

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO

Traditional medicinal plants of Provence



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INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm your holistic practitioner Amandine Eymard.

I'm a passionate advocate for simple living and coming back to a natural way of living. I believe there's something deeply meaningful about returning to the basics and choosing non-toxic products, nourishing my body with whole foods, and embracing natural ingredients in everything from the meals I cook to the cleaning supplies and candles I use...

Growing up, I watched my grandmother rely on the power of plants for so many aspects of everyday life. I was fascinated by her knowledge and the simplicity of her approach, and those memories have stayed with me ever since. They continue to inspire my journey toward a slower, more intentional, and nature-centered way of living.



I truly believe that health sovereignty begins with knowledge. When we understand how to nourish and care for ourselves using the gifts of nature, we become more empowered and connected to our own well-being. By bringing this timeless knowledge back into our daily lives, we can create healthier homes, stronger bodies, and a deeper connection to the natural world.

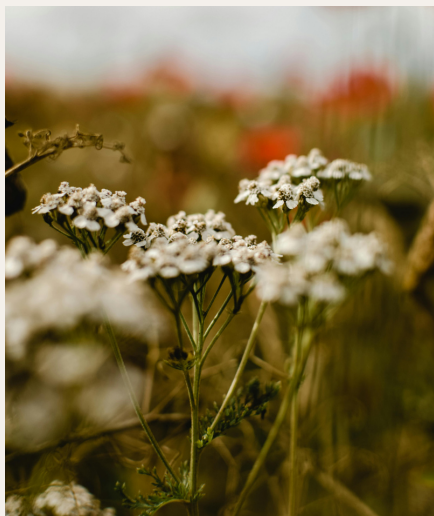
- *Amandine Eymard*

CHAPTER I

History of herbalism

Archaeologists found proof that paleolithic humans ate plants both raw and cooked. They also used plants that were not mainly for food, such as willow (Saule), St. John's wort (Millepertuis), yarrow (Achillée Millefeuille), chamomile (Chamomille), and bupleurum (Buplèvre).

This is easy to understand when we think about their daily life. Paleolithic humans depended completely on nature to survive. They had to pay close attention to the world around them. Over time, people learned that some plants could help with pain, sickness, or other health problems. They shared this knowledge with others in their group.



CHAPTER I

History of herbalism

What are the first written records of herbalism ?

When we study the history of herbal medicine, we should remember that written texts do not contain all human knowledge. Many traditions were passed down by speaking and teaching. Still, written records help us understand part of this history.

The oldest written information about medicinal plants comes from the Sumerians in ancient Mesopotamia more than 5,000 years ago. They wrote on clay tablets and described different herbal treatments using more than 250 plants.

Around 1500 BCE, the Ancient Egyptians created the Ebers Papyrus, an important medical text that listed more than 850 herbal remedies. It was not the first Egyptian text about medicine and herbs, but it is one of the best preserved. The document contains many recipes and treatments using plants that are still known today, such as cumin, coriander, garlic, willow, frankincense, cedar, aloe, and henna (Abou El-Soud, 2010).

Another very old herbal tradition is Ayurveda, a traditional system of medicine from India and nearby regions. Ayurveda was first passed down by speaking and teaching, and this oral tradition is believed to be more than 5,000 years old.

Around 400 BCE, important Ayurvedic books began to be written. One of the most famous texts, the Charaka Samhita, describes more than 300 herbs. Many of these herbs are still used in Ayurvedic medicine today. Some, such as ashwagandha, shatavari, bacopa, turmeric (Curcuma), and tulsi (Basilic sacré), are also popular in Western herbal medicine.

In China, the emperor Chi'en Nung is traditionally linked to one of the oldest Chinese herbal books, the Pen Ts'ao Ching. This text describes more than 365 herbs. Some of the herbal knowledge in the book may come from traditions that started as early as 2700 BCE and were shared orally for many generations. The version of the Pen Ts'ao Ching that we know today was organized by Tao Hongjing and published around 500 CE. Many herbs from this book are still important in Chinese medicine and are also used by Western herbalists. Well-known examples include astragalus (Astragale), licorice (Régliasse), reishi, ginger (Gingembre), schisandra (Schisandre – Baie 5 saveurs), and dong quai (Angélique de Chine).

