture into jars or tins. (Makes roughly 4 ounces).

Let it cool and then label it.



Using your cayenne salve

This cayenne salve can be used on aches and pains, from sore muscles and joints to bruises and even nerve pain.

It is best for closed wounds and may sting a bit on open wounds. Even on closed skin, you may feel a bit of burning or heat in the area where it is used. It should be applied externally only, and used within 6 months for the best results.

If using it for arthritic pain, it may take up to a week or two to see results. In this case, you want to use it daily to decrease chronic pain.

CAUTION!

When cayenne comes in contact with your mucosal membranes or eyes, it will burn! Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after touching cayenne or use gloves to apply the salve to the desired area. If you are using the cayenne salve on your hands, consider applying it at night and then sleeping with gloves on. Some sensitive individuals may develop feelings of heat or even blisters when cayenne salve is used regularly. If this happens, simply stop using it until the skin is healed and then try again using a smaller amount.

Cayenne salve



INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Two heaping teaspoons of cayenne powder (or 15 grams).
- 1/2 ounce of beeswax
- Cheesecloth

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin by infusing the cayenne into the olive oil over a double burner.
2. Heat the oil and cayenne until it is warm, turn off the heat and let it sit (warmly) for 20 minutes, then turn the heat on again.
3. Do this for at least one hour to a couple of hours.
4. Once the cayenne and olive oil have been infused, strain off the powder through a cheesecloth. Reserve the infused oil.
5. Heat the beeswax until melted. Stir in the infused oil until the beeswax and oil have thoroughly melted together and combined.
6. Immediately pour this mixture into jars or tins.
7. Let it cool and label.



HERBAL MOUTHWASH

Holistic approach to dental care

Modern popular opinion often falsely believes that dental health is solely a localized issue. But even if someone has impeccable oral hygiene, meaning that they brush and floss every day, use mouth washes, etc., tooth decay and gum disease can still be an issue. Thus, we need to take a more holistic approach to dental health and understand that it is a systemic issue as well as a localized issue.

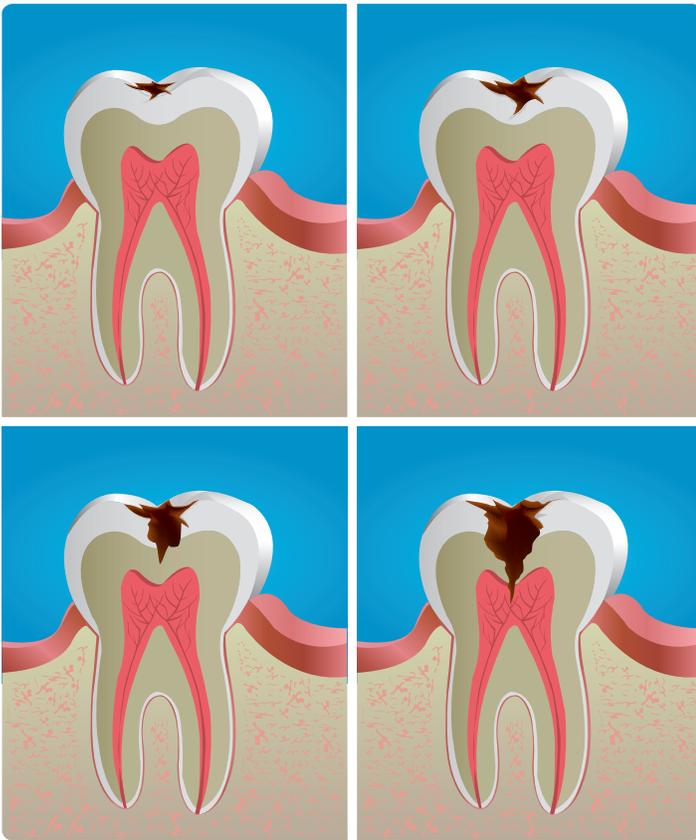
So what does that mean? Systemic vs. Local?

When I say a local problem I am referring to the bacteria in the mouth that undeniably

play a role in tooth decay and gum disease. These harmful bacteria eat carbohydrates in the mouth and then excrete acids that alter the pH balance in the mouth.

When the pH around teeth drops below 5.5, it starts to erode the enamel. Erosion of the enamel leads to porous teeth. Bacteria can then continue to bore through these holes, going through all layers of the tooth until it reaches the tooth pulp, which then creates a major infection.

These bacteria are always present in the mouth, and we have three major ways of combatting their ill effects.



Evolution of a Cavity

1: Manually removing food debris and plaque and tartar

The most commonly known way to promote dental health is of course to brush and floss daily and to use a mouth wash. Ridding the mouth of food debris also helps to decrease the amount of bacteria in the mouth. Brushing, flossing and using a mouth wash decreases the build up of plaque, which then decreases the amount of tartar. Regular visits to the dental hygienist will remove any built up tartar.

2: Healthy Mouth Bacteria

Most of us have heard of the concept of promoting healthy gut bacteria and the same principles apply to the mouth. There are beneficial and harmful bacteria in the mouth and by supporting beneficial bacteria through healthy lifestyle practices (such as diet) we can decrease the harmful bacteria.

3: Remineralization of teeth

Our skin is constantly regenerating itself, sloughing off dead skin cells and regenerating new ones. The same thing is true of our hair and finger and toe nails. Can you imagine only having one set of fingernails your whole life? Teeth are similar in that they can actually remineralize. Earlier, we learned that harmful bacteria can make our teeth porous, which then makes us susceptible to further dental erosion. But the initial stages of tooth decay is reversible!

Our saliva is designed to remineralize our teeth and, in doing so, can continually build our tooth enamel. The catch is that the saliva has to contain a plentiful amount of minerals in order to remineralize our teeth effectively. In order for our saliva to have minerals, we have to be ingesting minerals in our diet and avoid activities that decrease minerals in our body (such as sugar consumption and chronic stress.)



Dental health is multifactorial

Admittedly, this is a tip of the iceberg approach to dental health. Even though this article isn't a complete essay on dental health, I wanted to at least mention the multifactorial approach to dental health, so that readers can understand that the following recipe is not a magic cure all, but instead, part of a larger protocol for dental health.

