

Herbal Tea Making and Brewing Instructions

Most westerners have little training on how to make a healing cup or pot of tea. Herbal teas provide the most all around medicinal properties that can be lost or evaporated if proper attention is not used during preparation. Tea can be used when ever flushing, calming, or neutralizing is required, and is especially good for adding to baths to break fevers, cause a detoxifying sweat, absorb healing properties through the skin, or just to relax.

In times of illness herbal tea baths can be both healing and restoring. The skin, our largest organ, can absorb the medicinal properties of herbs in a bath in about 20 minutes as well as 2 cups of fluids. Knowing what herbs to use in the tub can bring relief to the care giver as well as to those that are ill.

Whenever possible use freshly picked and dried herbs, do NOT use tea bags for making tea as they are commonly infested with many harmful molds that are infused into the tea water, and bleached tea bags infuse tea water with chlorine and other chemicals used in making the bag.

Drinking Tea or Adding Herbal Teas to the bath water:

- Thyme tea will break a fever
- Chamomile tea will cause a sweat, especially if drunk while in a bath of chamomile tea
- Sage tea will purify blood fluids, especially if drunk during the bath
- Golden Rod tea will purify the lymphatic fluids, and can be absorbed through the skin
- Peppermint opens constricted ducts and will stimulates appetite
- Ginger will stimulate circulation
- Arnica will soothe bruises and contusions, best used in a bath
- Juniper berry will neutralize uric acids in skin tissues and joints, internally and topically

The two types of herbal teas that require different methods of extracting their properties during the brewing process are known as infusion and decoction. Infusion herbs are never boiled as their properties are released with just the application of heated water. Infusion herbs are the tender leaves, flowers, soft stems, and berries, and only need be added to boiled water, or boiled water can be poured over them. In either case, once the recently boiled water and the herbs make contact, the container needs to be covered instantly as the first and most potent healing property of the herb, called essential oil, is released and quickly dissipates in the steam. The essential oils of these herbs are the most volatile, meaning they are given off the fastest, and can be seen floating on the top of the tea water if the tea is made properly.

A decoction tea is made with barks, roots, pods, and reeds and needs to be boiled from 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the thickness or hardness of the herbal fiber. The essential oils of these herbs are not released until they have been heated and well soaked.

Infusion (leaves, flowers, stems, and berries)

Bring water to a boil then remove from heat. Add ½ -1 teaspoon dried herb per every 1 cup of water boiled. Cover with air tight lid and steep for 15-30 minutes. (The longer herb steeps in water, the stronger it will be.) Strain tea through cheese cloth or strainer into cup and drink straight or sweetened with raw honey or grade B maple syrup. Any herbal teas may be combined.

Decoction (bark, root, reed, grass)

Bring water to a boil in covered sauce pan. Add ½ teaspoon dried herb per every 1 cup of boiling water. Replace cover and reduce heat to simmer. Continue boiling for 15-30 minutes and then steep for 15-30 minutes. (The longer herb steeps in water, the stronger it will be.) Strain tea through cheese cloth or strainer into cup and drink straight or sweetened with raw honey or grade B maple syrup. Any herbal teas may be combined.