CHAPTER 2

The roots of herbalism in the world

Western Herbal Tradition

When people speak about the beginnings of modern medicine and Western herbal healing, the name Hippocrates is often mentioned. He lived in ancient Greece around 400 BCE and is remembered as one of the first physicians to explain illness in a new way. At that time, many people believed sickness came from angry gods or spiritual punishment. Hippocrates believed something different. He taught that illness begins in the body itself and should be understood through observation and care. His ideas were unusual for his time, and many people disagreed with him.

According to tradition, he was even imprisoned because of his beliefs. During this difficult period, he continued writing and studying the human body, leaving behind ideas that still influence medicine today.



But Hippocrates did not create these ideas alone or from nothing. Like many Greek healers, he learned from older traditions that came before him. The wisdom of Egyptian, Indian, and Chinese healing practices quietly flowed into Greek medicine, carrying knowledge across deserts, mountains, and seas.

Today, people sometimes speak about the history of medicine as if it only began in Europe. Yet the story is much larger and more beautiful than that. Western herbalism, like a river, was fed by many streams from different cultures around the world. Ancient healers from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Indigenous communities all helped shape the traditions that later grew in Europe and North America.



CHAPTER 3

The Growth of Herbal Knowledge in Medieval Europe

One of the oldest universities in Europe was built in Salerno, a city in southern Italy. During the 10th century, the School of Salerno became an important place for the study of medicine in medieval Europe. Students and healers traveled there to learn about the human body, illness, and the healing power of plants.

A major reason for this growth of knowledge was the translation of medical texts from the Islamic world. Important books written in Arabic were carefully translated into Latin and French, allowing new ideas and herbal wisdom to spread across Europe. Through these translations, ancient knowledge continued its journey from one culture to another, like a light passed gently from hand to hand.

At the same time, monasteries also played a special role in healing traditions. Monks and nuns often cared for sick people and grew medicinal herbs in quiet garden spaces surrounded by stone walls and silence. These gardens became places of learning, patience, and healing. Monasteries also helped protect medical knowledge by copying herbal books and medical writings by hand.



Between the 15th and 17th centuries, an important change transformed the world of herbal medicine: the spread of printing. Before this time, books were rare and copied slowly by hand. But with the invention of the printing press, herbal texts could suddenly reach many more people. Ancient medical writings from Greek and Latin were translated into everyday languages such as English, French, Dutch, and Italian. For the first time, ordinary people could read about herbs and healing without needing years of formal education. Herbal knowledge slowly moved out of the hands of only wealthy physicians and into the homes of common families, healers, and apothecaries.

One of the first herbal books printed in English was called the Grete Herball, published in 1526. It opened the door for more people to discover the names, uses, and stories of medicinal plants.

CHAPTER 4

Herbalism in Early America

Among the most beloved herbalists of this period was Nicholas Culpeper (1616–1654). He was an English botanist, physician, apothecary, and astrologer who dedicated his life to studying plants and helping the sick. Culpeper spent long hours walking through fields and forests, carefully observing and collecting medicinal herbs. He believed deeply that healing knowledge should belong to everyone, not only to rich or powerful people. He offered free treatments to those who could not pay and used mostly herbal remedies to care for them. He also translated medical texts into English and sold his books at very low prices so ordinary people could learn about medicine for themselves.

This idea was considered dangerous by some powerful medical authorities of the time. The College of Physicians wanted to keep medical knowledge limited to a small educated group and strongly opposed English translations of medical texts. Because of his beliefs and his work, Culpeper was accused of witchcraft more than once and almost lost the right to practice medicine.



The writings of Nicholas Culpeper quickly traveled across the ocean to the American colonies. His famous book, *The English Physician*, was printed in Boston in 1708. This made it the first medical book and the first herbal medicine text ever printed in America.

Over time, different healing traditions blended together. European herbal practices mixed with Indigenous plant wisdom, the healing knowledge carried by enslaved Africans, and the traditions of midwives and local herbal healers. Together, these influences slowly created a unique American herbal tradition. But this history also carries pain and injustice. Much of this exchange happened during colonization and slavery, where there was a great imbalance of power. In many cases, important knowledge was taken without permission or proper recognition. Some physicians and botanists became famous for “discoveries” that were originally learned from Indigenous peoples or other marginalized communities whose contributions were not acknowledged.

CHAPTER 4

Herbalism in Early America

By the 19th century, medicine in America had changed greatly. Many doctors began using strong and sometimes dangerous treatments, including bloodletting, purging, and toxic substances such as mercury and arsenic. These methods were often called “heroic medicine.”