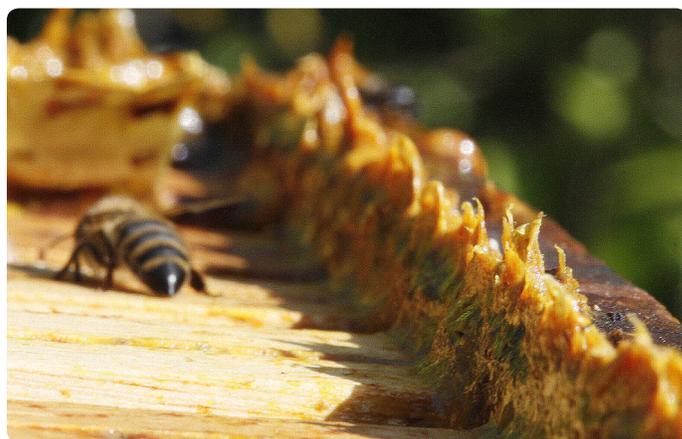
Herbs in the mouth wash recipe

Many medicinal herbs can be strong allies against dental decay. They can be used as topical antimicrobials to decrease harmful bacteria, they can tone spongy gums and heal mouth ulcers, and nutritive herbs (and foods) can be used dietarily to help remineralize our teeth.

This remedy focuses on the topical antimicrobial nature of herbs. Keep in mind that many different herbs can be used with great results. I am sharing the particular recipe that I used, and you can use this as a guide to create your own formula.

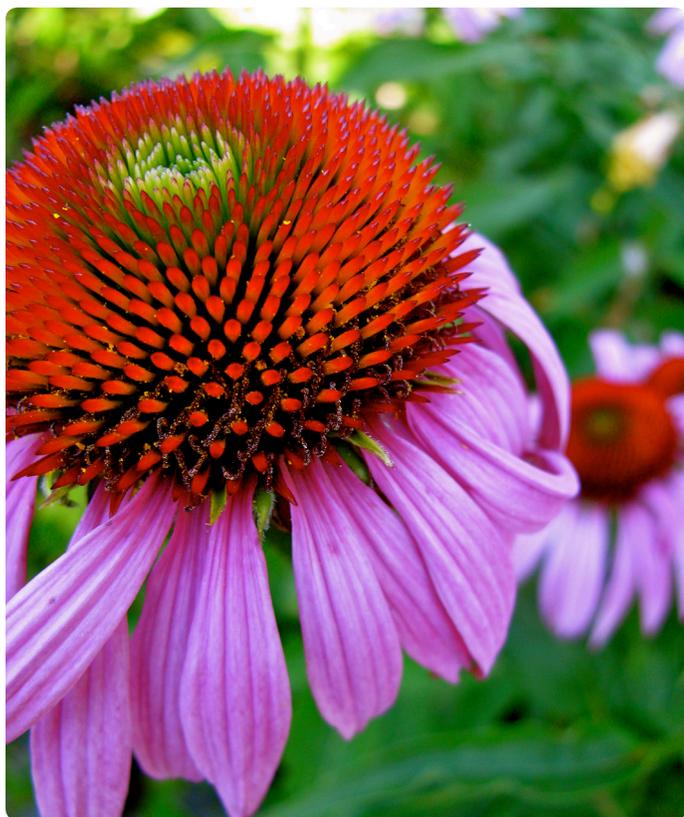
Plantain

Plantain (*Plantago major*, *P. lanceolata*) is scorned as a weed by many but is a beloved herb to those who truly know it. The list of plantain's medicinal abilities could go on and on so for this we'll simply say it is a wonderful herb to help heal wounds and fight infection.



Propolis

Propolis is a resin collected from beehives. Bees harvest various resins and volatile oils from nearby plants to create propolis, which is then used in the hive to seal unwanted gaps and prevent pathogenic invasion. Propolis is used worldwide on tooth infections as it is an incredible antimicrobial herb.



Echinacea

Echinacea (*Echinacea angustifolia*, *E. purpurea*) is often wrongly pigeonholed as a cold and flu herb, but Echinacea is so much more than that! It is the one herb I reach for most frequently for infections and hot eruptions like boils, acne and yes, even mouth infections.

Echinacea is anti-microbial, it boosts the immune system and can draw out infections. Sometimes, Echinacea is even referred to as the toothache plant. According to herbalist Paul Bergner, Echinacea was used as a dental remedy by many Native American tribes, including the Omaha Ponca, Oglala Dakota, Cheyenne, Crow and Comanche.

Echinacea is rapidly disappearing from the wild. When you purchase Echinacea products please only buy Echinacea from a cultivated source.



Oregon Grape Root

Oregon grape root (*Mahonia angustifolia*, *M. nervosa*) is a wonderful antimicrobial herb that can address a variety of infections. It is also an astringent, helping to tighten and tone tissues, which is especially useful for swollen and inflamed gums.

The Herbal Mouth Wash Recipe

You can make it either by purchasing/harvesting these herbs and tincturing it yourself or simply buying the tinctures already made and mixing them together yourself.



Ingredients

- 1/2 ounce Echinacea tincture
- 1/4 ounce Oregon Grape Root tincture
- 1/8 ounce Plantain tincture
- 1/8 ounce Propolis tincture

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking [here...](#)



To use this blend, simply combine the above amounts in an amber bottle with a dropper.

Then place 30-60 drops in a mouthful of water. *Note: the water will turn cloudy as a result of the propolis resin mixing with water.*

Depending on your current dental health, you could swish from 1 minute up to 20 minutes, 1-3 times a day. Then, spit out the mixture. Rinse if desired.





Herbal Mouthwash

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PARSLEY PESTO

Parsley is often mistaken for a “garnish” herb. Something to brighten your restaurant dinner plate only to be discarded with the trimmings.

But don't be fooled! Parsley is an amazing powerhouse of nutrients and it should be respected as one of our best herbal medicines. In fact, that sprig of parsley may be the healthiest thing on your dinner plate!

The Amazing Benefits of Parsley

Nutrients

Parsley is really high in nutrients, notably Vitamin K, Vitamin C and Vitamin A. It is especially high in Vitamin K. This vitamin

is strongly tied to heart health and healthy bones.

Promotes Digestion

Besides looking pretty, another reason you find parsley on dinner plates is because it helps to promote digestion. It is an aromatic herb that stimulates digestion and moves stagnant digestion. Ever eat a meal and feel like you have a bowling ball stuck in your stomach? Try parsley!

Anti-inflammatory

Parsley helps to modulate inflammation. Excess inflammation in the body is associated

with muscle pain, arthritis, and degenerative diseases, including cancer.

Protects Against Cancer

Parsley stops negative angiogenesis. This happens when a tumor creates a blood supply that enables it to grow. Cutting-edge cancer research shows us that many people have cancer cells in their body but, by eating antioxidant-rich foods like parsley, we can stop cancer cells from ever growing!



The Taste of Parsley

Have you ever really tasted parsley? Parsley certainly tastes “green”, but it also has a slightly spicy and pungent taste to it. The way herbs taste is a huge clue as to how we can use them as medicines.

Spicy and pungent herbs are often used to promote digestion and reduce inflammation.

Difference Between Curly Parsley and Flat Leaf Parsley?

