

How to make a Medicinal Tea?

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

Infusions or Tisanes extract medicinal properties from the leaf, flower, certain seeds, and a few roots that are high in volatile oils (such as valerian). Fresh herbs can be chopped, torn, or bruised. Dried herbs can be broken up or rubbed between your palms. This helps to break down the plants' cell walls to release more of their medicinal properties, including the oils that give herbs their scent and taste. Place the herb(s) into a vessel such as a cup, teapot, or mason jar, then fill with hot water. Cover the container so the tea's medicinal qualities don't escape with the steam.

Decoctions extract medicinal properties from the roots, bark, medicinal mushrooms, and hardy seeds. We have to work a bit harder to get to the medicines of these plant parts, by boiling and chopping/grating/grinding, too, if possible. Chop or grate fresh parts (if whole, break up or grind dried parts) into a glass, enamel, or stainless steel pot, and cover with cool water. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the flame and simmer for 20-45 minutes, covered. If possible, let the herb soak a few hours or overnight, before decocting the herb in order to extract the most properties possible.

Solar infusions draw out the medicinal/energetic properties of herbs with the sun. Pour fresh water over your herbs and set out in the sun for a few hours, with or without a lid.

Lunar infusions draw out the medicinal/energetic properties of herbs with the moon. Place herbs into a glass bowl or jar of fresh water and set out in the moonlight, uncovered.

Containers When making an infusion or decoction, choose containers (mugs, kettles, teapots, French presses) made of glass, stainless steel, or enamel. Other materials (aluminum, plastic) may react with the herbs or leach harmful chemicals into your brew.

Steeping time and temperature Herbal infusions can be steeped for any length of time, from just a few minutes to all night long. Some herbs, such as chamomile, become bitter if left to steep more than a few minutes. Other herbs such as nettles and oats become more mineral-rich (and better-tasting, I believe), the longer they steep. I prefer to steep my nutritive herbs such as oats and nettles overnight in room-temperature or hot water. It's a nice bedtime ritual to prepare the next day's blend and let it infuse as you sleep. When you wake, it's ready for you to just warm and drink.

Intention At any point in your tea-making process you can take time to breathe, unwind, and focus on the changes you'd like to welcome into your life. As the photos in [The Hidden Messages in Water](#) show, water physically responds to energy. The waters that we take into our bodies, swim and bathe in, can carry negative messages that we've received and replay inside ourselves, or we can infuse our teas, baths, and self with new messages of gratitude, love, and growth.

Dosage *Since the water has been evaporated out of dried herbs, their medicinal properties are more concentrated than fresh herbs and less is needed. These measurements are only a guide. There are herbs that you may want to use by the handful or pinch. If in doubt, just look them up in a good herb book!*

Dried herbs : 1 tablespoon per cup or 4-6 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ +cup) per quart

Fresh herbs : 2 tablespoons per cup or 8-12 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per quart

Chronic conditions (i.e. muscle tension): 3-4 cups daily, one cup at a time, for several weeks

Acute conditions (i.e. headache, fever): $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup throughout the day, up to 3-4 cups