Not everyone agreed with these harsh practices. Two groups of physicians, known as the Eclectics and the Physio-Medicalists, chose a different path. They focused more on botanical medicine, gentler treatments, and therapies that worked with the body rather than against it. Plants remained at the heart of their healing philosophy.

For many years, different medical traditions existed side by side, sometimes peacefully and sometimes in competition. But in the early 20th century, medicine became more controlled and standardized. In 1904, the American Medical Association (AMA) and its Council on Medical Education began creating strict rules for medical schools.

Many smaller schools could not meet these new standards and were forced to close or merge with larger universities. This especially affected schools that educated women and African American students (Wright-Mendoza, 2019). Between 1910 and 1935, more than half of the medical schools in America disappeared.



At the same time, alternative healing traditions such as homeopathy, naturopathy, chiropractic medicine, osteopathy, and Eclectic herbal medicine lost recognition and support. Schools teaching these methods often had to remove them from their programs in order to remain officially approved.

Even though herbal medicine became separate from modern conventional medicine, it never disappeared. People continued using herbs through folk medicine, family traditions, natural healing, and alternative therapies.

In the United States, interest in herbalism started growing again during the 1960s and 1970s. Since then, more and more people have become interested in natural remedies and plant-based healing.

Today, herbs are also becoming more accepted in modern healthcare through integrative and functional medicine. Some doctors, naturopaths, and osteopathic practitioners now include herbal remedies as part of their treatments.

DISCLAIMER

All the information provided in this ebook is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Natural remedies are not a substitute for professional medical care. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider before starting any new supplement or herbal remedy, especially if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, have a medical condition, or are taking prescription medications.

General Precautions When Preparing Natural Plant Remedies

Natural does not always mean safe. Medicinal plants contain active compounds that can affect the body, interact with medications, and cause side effects if used incorrectly. Always identify plants with certainty before harvesting or using them, as some edible or medicinal species have toxic look-alikes.

Use clean equipment and high-quality organic ingredients, and harvest plants from areas free of pesticides, pollution, and other contaminants. Follow trusted recipes and recommended preparation methods, as the strength of herbal remedies can vary depending on the plant species, growing conditions, and preparation.

When trying a remedy for the first time, start with a small amount to assess your individual tolerance. Discontinue use immediately if you experience any signs of an allergic reaction or unexpected side effects.

Extra caution is advised for children, older adults, pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, and people with chronic medical conditions, as they may be more sensitive to herbal preparations. Many herbs can interact with prescription medications, including blood thinners, diabetes medications, blood pressure medications, and sedatives. Please ask your doctor to be sure.

Essential oils require special care. They are highly concentrated and should always be diluted appropriately. Unless specifically recognized as safe for internal use under professional guidance, essential oils should not be ingested. Keep all herbal preparations and essential oils out of reach of children and pets.

Store remedies in clean, properly labeled containers away from heat, light, and moisture, and discard any preparation that develops an unusual smell, color, mold, or signs of spoilage.

Natural remedies are intended to support general well-being and are not a substitute for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. If symptoms are severe, persistent, or worsening, or if you suspect a serious medical condition, seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional before using herbal remedies.

CHAPTER 5

Making easy herbal remedies

Herbal teas

Infusion



we use the more delicate parts of the plants, like leaves, flowers, and aromatic parts. In order to keep their properties, it is better to steep them instead of simmered. To make an infusion, boil 1 quart of water per ounce of herb, or 1 cup of water for 1 tbs of herb.

Pour the water over the herbs and let steep for 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on each herb.

Each herb will require a different steep time, so make sure you read some literature about the plant you want to use. Also, you can adjust the steep time depending on your taste. The longer you let it steep, the stronger the brew.

Decoction or concoction



we use the more tenacious parts of the plant as properties will need extra time and heat to be extracted. For example, the roots, the bark, the seeds.

To make a decoction, place the herbs in a saucepan and cover with cold and filtered water. Heat slowly and simmer, covered, for 20 to 45 minutes, depending on each herb. Each herb will require a different simmer time, so make sure you read some literature about the plant you want to use. Also, you can adjust the steep time depending on your taste. The longer you let it steep, the stronger the brew.