If you know your parsley, you might notice that there are two distinct kinds that are commonly sold. One kind has really curly leaves while the other variety has a flat leaf.



What's the difference?

You can tell a lot about herbs by their taste and this is a perfect example of letting your taste sensation be your guide. If you get a chance, taste each kind. Do they taste the same? (hint: they don't!)

Here's another taste question for you. Does the stem taste the same as the leaves? What's the difference?

I'm going to let you discover the different tastes of parsley for yourself.

How to use Parsley

Parsley is best used fresh. It's easy to grow in your garden, and can also be found in grocery stores all year round.

Since parsley is typically served as one sprig on the dinner plate, we tend to think that this is a good serving size. Not even close!

In our house, we make an effort to get as much parsley in our diet as we could possibly enjoy! Food as medicine at its best.

During the hot summer months, we make salads that are at least half parsley leaves. We also like to include liberal parsley

garnishes with all of our meals (think small handful rather than sprig).

Another favorite way to enjoy parsley is as a pesto. Not only do you get the wonderful nutrition and benefits of parsley, you also get the wonderful qualities of walnuts, garlic, olive oil, paprika and lemon. This really is food as medicine!

We enjoy this parsley pesto on our meats, veggies and even our eggs at breakfast.

Pesto is a very forgiving mixture. If you can't have nuts or dairy, feel free to omit them and change the recipe as you would like. It's hard to go wrong!

Ingredients

- 2 cups tightly-packed flat leaf parsley leaves
- 3/4 cup toasted chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 3 large cloves of garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika powder
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest

You can get all these ingredients at your local market.



Throw everything in a food processor or blender. Blend on high until it forms a smooth consistency.

Store in the fridge and use within a few days. You can also freeze it in whatever portion size works for you.

CAUTION: *Parsley should not be eaten in large quantities during pregnancy.*





Parsley Pesto

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FIVE SIMPLE SPICE BLENDS

Top 6 Reasons to Make Spice Blends As Gifts

Whether you decide to make these as gifts, or simply enjoy the blends yourself, you will love how easy it is to make your own delicious spice blends.

Number 6...

Forget dull tasteless spices.

Your own fresh blends ensure the best taste and quality.

Many store-bought spice blends are old and bland tasting compared to the vibrant blends you can create using freshly-dried

organic herbs and spices. Mountain Rose Herbs sells incredible powdered spices. You can even step it up a notch by buying whole seeds and spices and grinding them yourself for the blends. It doesn't get much fresher than that!

Number 5...

Handmade gifts are thoughtful and much more meaningful than random stuff you buy at the store.

When it comes to getting presents from friends and family, I would much rather have something they've taken the time to make themselves.

Besides making these blends yourself, you can add another special touch by including your favorite recipes using the spice blends.

Number 4...

They are an elegant herbal gift that your friends and family will actually enjoy and use.

I am constantly looking for fresh homemade ideas for my friends and family. I insist on

hand making most of my gifts each year, but I also want to make and give something my loved ones will actually use. I am pretty sure I over-gave salves for a number of years before I caught on to the fact that they were simply gathering dust in people's drawers.

Spice blends are delicious and practical. They will be loved!



Number 3...

They are an affordable gift.

Buying these spices in bulk (or better yet using your own home grown herbs) makes this gift incredibly inexpensive, way cheaper than buying inferior spice blends at the grocery store.

Number 2...

Giftng spice blends lets you share your passion for herbs and good health.

Last holiday season, I bought the book *Healing Spices* by Dr. Bharat Aggarwal. Granted, I was already a believer that spices were good for one's health, but this book totally blew me away. I read it from cover to cover and was totally amazed at all the ways culinary herbs and spices can dramatically influence our health.

From improving digestion (poor digestion is often considered the root of chronic disease) to improving cardiovascular health to decreasing the risk of cancer and everything in between, spices are truly incredible.

Giving spices is like giving the gift of health!

Many U.S. homes are devoid of spices! Sharing spice blends with your friends and family (especially with your favorite recipes) is a great way to share both your passion for herbs and your passion for healthy living.

AND THE NUMBER ONE reason to make spice blends...

We've made it super simple for you.

Making Your Spice Blends

Now that I have given you 6 reasons to make spice blends as gifts, let's see how you go about making them.

I've chosen five different spice blends to give you a variety of options. Consider making all five for a complete gift set.

The following recipes are in parts. I chose to do this to make it easy for your to make as small or as large a batch as you want.



If you've never measured in parts before here's how to do it.

You choose how much you want one part to be. For example if you wanted to make a large batch of something you might choose the part to be a cup. Then you substitute a "cup" each time it says "part".

Of, if you wanted to make a smaller blend you might choose a tablespoon as your part.

Once you've decided how big to make your parts you simply measure them out into a bowl. Mix well. And then transfer to your spice blend container. Label the container and voila!

Some tips...

Make sure all the spices in your blend are the same consistency. If some have large leaves and others are powder, the powder will just shift to the bottom of the blend.

Sift your powders to avoid having any large clumps.

If you are making your own spice blend, make a small amount so that you can try it out yourself first.



All Purpose Seasoning

To make this blend, I lightly ground up all the spices until they were about the same consistency. If you leave your oregano leaves and rosemary leaves whole, the garlic granules will sink to the bottom of the mix. Better to have them all closer to a powdered consistency.

This blend is perfect for grilling meats and for a variety of savory main or side dishes.

- 2 parts oregano
- 1 part rosemary
- 1 part fennel
- 1 part thyme
- 1/2 part garlic granules

Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...

Pumpkin Spice

As you might imagine, this pumpkin spice blend goes well in pumpkin pie. But don't let the name of the spice limit its use. It can be used on top of ice cream, in eggnog, in oatmeal, in hot chocolate, in cookies and many more sweet treats.

- 4 parts cinnamon powder
- 2 parts ginger powder
- 1 part cloves powder
- 1/2 part nutmeg powder



Garam Masala

This traditional Indian spiced blend works well in curries and on meats and veggies. We cook a lot of Indian-inspired cuisine and this mix goes into practically every dish.

- 2 parts cumin powder
- 2 parts coriander powder
- 1 part turmeric powder
- 1/2 part cinnamon powder
- 1/4 part ground cloves
- 1/4 part ground cardamom



Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...

Celery Salt

Celery salt is commonly used in coleslaw and on popcorn. When I first had homemade celery salt, I was amazed at the delicious taste. It's way better than the store-bought stuff!

- 2 parts ground celery seed
- 1 part sea salt



Taco Seasoning

Used on tacos, fajitas, meats and chili, this spiced blend enlivens meat dishes and bean dishes. The optional cayenne powder can be increased or decreased depending on the amount of heat you want.

