

How to Make Nourishing Herbal Infusion

by Susun Weed, Wise Woman Herbalist

Lesson One

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Many people are familiar with the benefits of herbal teas. You can make your herbal preparations even more potent by incorporating the healing qualities of nourishing infusions. A tea is a small amount of fresh or dried herb brewed for a short time. An infusion is a large amount of (not fresh) herb brewed for a long time. An infusion extracts more nutrients than a tincture and more medicinal qualities than a tea. Most infusions are short-lived; they stay good for only two or three days.

Prepare infusions in pint/half-liter and quart/liter jars with tight lids. A teapot is not as good, but acceptable.

Usual dose of infusion is 1-2 cups (250-500 ml) a day, taken hot, chilled, or at room temperature. Infusions may be seasoned with sweeteners, tamari, milk, or any other additions that please your taste. Infusions can also be used as soup stocks, bath waters, hair rinses, and facial washes.

Summary of Infusion Data

<u>Plant Part</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Jar/Water</u>	<u>Infusion</u>
Roots/barks	1 oz/30 g.	pint/500 ml	8 hours
Leaves	1 oz/30 g.	quart/liter	4 hours
Flowers	1 oz/30 g.	quart/liter	2 hours
Seeds/berries	1 oz/30 g.	pint/500 ml	30 min.

An infusion is a large amount of herb brewed for a long time. Typically, one ounce by weight (about a cup by volume) of dried herb is placed in a quart jar which is then filled to the top with boiling water, tightly lidded and allowed to steep for 4-10 hours. After straining, a cup or more is consumed, and the remainder chilled to slow spoilage. Drinking 2-4 cups a day is usual. Since the minerals and other phytochemicals in nourishing herbs are made more accessible by drying, dried herbs are considered best for infusions.

I make my infusions at night before I go to bed and they are ready in the morning. I put my herb in my jar and my water in the pot, and the pot on the fire, then brush my teeth (or sweep the floor) until the kettle whistles. I pour the boiling water up to the rim of the jar, screw on a tight lid, turn off the stove and the light, and go to bed.

In the morning, I strain the plant material out, squeezing it well, and drink the liquid. I prefer it iced, unless the morning is frosty. I drink the quart of infusion within 36 hours or until it spoils. Then I use it to water my house plants, or pour it over my hair after washing as a final rinse which can be left on.



My favorite herbs for infusion are nettle, oatstraw, red clover, and comfrey leaf, but only one at a time. The tannins in red clover and comfrey make me pucker my lips, so I add a little mint, or bergamot, when I infuse them, just enough to flavor the brew slightly. A little salt in your infusion may make it taste better than honey will.

Here are some links to other articles I have written that you will want to read:

[Nutrition the Wise Woman Way](#) - Many herbs are exceptional sources of minerals...

[My Anti-Cancer Lifestyle](#) - An anti-cancer lifestyle is not a rigid set of rules to follow...

[Boost Your Energy Naturally](#) - Wise Woman ways to beat fatigue and restore vitality to your life.

[Building Better Bones](#) - Forget Osteoporosis, get flexible and nourish your bones naturally!

Green Blessings, Susun Weed



RASPBERRY LEAVES (Rubus spp.)

by Susun Weed

Brewed as a tea or as an infusion, raspberry is the best known, most widely used, and safest of all uterine and pregnancy tonic herbs. It contains fragrine, an alkaloid which gives tone to the muscles of the pelvic region, including the uterus itself.

Most of the benefits ascribed to regular use of Raspberry tea through pregnancy are traced to the nourishing source of vitamins and minerals found in this plant and to the strengthening power of fragrine - an alkaloid which gives tone to the muscles of the pelvic region, including the uterus itself. Of special note are the rich concentration of vitamin C, the presence of vitamin E and the easily assimilated calcium and iron. Raspberry leaves also contain

vitamins A and B complex and many minerals, including phosphorous and potassium.