Fun and alternatives ways to make herbal teas

Solar tea: place the herbs and the filtered water in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Set it directly in the hot sunlight for several hours.

Lunar tea: place the herbs and the filtered water in an open container and position it directly in the path of the moonlight. To avoid flies to fall in your container, you can put a cheese cloth on top.

CHAPTER 5

Making easy herbal remedies

Tinctures

Tinctures are concentrated extracts of herbs. They are very potent and are taken by the dropper. It can be diluted in warm water to take it easily. They are usually strong in taste too.

To extract the herb properties, we use a solvent. Most of the time it's alcohol, but it can also be apple cider vinegar or glycerin. Most of big companies making herbal remedies have now found other ways to extract the properties with mechanical means. However, in France, the tincture made with alcohol is still widely used.

80 to 100 proof alcohol such as vodka, brandy, gin or rum is required. An easy way to know the proof is to multiply by 2 the alcohol percentage mentioned on the bottle. (Example : vodka 45% means the alcohol proof is 90).



To make a tincture, place the finely chopped dried or fresh herbs (if fresh, make sure there is no remaining water on the plant) in a clean and dry glass container, if possible tinted glass like amber glass to avoid sunlight to alter the preparation.

Pour the solvent (alcohol here) to cover the herbs and add enough alcohol to have liquid 2 to 3 inches above the herbs. The herbs need to be COMPLETELY SUBMERSED. Cover with a tight-fitting lid.

Place the jar in a warm (not hot) location and let the herbs soak for 4 to 6 weeks, the longer the better. Shake the bottle daily during the maceration period. It helps the herb from packing down on the bottom of the jar. After the maceration period, strain the herbs, rebottle and label.

Store out of the reach of children, in a cool and dry location. Well made and well stored tinctures will keep almost indefinitely. Because of their potency, tinctures should be used wisely. Always refer to the dosage on the bottle or ask your physician. Also, it is not recommended to be taken by children and people suffering from liver disease as it contains alcohol.

CHAPTER 5

Making easy herbal remedies

Infused oils

Herbal oils are easy to make, and can be a base for salves and ointments. I love this technique to infuse plants into oil for massage oil or skin oil.

I suggest to work with organic olive oil or sunflower oil. In Europe, both can be bought organic and locally. However, please note that infused oils are not always easy to make, depending if you are using fresh or dried herbs and can develop mold and dangerous bacteria. The recipe here is for dried herbs.

To make an infused oil, use a double boiler. Place the herbs and the oil into a double boiler and simmer. Slowly heat the oil up to 60 degrees. Then transfer into a glass jar (oil + herbs), make sure the herbs are submerged in the oil. Put a lid on it and let it sit in a cool and dark place for 2 weeks. After the maceration period, strain the herbs, rebottle and label. Infused oil typically last well for 6 months.



Salves and ointments

Salves and ointment are very practical to use as they can be easily stored in glass or tin container.

The base is an infused oil, in which one you add beeswax to solidify. It will also adds a soothing and protective quality.

To make a salve, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of beeswax to 1 cup of infused oil. Heat gradually on a double boiler until the beeswax is completely melted. Remove from heat and pour into small glass jars or tins. Store in a cool and dark place. Stores properly, salves will last for months.

CHAPTER 5

Making easy herbal remedies

Notes on essential oils and hydrosols

Essential oils and hydrosols are both produced during the steam distillation of plants, but they are very different in strength and composition.

Essential oils are highly concentrated extracts containing the plant's volatile aromatic compounds. They are powerful, potent, and usually used in very small amounts for aromatherapy, massage blends, or therapeutic purposes.

Hydrosols, also called floral waters, are the gentle water-based part left after distillation. They contain small traces of essential oil and water-soluble plant compounds. Hydrosols are much milder and can often be used directly on the skin as facial mists, lotions, compresses, or gentle remedies for children and sensitive people.

Essential oils are the concentrated essence of the plant, while hydrosols are the soft, delicate herbal water created alongside them.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Rosemary

The Greeks called it the “incense tree” because it was used during religious ceremonies and sacred rituals. Students would place rosemary in their hair during exam periods to strengthen memory and concentration.

The Romans called it “dew of the sea” and believed it helped the dead travel peacefully into the afterlife.

During the Middle Ages in France, Charlemagne requested that rosemary be widely planted, especially in monasteries, so it could be used to prepare herbal remedies.