- 2 parts chipotle powder
- 1 part paprika powder
- 1 part cumin powder
- 1/2 part onion powder
- 1/2 part garlic powder
- 1/4 part cayenne powder (optional)



Need ingredients? Visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#) by clicking here...

Spice Blend Labels

Our Gift To You!

We created these beautiful gift tags and labels which you can download here for free. They are located on HerbMentor.com.

HerbMentor is our community mentoring and herbal education site.

Print these out on your favorite paper. You can clip and adhere the labels to bottles using clear tape.

This link will open a web page on HerbMentor.com with a PDF download for the labels. You must be connected to the internet.



Five Simple Spice Blends



All Purpose Seasoning

- 2 parts oregano
- 1 part rosemary
- 1 part fennel
- 1 part thyme
- 1/2 part garlic granules

Pumpkin Spice

- 4 parts cinnamon powder
- 2 parts ginger powder
- 1 part cloves powder
- 1/2 part nutmeg powder

Celery Salt

- 2 parts ground celery seed
- 1 part sea salt

Taco Seasoning

- 2 parts chipotle powder
- 1 part paprika powder
- 1 part cumin powder
- 1/2 part onion powder
- 1/2 part garlic powder
- 1/4 part cayenne powder (optional)

Garam Masala

- 2 parts cumin powder
- 2 parts coriander powder
- 1 part turmeric powder
- 1/2 part cinnamon powder
- 1/4 part ground cloves
- 1/4 part ground cardamom



MAKE YOUR OWN MUSTARD

A couple years ago, my husband and I were traveling through France to visit our family. The trip had gone absolutely perfectly until about the last week there, when I caught a cold.

I quickly went through the small tincture bottles I had brought with me and was still a stuffy, foggy-headed mess. Even though it was just a little cold, I felt miserable! I really wanted to get the most out of every second in France, so I was desperate for something to help me.

I was standing in the kitchen of my husband's aunt and uncle's house, bemoaning my stuffy sinuses, when I suddenly realized that there was an often forgotten but very potent

herb that is found in practically every French kitchen.

Mustard!

Sure enough, I found several different kinds of mustard in the fridge and took a spoonful of one of them.

Holy smokes!

Mustard, especially well-prepared authentic mustard, is pungent, spicy and downright hot!

My sinuses immediately started to drain and I also started to sweat. I kept up with my regular dosing of mustard and I was feeling a lot better in no time.



Mustard's Great Healing Abilities

The power of mustard goes far beyond a simple cold and flu!

Allyl isothiocyanates (AITC) are compounds found in mustard seeds that have been studied extensively for their ability to prevent and decrease cancer cells. There are over 200 studies showing these positive effects!

Mustard seed and oil have also been shown to protect heart health by reducing inflammation and normalizing cholesterol levels.

Using a mustard seed poultice has been a long-lived folk tradition to help people with

congested lung mucus and bronchitis. It's also been shown to reduce symptoms of COPD.

Why Make Your Own Mustard?

Making your own mustard is really simple and super cheap. By avoiding store-bought brands you are also avoiding common artificial flavors and colorings.

When you make your own mustard, you can create many different herbal varieties.

Different Kinds of Mustard Seeds

There are two kinds of mustard seeds that are readily found in commerce: yellow and brown.





Yellow mustard seeds have a milder flavor and brown mustard seeds have a much hotter and spicier flavor. The following recipe uses both yellow and brown mustard seeds but, if you prefer a milder taste, use only the yellow.

This recipe is super simple but takes a few days to complete. The mustard seeds need to be soaked in water and apple cider vinegar for two days to let the flavor of the mustard seeds release.

Lavender Mustard Ingredients

- 1/4 cup brown mustard seeds
- 1/4 cup yellow mustard seeds
- (use only yellow seeds if you want a milder taste)
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon lavender flowers
- 1 teaspoon salt

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Place the mustard seeds, apple cider vinegar and water in a glass bowl. Cover and let sit for about two days.

When the mustard seeds are through soaking, place them as well as the liquid into a food processor or blender.

Add the rest of the ingredients and blend until the mustard is ground into a mustard paste.

This recipe makes about a pint of mustard. It will keep in the fridge for about six months.

Enjoy this on your favorite meats and sandwiches.



Make Your Own Mustard



INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup brown mustard seeds
- 1/4 cup yellow mustard seeds
- (use only yellow seeds if you want a milder taste)
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
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INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the mustard seeds, apple cider vinegar and water in a glass bowl.
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TOM KHA IMMUNE SOUP

Tom Kha soup is a dish from Thailand. It might possibly be my most favorite dish ever. The richness of the coconut milk mingles with the tartness of the lemongrass in a base of super delicious bone broth soup. It just tastes so darn good!

We make a big batch of this soup once a week and eat it numerous times throughout the week. When we have dinner guests or bring food to folks (because of injury or recent birth) we generally serve this soup. And we always hear people ranting and raving.

We love to eat this soup in the winter time as part of our medicine cabinet to keep our

immune systems strong throughout the winter and to avoid getting upper respiratory infections like colds and the flu. It is packed full of powerful immune herbs and spicy warming herbs that are perfect for the cold winter months.

There are lots of Tom Kha recipes out there, I hope you enjoy this version which has a few more local veggies than what you'll typically see in these recipes. Soups beg to be altered, so experiment away!

Before we get to the recipe, here's a bit more information about the yummy herbs in this soup and their health benefits.



Lemongrass

Lemongrass is a prominent spice in Thai cooking. It has an aromatic, lemony scent and taste, but also has something so much more. I find it hard to describe myself, but I recently heard someone describe it as a lemony pepper taste with a hint of rose. Besides its seductive taste, lemongrass is a powerful medicinal herb. It is used for fevers, for digestive complaints and for headaches.

It also makes a delicious tea. I often add small amounts to other tea blends simply because I love the taste of it so much. The oil of lemongrass is referred to as citronella and is commonly used as an insect repellent.

This recipe calls for fresh lemongrass. If you can't find it fresh, you can also make a strong tea out of dried lemongrass for a similar taste. I would try two heaping tablespoons of lemongrass in 8 ounces of just boiled water. Let sit for 10 minutes, then strain and add the water to the soup.



Cilantro

Cilantro is often thought of as simply garnish for guacamole, but this is yet another unassuming plant that is disguised as potent medicine. Before I go on, I know someone out there is thinking, "yuck! I hate cilantro." It's true, people seem to either adore cilantro or detest it. If you think cilantro tastes like soap, then it's probably not your fault!

Some people genetically lack the ability to taste the flavor that most people love in cilantro. Concurrently, they also have a stronger reaction to another flavor within cilantro. If you don't like cilantro, feel free to omit it from the soup.

