

Making An Infused Herbal Oil

Some types of oils that can be used to make your herbal oils are: olive (healthy, light in taste and colour, medium price range to buy, but you can buy it in bulk), sunflower, coconut, grape seed (expensive but healthy), or walnut (expensive but healthy). Using a plain wide mouthed jar to infuse the oil then transferring the infused herbal oil into smaller bottles is recommended. This way any moisture that came from the herb can be left behind and will not spoil the oil.

Collecting Your Herbs

The best time to harvest your herbs for oil making is when the plants are just beginning to bloom. Late morning is the preferred time of day because the dew has evaporated away but not your volatile oils.

Fresh or dried herbs can be used to make your oils. Fresh is best BUT dried is easiest. You can also use frozen herbs but they are the most difficult to work with. All make wonderful oils and allows for the fresh garden taste year round.

Herbal oils can be used immediately or stored in the refrigerator. Herbal oils can last up to 6 months, or longer, but it is best to use as soon as possible.

To make a herbal oil, it's easiest to use dry herbs so you don't get bacteria growing in the water which is released from the fresh plant.

The Different Methods of Making Herbal Oils

Be sure to check your oils after a few days to be sure that all the herbs are covered with oil.

Cold Method - Place the herbs and oil in a jar, at room temperature, in a cool dark place and shake well every day for 1 to 2 weeks.

Warm Method - Place the loosely capped jar in the oven on the lowest setting for several hours. Remove and place in a cool, dark place for 1 to 5 days shaking every day.

Dried Herbs vs Fresh Herbs

Using Dried Herbs

1. Collect herbs on a dry morning or evening when the dew has dried.
2. Dry herbs out of the sun and away from high heat and in a well ventilated area by placing them on a clean cloth or newspaper. Turn or stir herbs frequently. This will take a few days. Be sure they are COMPLETELY dried.
3. Place finely cut or powdered dried herbs in a clean DRY jar and fill to 3/4 full, leaving room at the top.
4. Cover the herbs with any good quality vegetable oil. Organically grown cold pressed extra virgin olive oil is one of the best, and sesame oil or coconut oil is wonderful, but if your budget is really restricted any reasonable oil will do.
5. Infuse the herbs in oil for a minimum of 2 weeks in a moderately warm place, shaking or stirring it every day. If in a hurry, you can heat the oil with the herbs in it for a couple of hours, being very careful not to let it boil or overheat.
6. Strain the oil out. The residue left, called the "marc" can be squeezed out by hand but be sure to wash your hands first. Straining through a clean cloth will ensure no plant material ends up in your oil.
7. Store in a dark, cool place for 1 to 6 months depending on type of oil made.

Using Fresh Herbs

1. Collect herbs on a dry morning or evening when the dew has dried.
2. For very high moisture content herbs, allow to dry for a day or two first if necessary.
3. Cut the plants very small and place in a clean jar, filling to within a few inches of the top.
4. Add enough oil (olive, sweet almond, grapeseed, apricot, etc.) to completely cover herbs with an extra inch at the top.
5. Place jar in a warm, dark place for 2 weeks.
6. Check the mixture every day, wiping from the inside of the jar any condensation that may form on the sides of the jar, then shake vigorously.
7. After 2 weeks strain off oil and press the herbs if necessary.
8. Let oil sit for a day or overnight, then decant the oil off the top with a turkey baster, leaving behind the watery residue