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine : decoction from dried plant, tincture from fresh plant

A powerful antioxidant, rosemary helps protect the body and skin from cellular aging.

Hepatoprotective and antispasmodic, it supports and protects liver cells, especially young shoots. It may also help calm nausea.

Helps regulate blood sugar.

Depurative and diuretic, it helps cleanse the body by supporting the liver and kidneys.

A general stimulant, especially for the brain, rosemary may help reduce stress, improve memory, and rebalance the nervous system.

It is also considered a mild heart tonic.

External Uses: hydrosol or lotion

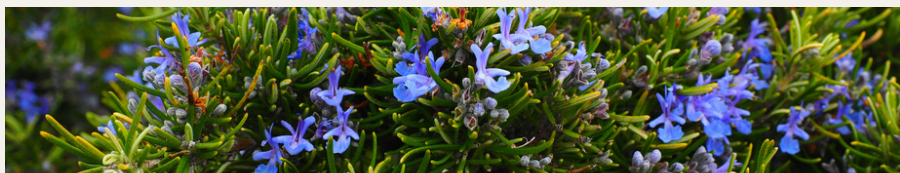
Strengthens the hair and tones the scalp while helping slow hair loss.

Hemostatic, healing, and antiseptic, rosemary can help clean wounds and support acne-prone skin.

Hydrosol or decoction

Contraindications

Rosemary containing camphor should be avoided by people with high blood pressure, heart conditions, pregnant women, and children.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Thyme

Thyme is considered the “food of the Gods.” Spiritually, it was believed to create a connection between the world of the Gods and the world of humans, uniting the divine and the mortal.

Like rosemary, it was used during religious ceremonies, sacred rituals, and sacrifices.

Its Greek root comes from *Thuos*, meaning “fragrant offering burned in sacrifice,” and *Thuein*, meaning “to sacrifice.”

Thyme is considered a panacea plant, traditionally used for almost everything: cooking, health, and beauty.

The two most common varieties are common thyme and wild thyme.

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine : decoction from dried or fresh plant, tincture from fresh plant

A general tonic, useful during chronic fatigue or recovery periods after illness.

An excellent stimulant that supports weakened or overworked individuals.

Acts on both physical and mental energy.

Powerful anti-infectious, antiviral, antibacterial, and immune-stimulating plant.

Helpful for chronic illnesses or repeated respiratory, urinary, or digestive infections.

Expectorant and antispasmodic, it supports the respiratory system, calms productive coughs, and helps dissolve bronchial mucus for easier elimination.

A natural vermifuge when taken as a decoction on an empty stomach for three consecutive mornings.

External Uses: decoction or infused oil

Used as a decoction on a compress, thyme helps clean and disinfect superficial wounds and soothe insect bites.

As a mouthwash, it may help heal mouth ulcers.

As an oil maceration (prepared for four weeks in the sun), it can be used in massage for stiff necks, rheumatism, and sciatica. It may also help reduce pain from sprains and bruises.

Contraindications

Thyme used as a decoction or tincture at reasonable doses is generally considered safe and non-toxic. However, thyme essential oil rich in thymol must be used with great caution because it can be hepatotoxic and irritating to the skin. It should not be used on mucous membranes, by pregnant women, or by children under six years old.

CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Lavender

Lavender is the true symbol of Provence. Its name comes from the Latin word lavare, meaning “to wash.” Originally from Persia, lavender was traditionally used to perfume bath water and laundry. It was also placed among freshly washed linens to scent fabrics and repel moths.

Worn close to the heart, lavender was said to encourage new love and romance. Legend says that Giacomo Casanova, the famous Italian adventurer and seducer, perfumed his letters with lavender so the recipient would become intoxicated by the fragrance while reading them.

When distillation techniques appeared, lavender essential oil began to be widely used externally for skin conditions. Internally, it was traditionally used as an antispasmodic and nervous system balancer.

Today, France is no longer the world's largest producer of lavender. Bulgaria now ranks first, followed by France and then China.

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine : infusion from dried plant, tincture from fresh plant

Sedative and anxiolytic, lavender is known for its calming and antidepressant effects.

Traditionally used for mild sleep disorders, irritability, stress, and headaches.

Choleretic and cholagogue, it stimulates digestion by increasing bile secretion. Helpful for bloating, indigestion, digestive spasms, and colic.

Antiasthmatic, it may help calm muscle contractions linked to asthma attacks.