Cilantro is loaded with antioxidants and is an aromatic carminative herb that is great for promoting digestion. My teacher, Michael Tierra, recommends strong cilantro tea or cilantro pesto for stubborn urinary tract infections.

Garlic

Garlic is a strong antimicrobial herb that stimulates circulation and boosts the immune system. Just eating one fresh clove a day (not bulb, clove) can deliver powerful health benefits such as supporting good cholesterol ratios and promoting digestion.



Ginger

Ginger is a spicy herb that can promote digestion, quell nausea, lessen headaches, reduce pain, fight intestinal infections, and shorten the duration of a cold or flu. Ginger is one of my most reached for herbs simply because it does so much and it does it so well!

Shitake mushrooms

I adore shitake mushrooms, so I love piling them in the soup until it looks like I am eating shitake mushroom soup! Shitakes are a wonderful food for the immune system. They have been studied extensively as a way of preventing and treating cancer.

Ingredients

- 32 fluid oz bone broth soup (learn how to make yours here)
- 3 cans regular coconut milk (look for BPA free coconut milk)
- 2 big stalks lemongrass, sliced in large pieces
- 4 tablespoons fish sauce
- 2 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 4 tablespoons lime juice
- 4 tablespoons minced ginger
- 8 cloves minced garlic
- 1 pack skinless chicken thighs, cubed in very small pieces (sometimes we use salmon instead)
- 8 ounces shitake mushrooms, sliced
- 1 bunch bok choy, chopped
- 1 bunch of kale chopped
- 1 bunch green onions
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 tablespoon green thai curry paste
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped (leave the stems in!)

Directions

Heat the bone broth and coconut milk in a large, heavy-bottomed pan.

Once the liquids are heated, you can add the fish sauce, tamari, apple cider vinegar, lime juice, ginger and garlic.

Bring the broth to a slow simmer, make sure it doesn't boil, and do not cover it during cooking.

When the broth is simmering, add the chicken, mushrooms, bok choy, kale, green onions, carrots and green curry paste.

When the chicken is fully cooked and the carrots are tender, add the cilantro. After a minute, taste the soup and add some lime juice if desired.

It's ready to serve! A cilantro and red pepper garnish is a nice touch.

This recipe makes a lot of soup. Perhaps 8 – 12 servings. It makes great left-overs!



Tom Kha Immune Soup



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6. It's ready to serve! A cilantro and red pepper garnish is a nice touch.



ROSE HIP & CRANBERRY COMPOTE

The first snows of the season have already hit our valley and our wood stove is crackling all day long. With the changing of the seasons we've been eating warming and spicy foods and using lots of herbs and foods to support our immune systems as well.

Before I learned how to support and nourish my immune system, I used to struggle through the winter months, catching several colds and even the flu at least once a year. Now, I rarely get sick.

My close friends are often surprised at how little I get under the weather. "What's your secret?" they want to know.

It's not easy to point to that ONE thing that can improve your immune system. Good food, good digestion, sunlight, exercise and emotions all play a big role in our total health. However, another big factor in immune system health that often gets overlooked is the use of herbs (and foods!) to support the immune system.

One important nutrient for optimal immune system function is Vitamin C; and today's delicious recipe is also loaded with this nutrient!

Vitamin C is crucial for the immune system, but evidence seems to support that getting vitamin C from whole food sources (rather than isolated extracts) has the best results.

Your body doesn't make vitamin C on its own nor does it store it; so it's important to include vitamin C in your diet regularly. Luckily, many foods and herbs high in vitamin C are also tasty!

Today's recipe is like getting a mega dose of natural vitamin C. You'll see that almost all the ingredients in this compote contain large amounts of this vitamin plus many other valuable nutrients.

What's a compote?

A compote is stewed fruit with added spices. This dessert may have originated in France during the 17th century, but it is also possible that it was developed before that. Many traditional recipes call for gobs of sugar. If you've been following my recipes for long you'll know that I remedied that!

Compotes are some of my favorite desserts. They are easy to make and delicious! I always use seasonal fruit and rarely add any additional sweeteners. In the winter time, compotes are delicious served warm with a dollop of whipped cream. In the summer, we loved them chilled with yogurt.

The health benefits of compotes vary with the fruits used. The recipe I am sharing with you today is loaded with antioxidants and Vitamin C. Eating this compote is like

getting a mega dose of vitamin C, which is especially beneficial to our immune system.

Before we get to the recipe, let's look at some of the health benefits of the fruit in our compote.

Health Benefits

Rose hips

Rose hips are the fruits of the rose. These tart and tangy fruits are delicious and loaded with vitamin C and antioxidants. I use dried rose hips in the recipe; if you can harvest them fresh, then all the better!



Cranberries

Cranberries have been studied at length for their health benefits. They have multiple constituents that have been shown to prevent cancer! And, like rose hips, cranberries are really high in flavonoids and Vitamin C.

C. Flavonoids are powerful antioxidants that protect the body from oxidation and inflammation, which can lead to premature aging.

These flavonoids have been shown to promote a healthy heart and cardiovascular system. By reducing inflammation, they reduce plaque build-up in arteries, prevent platelets from sticking together and normalize cholesterol levels.



Apples

Apples can be overlooked as a common and boring fruit, but they also pack a nutrient-dense punch. For the best nutrient value, be sure to get local organic varieties and veer away from those red delicious varieties to explore some of the heritage varieties.

An apple is yet another fruit that is high in Vitamin C. (I told you this recipe is full of it!) Apples have also been shown to have a strongly beneficial effect on the heart.

Apples are high in quercetin, which is a powerful flavonoid that is a sort of building

block for other flavonoids. Quercetin prevents cancer and heart disease, speeds the healing of digestive ulcers and can help prevent seasonal allergies.



Ginger

Ginger is one of my favorite herbs! I mean really, what can't it do? Soothe an upset stomach, check. Decrease inflammatory pain, check. Relieve headaches, check. Promote digestion, check. And the list goes on and on!

This recipe calls for candied ginger. You can make your own using this recipe. You can also often find candied ginger at the store or try using regular fresh ginger instead.





Here's the recipe!

This recipe serves 6 – 8 people. I think it even tastes better on the second day.

I made this compote for my 5-year-old niece who proudly proclaimed, “No one makes cranberries as good as my Auntie Rosie!” I guess that could be an endorsement or a challenge!

Ingredients

- 3 cups of chopped apples
- 2 cups of fresh cranberries
- 1/3 cup of dried rose hips
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon cloves
- Sugar or honey to taste
- Freshly whipped cream (optional)

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To begin, place the fruits, lemon juice, apple cider and water into a pan and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat so that it is on a low simmer. Continue to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning.