The benefits of drinking a raspberry leaf brew include:

- ❖ Increasing fertility in both men and women. Raspberry leaf is an excellent fertility herb when combined with Red Clover.
- ❖ Preventing miscarriage and hemorrhage. Raspberry leaf tones the uterus and helps prevent miscarriage and postpartum hemorrhage from a relaxed or atonic uterus.
- ❖ Easing of morning sickness. Many attest to raspberry leaves' gentle relief of nausea and stomach distress throughout pregnancy.
- ❖ Reducing pain during labor and after birth. By toning the muscles used during labor and delivery, Raspberry leaf eliminates many of the reasons for a painful delivery and prolonged recovery. It does not, however, counter the pain of pelvic dilation.
- ❖ Assisting in the production of plentiful breast milk. The high mineral content of Raspberry leaf assist in milk production, but its astringency may counter that for some women.
- ❖ Providing a safe and speedy pariuntion. Raspberry leaf works to encourage the uterus to let go and function without tension. It does not strengthen contractions, but does allow the

contracting uterus to work more effectively and so may make the birth easier and faster.

NETTLE LEAVES (Urtica Dioica)

by Susun Weed

Urtica is one of the finest nourishing tonics known. It is reputed to have more chlorophyll than any other herb. The list of vitamins and minerals in this herb includes nearly every one known to necessary for human health and growth.

Vitamins A, C, D and K, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, iron and sulphur are particularly abundant in nettles. The infusion is a dark green color approaching black. The taste is deep and rich. If you are blessed with a nettle patch near you, use the fresh plant as a pot herb in the spring.



The benefits of drinking nettle infusion include:

- Aiding the kidneys. Nettle infusions were instrumental in rebuilding the kidneys of a woman who was told she would have to be put on a dialysis machine. Since the kidneys must cleanse 150 percent of the normal blood supply for most of the pregnancy, nettle's ability to nourish and strengthen them is of major importance. Any accumulation of minerals in the kidneys, such as gravel or stones, is gently loosened, dissolved and eliminated by the consistent use of nettle infusions.
- Increasing fertility in women and men. Nourishing mother and fetus. Increasing the richness and amount of breast milk.
- Easing leg cramps and other spasms.
- Diminishing pain during and after birth. The high calcium content, which is readily assimilated, helps diminish muscle pains in the uterus, in the legs and elsewhere.
- Preventing hemorrhage. Nettle is a superb source of vitamin K, and increases available hemoglobin, both of which decrease the likelihood of hemorrhage. Fresh Nettle Juice, in teaspoon doses, slows bleeding.
- Reducing hemorrhoids. Nettle's mild astringency and general nourishing action tightens and strengthens blood vessels, helps maintain arterial elasticity and improves venous resilience.

Questions -- And Answers -- About Nourishing Herbal Infusions

by Susun S Weed c. 2010

Can I use fresh herbs instead of dried herbs when making my nourishing herbal infusion?

No. The herbs I use for my nourishing herbal infusions -- such as nettle, oatstraw, red clover, comfrey leaf, linden flowers, chickweed, or mullein leaves -- contain little or no volatiles to be lost in drying. Rather, drying liberates their minerals and other nourishing constituents.

Can I brew my infusion as "sun tea"?

No. It is important to pour boiling water over the dried herb to help liberate the minerals.

How can I make nourishing herbal infusion for lots of people?

When we make nourishing herbal infusion for 30 at the Wise Woman Center, we begin by boiling 4 gallons of water in our biggest pot. Then we add one pound of herb (16 ounces in one pound, and 16 quarts in 4 gallons), stirring well until the water boils again. We cover the pot well with a tight-fitting lid, turn off the fire, and allow to steep right there overnight.

Can I make enough infusion to last for a whole week?

No. It is best to make infusion fresh each day. Once made, nourishing herbal infusions spoil rapidly. Refrigeration lengthens the time the infusion is good to drink. Depending on many factors, including the herb used and the indoor temperature during the brewing, refrigerated infusion is usually good for at least 24 hours, sometimes as much as 72 hours.



How can you tell if your infusion has spoiled?

If a nourishing herbal infusion tastes funny, smells odd, and/or has bubbles in it, it is no longer fit to drink.

What can you do with spoiled infusion?

All is not lost; spoiled infusion makes a perfectly good hair rinse and a superb plant food.

Are infusions safe for children?

Not only are nourishing herbal infusions safe for children, children love nourishing herbal infusions. Children who drink nourishing herbal infusions instead of fruit juice are frequently healthier and more robust.