External Uses: tincture from fresh plant

Antiseptic and healing when diluted in water.

Antibacterial and vulnerary, traditionally used for minor skin infections and insect bites.

Helps support wound healing and skin repair.

Contraindications

Lavandula latifolia contains high levels of camphor and may become toxic in high doses. It should not be used for young children.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Notes on lavender

There are different varieties of lavender. The most known and used are *lavendula augustifolia* (true lavender) and *lavendula latifolia* (spike lavender).

Essential Oil

Lavender essential oil has a very broad range of uses and is considered an essential remedy in natural family medicine.

Lavandula augustifolia. Used mainly through skin application.

- Powerful antispasmodic, traditionally used for asthma and asthmatic bronchitis.
- Calming and sedative, especially helpful for nervous or emotionally sensitive children and those struggling with sleep. Often applied through massage on the solar plexus or soles of the feet.
- Anti-inflammatory and circulatory stimulant.
- Anticoagulant and blood-thinning properties.
- Cardiac tonic, vasodilator, and hypotensive.
- Healing and cellular regenerating, especially beneficial for superficial burns.

Avoid sun exposure immediately after application.

Lavandula latifolia

- Expectorant and mucolytic, traditionally used for common respiratory conditions such as colds, bronchitis, sinusitis, rhinitis, and spasmodic coughs.
- Anti-infectious, antiviral, antifungal, and antibacterial, particularly active against *Staphylococcus aureus*.
- Used for fungal skin infections and oozing acne.
- Pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory, traditionally used for rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, tendinitis, and muscle or joint pain.
- Healing and soothing for burns and superficial wounds.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Notes on lavender



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Sage

There is two different types of sage : Clary sage (*salvia sclarea*) and regular sage (*salvia officinalis*)

The Latin origin of the word sage means “to save” in the sense of healing. Throughout history, sage was considered the queen of plants and carried a sacred dimension. The Romans harvested it according to a very precise ritual: no iron tools could be used, and the harvest had to be done barefoot.

During the Middle Ages, sage was included in almost every medicinal preparation.

In Provence, there is an old saying:

“Whoever has sage in their garden does not need a doctor.”

Where to find it:

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine: infusion from dried plant, tincture from fresh plant
Stomach tonic and antispasmodic, useful for slow and difficult digestion.

- Helps relieve stomach pain, digestive spasms, bloating, nausea, and vomiting.
- Traditionally used for persistent diarrhea and gastroenteritis.
- Supports menopause and pre-menopause symptoms linked to declining estrogen levels, such as hot flashes, long cycles, and amenorrhea.
- Tonic action on the uterus and traditionally used to reduce breast milk production.
- Helps regulate excessive sweating.
- Nervous system tonic and mild antidepressant, traditionally used during physical and mental fatigue.

External Uses: decoction from fresh plant

Antiseptic and astringent.

- Used as a gargle for sore throats, laryngitis, pharyngitis, gingivitis, and mouth ulcers.
- Once cooled, it can be applied to superficial wounds for its healing and disinfecting properties.

Contraindications: Sage should not be used continuously or excessively for more than one month. It is not recommended in cases of hormone-dependent cancers, mastosis, or fibroids.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Lemon balm

It is a plant very sensitive to oxidation and quickly loses its active compounds, especially once dried. If it loses its bright green color and fresh scent, it no longer contains its medicinal properties. It must therefore be dried carefully and used quickly, ideally within four months.

Whenever possible, lemon balm is best used fresh.

Its name comes from *Melissophyllon*, composed of *Melissa* meaning "bee" and *phyllon* meaning "leaf." It is a highly melliferous plant loved by bees.

The Ancients called it the "pepper of the bees," revealing the hidden fiery nature beneath its gentle appearance.

During the Middle Ages, physicians considered lemon balm a "cordial." It was said to "make the spirit joyful, aid digestion, revive the weak, and strengthen the heart during insomnia and palpitations."

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine : infusion from fresh plant, tincture from fresh plant
Especially appreciated for its calming action on both the digestive and nervous systems.

- Traditionally used for stress, anxiety with heart symptoms, mood disorders, panic attacks, and nervous tension.
- Helps calm gastrointestinal spasms, bloating, and nausea.
- Antiviral plant traditionally used for cold sores and shingles.

