

How to make an herb infused oil?

by Dana L Woodruff~ Community herbalist, [Dandelioness Herbals](#), ©2010

The process of making your own herb infused oil is similar to making tea, but instead of extracting the herb's medicine into water, you're using oil. Whether you're making a medicinal oil to heal wounds, a massage oil to soothe sore muscles, or an oil to anoint yourself with after bathing, the process is all the same.

Making herb infused oils from fresh plants:

- Find the herb in a place that feels good, away from busy roads and pesticide-sprayed lawns. Harvest only what you need and give thanks to the plants, however you wish. You can let the herbs wilt in a basket for a few hours or overnight first, so that some of its moisture can evaporate and it will be less likely to grow bacteria in your oil.
- Place the fresh herbs in a dry, clean glass jar.
- Cover your herbs with oil and use a clean knife or chopstick to release all the little air bubbles and to completely surround the herb with the oil.
- Screw on the lid and place the jar in a warm space under 100° F and let infuse for an entire moon cycle (if not possible, then for at least 2 weeks). In the summer, you can keep your oil in a sunny windowsill or out in the sunshine. In the winter, you can keep your oil near the stove or heating vents. The warmth and time draws certain properties from the herb, infusing your oil with medicine. You may want to put a rag underneath the jar, as some of the oil may seep out and make a mess.
- Keep an eye on the oil. If at any point moisture appears on the exposed edges of the jar, wipe it out with a piece of cloth or paper towel. Mold may begin to grow if there is too much moisture, either from the fresh plant or if your container was not fully dry. Even if mold appears, don't throw it out! Just spoon off the mold and keep an eye on the oil.
- Strain the oil through a metal strainer or cloth (muslin works great).
- Compost the herb and bottle the oil in a widemouth jar. Water and gunk may settle on the bottom of the jar after a day or two. If this happens, siphon or pour the good oil on the top into another dry, clean jar. You may have to do this a couple of times, but it's important. If you leave the gunk, the oil will go bad.
- Label your oil, including the name of the herb, the date, and any other details you wish to add (moon phase, where you harvested the herb, your purpose/intention for the oil), and store in a cool, dark place. It should keep for many months, up to a year. You can add vitamin E or essential oils such as lavender or rosemary to lengthen the oil's shelf life – this is a good idea if you're giving oil as a gift and the person may not use it right away.

Making herb infused oils from dry plants:

- Choose the dry herb you'd like to use. You can use herbs that you dried yourself, or buy them at a co-op, natural food store, or by mail order. When buying herbs, crush the herb between your fingers and smell it, and notice the color and appearance. Every herb is different, but in general, it should maintain its scent and have some of its color left. If you are unsure whether it still possesses its vital energy, move on and find another herb that clearly does.
- Place the dried herbs in a dry, clean glass jar. As dried herbs are more concentrated, you only need to use about ½ the amount that you'd use fresh. Fill the jar halfway.
- Follow the instructions above. As long as you make sure your jar is dry, you should have no trouble with mold growing.

The double boiler method:

- If you don't have the time to let the oil draw out the herb's medicine slowly, you can use this method:
- Place the herbs and oil together in a double boiler. If you don't have a double boiler, you can rig one up by resting a metal bowl over a pot of water.
- Slowly warm the herbs at the lowest temperature for at least 30-60 minutes. Check often to make sure that the oil is not too hot. You don't want to cook your herbs in the oil, just warm them. The longer you're able to warm the oil at a low temperature, the stronger medicine your oil will be.
- Let the oil cool and then strain it through a cloth and label, as described above.

Choosing your oil:

For medicinal oils, the most commonly used oil is Olive oil. Extra virgin cold pressed is best. Olive oil lasts longer and is less expensive than most other oils. Grapeseed oil is also commonly used and is more lightweight than olive oil. Sesame oil is commonly used in Ayurvedic medicine, for its warming and medicinal properties, both on the hair and skin. Jojoba oil is the closest to our body's own natural oil. Almond oil is good for dry, mature, and sensitive skin.

Some possibilities for infused oils:

- **Wound-Healing Oil** with herbs such as Calendula blossoms, Yarrow leaf and flower, St. Johnswort blossom, and Plantain leaf.
- **Sore Muscle Soothing Oil** with St. Johnswort and Ginger oils, and a touch of Cayenne to increase circulation.
- **Breast Massage Oil** with Calendula, Dandelion blossom, Evergreen needles, Plantain leaf, and Red clover blossom.
- **Energetic Protection Anointing Oil** with Yarrow leaf and flower or St. Johnswort blossom.
- **Dreamtime Oil** with Mugwort, Lavender, and Chamomile.