What's wrong with fruit juice?

Fruit juices are really quite sweet: drinking them daily can promote tooth decay and obesity. They are expensive, and actually contain little nutrients in proportion to calories. Nourishing herbal infusions, even if sweetened with honey, have a much more favorable nutrient density to calorie ratio. (Caution: Do not give honey to infants under one year of age).

Can I drink too much nourishing herbal infusion? Or eat too much seaweed?

Your may be astonished by your desires for nourishing herbs once you begin to use them

regularly. This is quite common. When you have absorbed all the minerals you need, your cravings will naturally disappear. So, no, it is not really possible to drink too much nourishing herbal infusion or eat too much seaweed.

Is it true that you don't take supplements?

It is. I haven't taken supplements for more than 25 years. I do eat a healthy whole foods diet, drink nourishing herbal infusions daily, consume lots of yogurt, and take time for my weekly (for 35 years) yoga, and twice-a-week (for 5 years) tai chi classes.

How much infusion do you drink?

I drink 2-4 cups of nourishing herbal infusion a day, plus I use several tablespoons of mineral-rich herbal vinegars on my wild salad daily, and plenty of garlic, onions, mushrooms, seaweed.

How do you like to take your herbal infusion?

I prefer to drink my nourishing herbal infusion iced. Although I may prefer my comfrey infusion hot and with honey if the wind is howling and the snow blowing outside. Some salt or miso or umeboshi vinegar in nettle infusion is another interesting variation I enjoy.

Green Blessings! Susun Weed



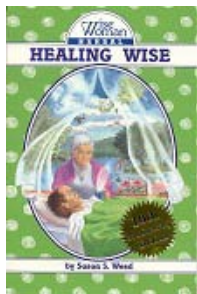
Susun Weed's books include:



Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year

Author: Susun S. Weed. Simple, safe remedies for pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and newborns. Includes herbs for fertility and birth control. Foreword by Jeannine Parvati Baker. 196 pages, index, illustrations.

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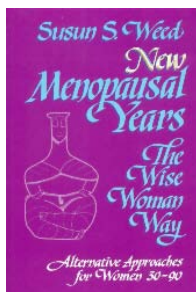


Healing Wise

Author: Susun S. Weed. Superb herbal in the feminine-intuitive mode. Complete instructions for using common plants for food, beauty, medicine, and longevity. Introduction by Jean Houston. 312 pages, index, illustrations.

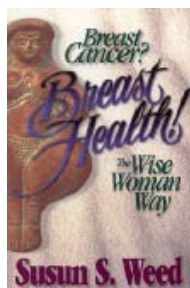
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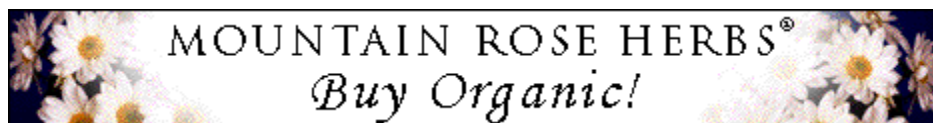
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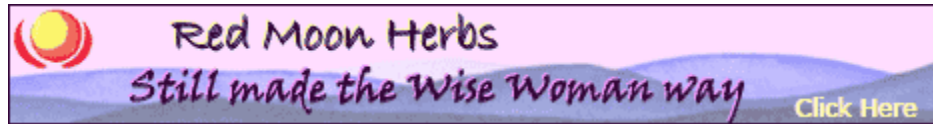


<http://www.catskillmountainherbals.com> Handcrafted highest quality wildcrafted and organic herbal extracts, vinegars and oils, all created as a labor of love. Catskill Mountain Herbals Olivebridge, NY

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Susun Weed, author of the Wise Woman Herbal series, is an extraordinary teacher with a joyous spirit, a powerful presence, and an extensive knowledge of herbs and health. Ms. Weed is the voice of the Wise Woman Tradition, empowering women worldwide to reclaim their health and wellbeing through knowledge, simply and safely. Visit: www.herbshealing.com

wisewomanuniversity.org

The Wise Woman University (WU) is a sacred online learning environment for the reweaving of the healing cloak of the Ancients. WU offers women a secure online space for personal empowerment: emotionally, psychically, and physically.

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