

Medicinal Uses of Culinary Herbs

Tea- 1 tsp of dried herb per cup of water or 2 tsp of fresh herb to a cup of water & one for the pot.

Cover the cup while it steeps to keep volatile oils from rising with the steam.

Steeping time- 5-10 minutes for herb leaves

Green tea or white tea- 1-2 minutes tops or cold infusion

Tea from roots, branches, barks & the harder parts of herbs, is called a decoction - simmer 20 minutes

You can drink teas or you can soak your feet in them, depending on how you want to use them.

Tinctures- stronger than tea- shelf life- 10 years. Infused oils, Salves, lotions or poultices for topical use.

Test for sensitivity, do your homework before taking an herb and consult your doctor or pharmacist, especially, if you are on medications or are pregnant.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) add to bath water for sore muscles, for improving memory, antioxidants, stimulates poor circulation, for headaches, as a digestive herb it stimulates flow of bile.

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*) Grow it in a pot, needs more water. Mints are one of the oldest & most reliable herbal remedies. For digestion, helps with gas, nausea, heartburn, bronchitis, colds & flu. Peppermint is also a helpful herbal catalyst, so drinking a cup of peppermint tea before taking other herbs opens the circulation & potentiates their action.

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) for bronchial problems, gastrointestinal ailments, laryngitis, lack of appetite, anti-parasitic, & skin inflammations. It can also be used as a mouthwash, skin cleanser, anti-fungal like for athlete's feet & as an antiseptic.

Garlic Chives (*Allium tuberosum*) aids digestion & helps promote the flow of blood; for intestinal parasites, to enhance immune system & for anemia. In Chinese herbal medicine- treat fatigue, help control excessive bleeding & as an antidote for ingested poisons. The leaves & bulbs have been applied to insect bites. The medicinal properties are similar to garlic, but weaker.

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is a member of the mint family- for digestive & anti-gas, stomach cramps, nausea, constipation, headaches & anxiety. For info on Holy Basil: <http://hinduism.about.com/od/ayurveda/a/tulsibenefits.htm>

Curry Plant (*Helichrysum italicum*)- It is not the plant that is used to make curry seasoning, but it smells like it. Used more for potpourri & the fragrance. Helichrysum oil is used for bruises & varicose veins. (Arnica- bruises)

Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) chlorophyll - natural breath sweetener. Used for kidney stones, bladder infections, jaundice & digestive issues. Cleansing for the liver. A cloth can be soaked in the tea & put across the eyes for 10 minutes to reduce fatigue & swelling of the eyes.

Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) - anti-septic, stomach & respiratory ailments, sore throats. Breaks up congestion, kills microbes stimulates the appetite & detoxifies the food.

Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*) runny nose & colds in infants & toddlers, dry & irritating coughs swollen nose & throat & ear pain; for various digestion problems: poor appetite, liver disease, gallstones, intestinal gas & stomach cramps. It has also been used to relieve menopause symptoms, for mood swings, & to promote the flow of breast milk. Other uses include diabetes, sleep problems, muscle spasms, headaches, sprains, bruises & back pain. It is also used as a nerve tonic & a heart tonic to promote better circulation.

Common Sage (*Salvia officinalis*) Used as a stimulant, tonic & carminative. Mouthwash for mouth ulcers or bleeding gums & as a gargle for inflamed sore throats & tonsils. Cooling for fevers & cleanses & purifies the blood. Drinking tea & rinsing the hair with the tea to restore hair color. It has also been used for liver complaints, kidney issues, joint pain, palsy, removing mucus from the respiratory system, head colds & nervous headaches.

Lavender (*Lavandula spp*) antiseptic, wounds heal faster, helps reduce scarring- skin ailments, anti-inflammatory & antiviral. Scent of lavender calms the mind & promotes healthy sleep & relaxing when added to a bath. Some studies suggest it may be beneficial for hair loss. The plant can act as a fly & tick repellent. Lavender is one of the few essential oils that can be put directly on the skin & doesn't need to be diluted. Most essential oils should be diluted 1::4 before applying to the skin or they can cause irritation.

Aloe (*Aloe barbadensis*; *A. vera*) Soothing gel is great for burns, cuts & wounds. Use the gel under bandaid for blisters or burns. Internally it is used as a laxative. I don't recommend internal consumption from your plants, you are better off buying commercial preparations intended for internal consumption. It is a little tricky to do yourself & your body can become dependent on it, so I wouldn't go there.

Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)- expectorant, antispasmodic, a bitter, a diuretic & a slight emmenagogue. The flowering tops are used to prepare tea or cough syrup. It is very bitter, so making a syrup or candy from it was preferable. Horehound candy was once very popular as cough drops. Should be avoided during pregnancy.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) astringent, hemostatic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antiviral properties as well as other properties. It is a great first aid plant, stops bleeding.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)- Traditional cold & flu remedy, mild nervine, so it will help with rest & sleep, & it produces perspiration without increasing fever. It also helps with stomach upsets. It is used in many children's remedies for colic, anxiety, nervousness & diarrhea. Make a fresh tea. It should never be boiled & cover to contain the volatile oils.

Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pupurea*)- Historically- scarlet fever, syphilis, malaria, blood poisoning, & diphtheria. Today, people use echinacea to shorten the duration of the common cold & flu & reduce symptoms, such as sore throat, cough, & fever; help the body fight infections, enhances the activity of the immune system, relieve pain, reduce inflammation, & has hormonal, antiviral, & antioxidant effects. Always do your homework & check with your doctor or pharmacist first before using herbs especially if you are on medications. People with asthma or allergies to the daisy family should not use echinacea.

Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) leaves for lung congestion, asthma, bronchitis & sore throat, flowers are commonly infused with oil & combined with garlic & St. John's Wort oil for ear infections. Root of the first year plant is used for back pain & strengthening the spine.

Passionvine (*Passiflora incarnata*) leaves & flowers are used for anxiety, mild pain relief, insomnia, & may help reduce blood pressure.

Comfrey (*Symphytum officianale*) broken bones, ligaments, sprains, & skin Never use on an open wound, also known as knitbone, anti-inflammatory & soothing to a dry inflamed digestive tract, helps stop hemorrhaging & is used as an expectorant for dry irritable coughs. You should not use if pregnant, on children or people with liver disease. Do not use topically for no more than 10 days.

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) flowers emollient, anti-inflammatory & beneficial for skin ailments & healing the digestive tract.

This information is based on traditional uses of herbs, no claims are made. Nothing in this handout is meant to diagnose, treat, or cure any disease. This information should never take the place of a Licensed Physician. This is for educational purposes only.