After twenty minutes, the fruit should be soft and the mixture will look gelled or cooked down.

Add the spices and honey or sugar if desired. Stir for another two minutes.

This can be served immediately, although we find it's best after sitting for 24 hours.





Rose Hip & Cranberry Compote

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups of chopped apples
- 2 cups of fresh cranberries
- 1/3 cup of dried rose hips
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons ginger
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- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
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- Sugar or honey to taste
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INSTRUCTIONS:

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3. Continue to simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning.
4. After twenty minutes, the fruit should be soft and the mixture will look gelled or cooked down.
5. Add the spices and honey or sugar if desired. Stir for another two minutes.
6. Can be served immediately.



HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE

It all started when someone gave me a chocolate-making kit for my birthday. “What a cute idea” I thought. But I really wasn’t so sure about it.

The thing is, I am quite the chocolate snob. I buy the darkest chocolate available and often times spend an embarrassing amount on a small bar from the store. It’s not that I think sinking tons of money into an artisan item is in itself a cool thing, but rather that high quality chocolate is part of my health insurance plan!

Exquisite dark chocolate is not just simply a little treat. It’s the food of the gods!

In summary, dark chocolate and cacao products are a powerful superfood. It’s extremely high in antioxidants, which have been proven to strongly support heart health. It also elevates your mood and is high in minerals.

Oh yeah, and it tastes good!

Knowing the powerful health benefits of chocolate allows me to indulge in the best chocolate on the market, guilt free!

Back to my “cute” birthday gift. I obligingly made chocolate from this kit and was absolutely amazed at how incredible this homemade chocolate tasted! Without a doubt it was better than the best artisan

bars I've ever bought. Even better is that I can omit ingredients like soy lecithin (which many chocolate bars contain) and control the amount of sugar that goes into the mix as well.

You can bet it didn't take me long before I realized I could add herbs to my new chocolate-making obsession as well.

The Herbs in this Recipe

For this recipe I used maca powder and cinnamon powder.



Maca

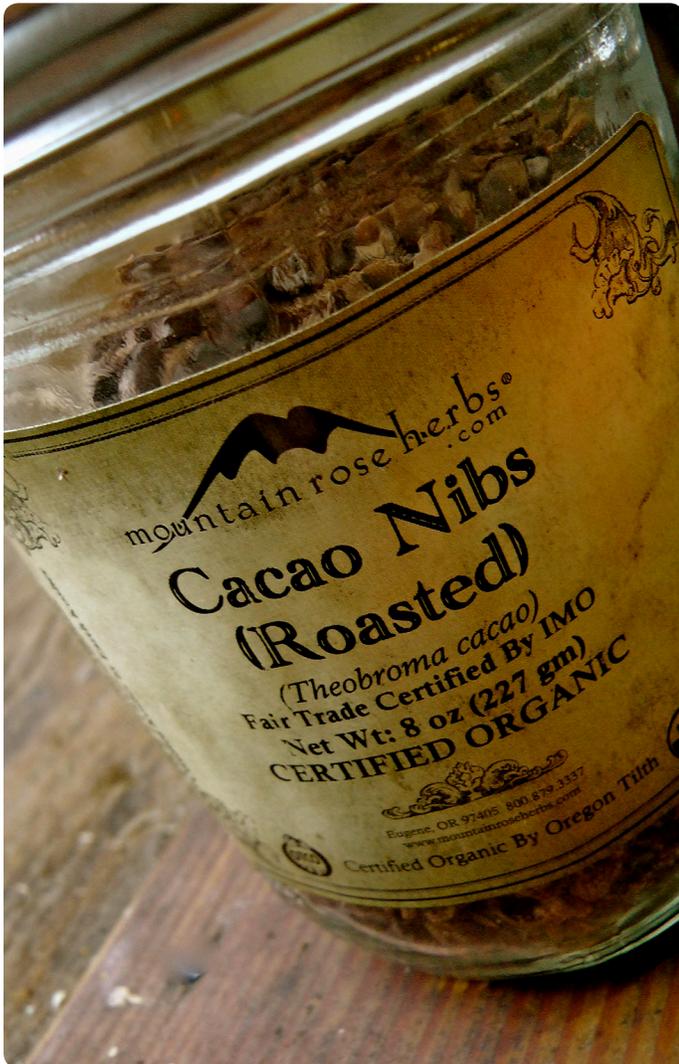
Maca is a root that comes from South America. It's essentially a turnip or a nutrient-dense root. It's heavily marketed in the natural health industry for its aphrodisiac qualities and its ability to promote fertility. Honestly, to get the most benefit from maca you would take it in much higher dosages. However, its sweet taste works well in this recipe.



Cinnamon

Chocolate and cinnamon just beg to be combined. I could go on and on about the health benefits of cinnamon, but forget that and just savor the complex combination of the sweet spicy taste of cinnamon against the rich slightly bitter taste of cacao. Yum!

But really, the herbal possibilities are endless and I've only just begun to explore them. Rose petal powder, orange powder, hawthorne powder, mint, little bits of lavender... I've also minced up nuts and goji berries for this mix as well. Yummy!



What's in a name? Cacao or Cocoa?

From what I can tell cacao and cocoa are interchangeable words for products that come from the *Theobroma cacao* tree. In my mind, cacao seems like a more specific word to discuss pure cacao products, as opposed to cocoa which reminds me of those awful powdered hot cocoa blends marketed to kids containing lots of sugar and other unhealthy additives.

Ethical use of chocolate

Before we get to the recipe itself, I really want to encourage you to buy organic chocolate that has been harvested and made in ethical and sustainable ways. You may have seen this on the news, but large chocolate manufacturers have been found guilty of using child slavery in the harvest and production of their chocolate.

Ingredients

- 130 grams of cacao butter
- 70 grams of raw cacao powder
- 15 grams maca root powder
- 5 grams cinnamon powder
- Honey to taste (I use a dollop from a tablespoon)
- 2 – 3 tablespoons of cacao nibs
- Silicon molds (ice cube trays may also work)

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Begin by placing a small amount of cacao nibs (roasted) in the molds.



Cut the cacao butter into small chunks.



Melt the cacao butter over a double boiler.



Once the cacao butter has melted entirely, add the cacao powder and herbal powders.



Add the honey. Stir well.



Stir well.

Pour into molds that have been sprinkled with cacao nibs and let harden. This takes a few hours at room temperature.

This recipe makes a great gift. Be sure to experiment with lots of different recipes in your own kitchen before handing them out to friends.



Homemade Chocolate



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3. Melt the cacao butter over a double boiler.
4. Once the cacao butter has melted entirely, add the cacao powder and herbal powders. Stir well.
5. Add the honey. Stir well.
6. Pour into molds that have been sprinkled with cacao nibs and let harden. This takes a few hours at room temperature.