External Uses: infusion from fresh plant

Used as a compress for cold sores or vaginal herpes.

Contraindications

Not recommended in cases of hypothyroidism, during pregnancy or breastfeeding, or for children under 12 years old.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Lemon verbena

Lemon verbena originally comes from South America and is not an ancestral plant of Provence. However, it has been widely cultivated in the region for many years because of its medicinal properties and ornamental beauty in gardens.

In Antiquity, common verbena was considered a sacred plant and symbol of peace and strength. Among the Romans, the Verbenarii were ambassadors of peace who wore crowns of verbena.

Internal Uses in Herbal Medicine: infusion from fresh plant

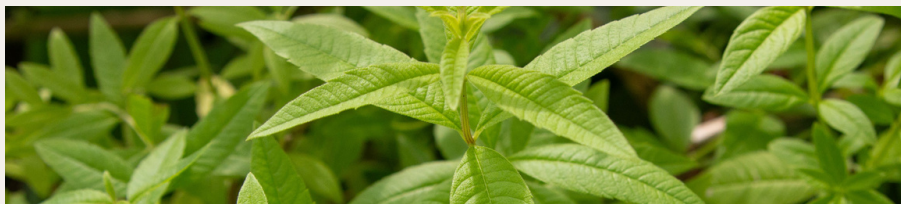
- Calms nervousness and mild sleep disorders.
- Neuroprotective action.
- Supports digestion and stress-related gastrointestinal disorders.
- Helps calm spasms and inflammation linked to colitis.
- Traditionally used for tinnitus, headaches, and palpitations.
- Considered febrifuge and may help reduce fever.
- Antioxidant properties.

External Uses: hydrosol

- Helps soothe sensitive or eczema-prone skin.
- Softens, purifies, and refines the skin texture.

Contraindications

There are no known contraindications when used normally as a herbal tea or hydrosol.



CHAPTER 6

Focus on 6 traditional Provençal herbs

Notes on oregano

Essential oil can be used in caps to help a variety of concerns.

- Traditionally used for immune support during acute infections.
- Has antimicrobial, antibacterial and antifungal and antioxidant properties, mainly due to carvacrol and thymol.

Put 3 drops of oregano essential oil into ½ capsule of olive oil (or another carrier oil) and swallow with food.

Use short-term only (typically no more than 7 days).

Oregano essential oil is highly concentrated and should never be taken undiluted internally or externally.

Contraindications & precautions:

- Do not use during pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Avoid in children or under 18 years old.
- Do not use if you are allergic to oregano or other plants in the mint (Lamiaceae) family.
- Use caution if you take blood thinners, diabetes medications, or are scheduled for surgery (may increase bleeding risk or lower blood sugar).
- May cause stomach irritation, heartburn, nausea, or burning if taken in excessive amounts or without adequate dilution.
- Avoid prolonged use, as strong antimicrobial activity may disrupt the normal gut microbiome.

The information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Natural remedies are not a substitute for professional medical care. Always consult a qualified healthcare provider before starting any new supplement or herbal remedy, especially if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, have a medical condition, or are taking prescription medications.

CHAPTER 7

Herbal recipes

Infusions & decoctions

The versatility of Provençal herbs lies in their ability to support the body as a whole. Rather than benefiting a single function, many of these herbs contribute to the healthy functioning of multiple organs and physiological systems.

1 tablespoon of dried herb for 1 cup of water.

Concern	Blend (3 Herbs) 10g of each	Main Effects	Contraindications
Sleep	Lemon Balm + Lavender + Verbena	Helps with sleep and mental relaxation	Avoid in cases of hypothyroidism, pregnancy, breastfeeding, or excessive drowsiness.
	Lemon Balm + Lavender + Sage (light)	Hot flashes, disturbed sleep	Sage should be avoided during pregnancy, breastfeeding, epilepsy, or hormone-sensitive conditions.
Digestion	Rosemary + Lemon Balm + Verbena	Slow and nervous digestion	Avoid rosemary in severe hypertension or epilepsy. Lemon balm not advised in hypothyroidism.
	Thyme + Lemon Balm + Verbena	Bloating, digestive spasms	Avoid excessive thyme use during pregnancy or in cases of allergy to Lamiaceae plants.
Women's Cycle	Sage + Lemon Balm + Verbena	Painful periods, PMS	Avoid during pregnancy, breastfeeding, hormone-dependent cancers, fibroids, or endometriosis.
	Sage + Lemon Balm + Lavender	Irritability, cramps	Sage should not be used long term in hormone-sensitive conditions.