TULSI TONIC TEA

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) is also known as Holy Basil.

This mint family plant has been a sacred and important medicinal plant in India. Tulsi is one of those plants that will amaze you with the many ways it can support health and well-being.

As an adaptogen...

Tulsi's main claim to fame in the western world is as an adaptogen. In Ayurveda, they refer to it as a rasayana. This term is similar to the Chinese term tonics. It basically means that this is a transformative herb and, when taken daily, it moves a person towards

health. These are generally building and nourishing herbs.

I often hear people say that they don't want to be taking herbs for the rest of their life, the idea being that if they were healthy they wouldn't need to take herbs. In this sense, people are equating herbs with pharmaceutical drugs. However, in other systems of healing like Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda, specific herbs are taken for a lifetime to ensure vibrant health and longevity. Holy basil is one of these herbs.

Holy basil not only helps the body adapt to stress, it can also promote energy and

endurance. One way it does this is by increasing the body's ability to efficiently use oxygen.

Holy basil is a relaxing nervine that can help calm the mind and recover from our hustle and bustle culture.

As an herb for the heart...

Tulsi has many beneficial actions on the heart. It is slightly blood thinning and promotes good circulation. It can lower stress-related high blood pressure and taken daily it can help optimize cholesterol levels. Stress can play an ugly role in overall cardiovascular health and the adaptogenic properties of tulsi can help mediate stress-related damage.

In Ayurveda, a formula that is balancing to all who take it (tridoshic) is made up of tulsi, arjuna and hawthorne.

For musculoskeletal pain...

In scientific studies, holy basil has been shown to be a COX 2 inhibitor (many modern pain medications are COX 2 inhibitors), making it useful against arthritis and other inflammatory conditions. Tulsi is high in eugenol, a constituent also found in cloves, which is helpful to decrease pain.

And more!

This is just a smattering of beneficial uses for this amazing plant. It's also used for



Holy basil growing in southern France

viral infections, fungal infections, radiation exposure, high blood sugar, hay fever, the herpes virus, anxiety, high blood pressure and on and on and on!

Note: I know some of you are wondering if our common culinary plant, basil, is the same as tulsi or holy basil and the answer is no. Our culinary plant, *Ocimum basilicum*, is a different species although they do have some overlapping properties and uses. There are over 60 different species in the *Ocimum* genus.

Ingredients

- 1 heaping teaspoon of tulsi (holy basil) leaves
- 1 heaping teaspoon of hibiscus flowers
- 1 heaping teaspoon of rose petals
- pinch of stevia or honey to taste
- 16 ounces of hot water

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To make this tea simply place the herbs in your tea pot.



Let steep for 10 – 15 minutes and then pour.



Pour in the just-boiled hot water.

...And enjoy!





Tulsi Tonic Tea

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 heaping teaspoon of tulsi (holy basil) leaves
- 1 heaping teaspoon of hibiscus flowers
- 1 heaping teaspoon of rose petals
- pinch of stevia or honey to taste
- 16 ounces of hot water

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Simply place the herbs in your tea pot.
2. Pour in the just-boiled hot water.
3. Let steep for 10 – 15 minutes and then pour.

About Rosalee



Rosalee de la Forêt, RH (AHG) is passionate about helping people discover the world of herbalism and natural health.

As Education Director of LearningHerbs, Rosalee creates multimedia presentations for HerbMentor, including videos, herbal photography, recipes, articles and ebooks. She also manages the educational content and moderates the community forums. She is proud to have been a part of HerbMentor since the day it opened!

In addition to her work at LearningHerbs, Rosalee teaches internationally at herbal conferences. She also guides enthusiastic herbal students in her popular mentorship program designed to deepen their herbal knowledge and grow their herbal business.

Rosalee loves helping people find natural solutions to their chronic health problems. Her health programs offer a personalized and unique blend of herbs, nutrition and innovative lifestyle changes that have helped many people transform their lives.

Rosalee is a professional member of the American Herbalist Guild.

Visit Rosalee at MethowValleyHerbs.com and HerbalRemediesAdvice.org.



We made herbal remedy making ridiculously simple. Visit LearningHerbs.com/kit

Healing Herbs



Astragalus
Botanical name: *Astragalus membranaceus*
Family: Fabaceae (Pea)
Parts used: root
Properties: warm/dry, adaptogen, antiviral, antioxidant, hepatoprotective
Used for: boosting immunity for people who have frequent colds/flu, wasting diseases, liver disease
Plant preparations: Decoction, add to soups, cooked with grains



Calendula
Botanical name: *Calendula officinalis*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: flowers
Properties: warm/neutral, vulnerary, anti-fungal, antiviral, lymphatic, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, emmenagogue
Used for: varicose veins, athletes foot, wounds, ulcers, burns, chicken pox, measles, diaper rash, eye wash, swollen lymph glands, dysmenorrhea, painful scars
Plant preparations: tincture, tea, oil, salve, food

Catnip
Botanical name: *Nepeta cataria*
Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)
Parts used: flowering tops, leaves
Properties: cooling, relaxing diaphoretic, aromatic digestant, antispasmodic, relaxing nerve
Used for: fevers, indigestion, flatulence, insomnia, cramps, diarrhea, colic, narcotic for cats
Plant preparations: tea, tincture



Burdock
Botanical name: *Arctium lappa*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: roots, seeds
Properties: cool/dry, nutritive, alterative, lymphatic, anti-tumor, diuretic, diaphoretic
Used for: nutritious food, skin disorders (eczema, psoriasis, boils, acne), swollen lymph glands, fluid retention, tumors
Plant preparations: decoction, food, tincture, poultice



Chamomile
Botanical name: *Matricaria recutita*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: flowering tops
Properties: cool/dry, relaxing nerve, aromatic digestant, relaxing diaphoretic, antispasmodic, vulnerary, anti-inflammatory
Used for: irritability, restlessness, insomnia, indigestion, gas, fevers, colds, flu, teething, colic, whining, externally for burns, rashes
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, oil, salve



Comfrey
Botanical name: *Symphytum officinale*
Family: Boraginaceae (Borage)
Parts used: leaves, root
Properties: cell proliferant, nutritive, demulcent, expectorant, vulnerary
Used for: external use for healing of clean wounds, broken bones, pulled ligaments/sprains, varicose veins, burns, and hernias. Internal use with caution for coughs, ulcers
Plant preparations: infusion, decoction, oil, poultice, food

Dandelion
Botanical name: *Taraxacum officinale*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: root, leaves, flowers
Properties: cool/dry, bitter, alterative, nutritive, cholagogue, diuretic, laxative, tonic
Used for: poor digestion, water retention, nourishing food, skin eruptions
Plant preparations: decoction, tincture, food

Echinacea
Botanical name: *Echinacea spp.*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: whole plant, flowers, roots, seeds, leaves
Properties: cool/dry, immunomodulator, sialagogue, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial, vulnerary
Used for: infected wounds, colds and flu
Plant preparations: tincture, tea, decoction



Elder
Botanical name: *Sambucus spp.*
 (Blue and black berry varieties)
Family: Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle)
Parts used: flowers, berries
Properties: cool/dry, anti-viral, relaxing diaphoretic, relaxing nerve, immunomodulator, antioxidant, expectorant, emollient
Used for: colds, flu, fever, soften skin, rashes, burns
Plant preparations: tincture, tea, wine, honey, food



Garlic
Botanical name: *Allium sativum*
Family: Alliaceae (Onion)
Parts used: bulb
Properties: warm/dry, circulatory stimulant, hypotensive, alterative, stimulating diaphoretic, anti-coagulant, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal
Used for: hypertension, fungal infections, candida, lowering triglycerides, colds, flu, bronchial congestion
Plant preparations: food, oil, plaster, vinegar, honey

Ginger
Botanical name: *Zingiber officinale*
Family: Zingiberaceae (Ginger)
Parts used: rhizome
Properties: warm/dry, stimulating diaphoretic, carminative, circulatory stimulant, emmenagogue, expectorant, antispasmodic, antimicrobial, anodyne, anti-inflammatory
Used for: colds, flu, poor circulation, cramps, spasms, motion sickness, nausea, gas, mucus congestion, stomachic, late menses, vomiting
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, food, syrup

Hawthorn
Botanical name: *Crataegus oxyacantha*
Family: Rosaceae (Rose)
Parts used: leaves and flowers, berries
Properties: slightly cool/dry, cardiac prothrestorative, relaxing nerve, digestant, astringent, diuretic, antioxidant
Used for: heart related illness, cardiac weakness, stagnant digestion, regulation of blood pressure
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, vinegar, food



Lemon Balm
Botanical name: *Melissa officinalis*
Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)
Parts used: Aerial plant
Properties: relaxing nerve, anti-viral, relaxing diaphoretic, aromatic digestant, antispasmodic
Used for: stress/anxiety, cold sores, colds, flu, fever, teething, melancholy, hyperthyroidism, insomnia, seasonal affective disorder
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, popsicles



Nettle
Botanical name: *Urtica dioica*
Family: Urticaceae (Nettle)
Parts used: young leaves, roots, seeds
Properties: cool/dry, nutritive, kidney/adrenal trophorestorative, adaptogen, diuretic, astringent, hemostatic
Used for: nutritious food, allergies, asthma, edema, kidney disorders, low energy, hypothyroid, BPH, arthritis, adrenal fatigue
Plant preparations: food, infusions, tincture, vinegar, urtication

Oats
Botanical name: *Avena sativa, A. fatua*
Family: Poaceae (Grass)
Parts used: milky oats and straw
Properties: neutral/slightly moist, nerve, nutritive, nervous system trophorestorative
Used for: stress, anxiety, adrenal exhaustion, lack of libido, rashes and skin inflammation
Plant preparations: infusion, decoction, tincture, food

Peppermint
Botanical name: *Mentha x piperita*
Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)
Parts used: leaves, flowers
Properties: aromatic digestant, anodyne, stimulating nerve, anti-spasmodic, stimulating diaphoretic, calmative
Used for: stomach upset, hiccups, bad breath, colds, flu, fever, sinus congestion, gas, nausea, externally to soothe itching and inflammation of the skin
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, wash



Plantain
Botanical name: *Plantago spp.*
Family: Plantaginaceae (Plantain)
Parts used: young leaves
Properties: cool/moist, demulcent, diuretic, expectorant, alterative, vulnerary
Used for: insect and spider bites, urinary infections, dry coughs, ulcers and other GI inflammation
Plant preparations: infusion, poultice, vinegar, food, oil, salve



Red Clover
Botanical name: *Trifolium pratense*
Family: Fabaceae (Pea)
Parts used: flowering tops
Properties: cool/dry, astringent, alterative, blood thinning, antispasmodic, expectorant, anti-tumor
Used for: prevention and treatment of cancer, whooping cough, blood thinning, clearing up metabolic wastes
Plant preparations: food, vinegar, oil, tincture, infusion, poultice

Slippery Elm
Botanical name: *Ulmus fulva*
Family: Ulmaceae (Elm)
Parts used: inner bark
Properties: neutral/moist, sweet, demulcent, nutritive, emollient, expectorant, antioxidant
Used for: ulcers, sore throat, coughs, nutritive food, inflammation of the colon and respiratory system, wasting diseases
Plant preparations: oil, gruel, tea, tablets

St. John's Wort
Botanical name: *Hypericum perforatum*
Family: Hypericaceae (St. John's Wort)
Parts used: flowering tips including leaves, buds, and flowers
Properties: cool/dry, nervous system trophorestorative, vulnerary, anti-inflammatory, anti-depressant, anti-viral, astringent
Used for: mild depression associated with lack of sun, sciatica and other nerve pain, cold sores, liver function
Plant preparations: oil, tincture, tea



Valerian
Botanical name: *Valeriana officinalis*
Family: Valerianaceae (Valerian)
Parts used: root
Properties: warm/dry, anti-spasmodic, nerve
Used for: insomnia, muscle spasms, uterine cramps, nervousness
Plant preparations: decoction, tincture



Wild Rose
Botanical name: *Rosa spp.*
Family: Rosaceae (Rose)
Parts used: petals, inner bark, leaves, fruit
Properties: cool/dry, astringent, anodyne, nerve, aphrodisiac, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, mood elevator
Used for: bladder infections, muscle pain, colds, flu, grief, anxiety, sunburn, burns, rashes, cardiac weakness, depression
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, honey, syrup, vinegar, food, oil, salve

Yarrow
Botanical name: *Achillea millefolium*
Family: Asteraceae (Aster)
Parts used: flowers, leaves, roots
Properties: warm/dry, anti-bacterial, styptic, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, astringent, anti-microbial, bitter, anti-inflammatory, anodyne
Used for: wounds, fevers, colds, flu, insect repellent, stopping bleeding, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, cystitis
Plant preparations: tea, tincture, externally as a wash, poultice suppository or powder

Companion eBook available at HerbMentor.com.
 It includes more information about these plants, ideas on how to use them, recipes, and a key to the herbal properties.
 Chart compiled by Rosalee de la Forêt, and edited by Kiva Rose. Artwork from *Wildcraft! An Herbal Adventure Game*, available at LearningHerbs.com.
Order organic herbs and remedies at MountainRoseHerbs.com.