Dosage of herbal remedies for adults

Long-term imbalance and chronic issues:

Infusion / Decoction – 3 to 4 cups daily for several weeks

Tinctures – ½ to 1 teaspoon three times daily

Acute issues

Infusion / Decoction – ¼ to ½ cup served throughout the day, up to 4 cups

Tinctures – ¼ to ½ teaspoon every 30 to 60 minutes, until symptoms subside.

CHAPTER 7

Herbal recipes

Infusions & decoctions

The versatility of Provençal herbs lies in their ability to support the body as a whole. Rather than benefiting a single function, many of these herbs contribute to the healthy functioning of multiple organs and physiological systems.

1 tablespoon of dried herb for 1 cup of water.

Stress	Lemon Balm + Verbena + Lavender	Intense stress, anxiety	May increase drowsiness when combined with sedative medication.
	Lemon Balm + Lavender + Rosemary (light)	Stress and mental fatigue	Avoid rosemary in epilepsy or uncontrolled high blood pressure.
Cold & Flu	Thyme + Rosemary + Lavender	Cold, cough, fatigue	Avoid excessive thyme or rosemary essential oil use during pregnancy or with epilepsy.
	Thyme + Rosemary + Sage	Sore throat, voice loss, strong cold symptoms	Sage and rosemary should be avoided in pregnancy, epilepsy, and hypertension.
Liver Support	Rosemary + Lemon Balm + Verbena	Sluggish liver, stress	Avoid in gallstone obstruction or severe liver disease without medical supervision.
	Rosemary + Sage + Lemon Balm (light)	Hormonal detox support	Not suitable during pregnancy, breastfeeding, or hormone-sensitive disorders.
Fatigue	Rosemary + Thyme + Verbena	Physical and nervous fatigue	Avoid in cases of severe hypertension, epilepsy, or sensitivity to stimulating herbs.
	Rosemary + Thyme + Lemon Balm	Digestive fatigue	Lemon balm may not be suitable for hypothyroidism; rosemary should be used cautiously with hypertension.

Dosage of herbal remedies for adults

Long-term imbalance and chronic issues:

Infusion / Decoction – 3 to 4 cups daily for several weeks

Tinctures – ½ to 1 teaspoon three times daily

Acute issues

Infusion / Decoction – ¼ to ½ cup served throughout the day, up to 4 cups

Tinctures – ¼ to ½ teaspoon every 30 to 60 minutes, until symptoms subside.

CHAPTER 7

Herbal recipes

Fire Cider

Rosemary Gladstar created the original Fire Cider as a traditional herbal vinegar intended to be shared freely within the herbal community. The recipe has many variations, but the classic version is simple and easy to adapt.

Ingredients (makes about ½ gallon / 2 L)

- ½ cup freshly grated horseradish root
- ½ cup (or more) chopped onion
- ¼ cup (or more) chopped garlic
- ¼ cup (or more) freshly grated ginger
- Fresh or dried cayenne pepper, to taste (hot, but still pleasant)
- Raw, unpasteurized apple cider vinegar (enough to cover the herbs by 3–4 inches)

Optional additions : Fresh turmeric root Echinacea Rosemary Thyme Sage Cinnamon Citrus peel or lemon. Other warming or aromatic herbs you enjoy. Raw honey, to taste (added after straining)

Method

1. Place all the chopped and grated ingredients into a clean half-gallon glass jar.
2. Pour in enough raw apple cider vinegar to completely cover the herbs by at least 3–4 inches.
3. If using a metal lid, place a piece of parchment or wax paper between the jar and lid to prevent corrosion.
4. Seal the jar and shake well.
5. Store in a warm, dark place for 3–4 weeks, shaking the jar daily.
6. Strain through cheesecloth or a fine sieve, squeezing the herbs to extract as much liquid as possible.
7. Stir in raw honey until the flavor is balanced—spicy, tangy, and slightly sweet.
8. Bottle and store in a cool place or refrigerate.

Traditional use

Rosemary Gladstar recommends:

- 1 small shot (about 1 tablespoon) daily as a warming tonic.
- At the first sign of a cold, 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon several times throughout the day, according to your tolerance. These are traditional herbal recommendations rather than medically established dosages.