

Healing With Herbal Tea



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INTRODUCTION

For countless ages, medicinal plants have been used to heal, empower, and uplift people from all across the world. There are many ways to work with these plants, but none as enjoyable as in the form of an herbal tea infusion. Herbal tea allows us to interact intimately with the plants that nurture us, and experience them as a meditation and an intentional act of peace.

In this book I'd like to show you why herbal tea is a great addition to your life, and teach you how to use it to your advantage in many ways. When you finish this short text, you'll know how to select herbs or pre-packaged herbal teas, how to brew them perfectly every time, and how to get the most out of your tea drinking experience.

My goal in writing this book is to introduce as many people as I can to the natural, gentle, effective, and deep healing that comes from the world around us – and inspire them to work with these many blessings in any way they can.

In celebration of life,

Josh Williams

WHAT IS HERBAL TEA?

Herbal tea is the result of steeping medicinal or flavorful herbs in water, allowing the good stuff in those herbs to infuse with the water, and then smiling from ear to ear as you enjoy the brew you just made. Herbal teas have been used as medicine, meditation, spiritual rites, and just plain relaxation for countless centuries, and in the modern day they're more important than ever before.

When many people think of 'tea', they actually think of the tea plant. Green, oolong, black, and white are all varieties of the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*) that are enjoyed throughout the world – but they are just the tip of the teacup! Tea can actually be brewed from a host of medicinal plants using their leaves, stems, flowers, buds, roots, and rhizomes. If you've ever enjoyed chamomile tea you've tasted tea made from flowers, peppermint tea is made from leaves, and ginger tea is made from roots.

As you can see, herbal tea can be made from a huge array of medicinal and flavorful plants in a variety of ways. From hot to iced, in a mug or in a travel cup, herbal tea offers healing, comfort, and nourishment through the natural power of plant medicine.



THE MANY BENEFITS OF HERBAL TEA

There's a really good reason why herbal teas have been used across the world for countless ages – they work! From healing and strengthening the body to offering periods of rest and rejuvenation, plant medicine coupled with a few quiet moments of reflection can make miracles happen!

Here are just a few of the benefits that can come from adding herbal tea to your life right now...

- The ability to work with and use medicinal plants easily and affordably
- The ability to learn about the medicinal qualities, names, folklore, modern scientific findings, flavors, aromas, and effects of various plants in an intimate and easy way
- Set time to simply relax and nurture yourself – tea reminds us to take breaks!
- Receiving the many healing benefits that various herbal teas offer
- A chance to socialize and show generosity to friends and guests while offering them healing and relaxation at the same time
- Empowerment to take better care of yourself and take time to add healing to your own life
- The ability to learn more about your health, healing options, alternative remedies, and home remedies so that you can do more for your health and the health of people you love.

As you can see there are many benefits to herbal tea, and the list goes on and on! From the moment you brew your first mug of herbal tea you'll know that there's something special, empowering, and even magical about the blessings of natural herbs!



HERBAL TEA GEAR

If you'd like to transform your kitchen into a first-class herbal tea bar, there are just a few simple things you'll need – and many of them may already be in a cupboard! Preparing the perfect cup of herbal tea every time is all about having good gear and patience. As soon as you fall madly in love with herbal tea, and you definitely will, you'll have fun finding new things to add to your tea gear collection.

Here are a few things to get you started...

- A good tea kettle. Go for enamel, earthenware, or stainless steel but avoid other kinds of metal.
- Tea mugs! I'm a big fan of handmade mugs from local pottery shops or farmer's markets. You can buy heat-proof mugs in sets or collect a mis-matched array of mugs to add variety and texture when you serve tea to your friends.
- If you think you'll be using a lot of loose tea (we'll cover this in depth in the next section), you may want to invest in a nice steeping pot. These beautiful earthenware pieces look like small tea kettles with strainer baskets inside. You put your loose tea in the basket; pour hot water over them from your kettle, then put the lid on while the herbs steep. Once they're ready, you just pour your tea into your favorite mug!

- Other ways to work with loose tea include tea infuser balls which are made from fine stainless steel mesh, reusable tea bags, or disposable ‘fill it yourself’ bags. You can buy infuser balls for a couple of dollars at most grocery stores or tea shops, and reusable hemp, cotton, or muslin bags can typically be found in sets of 4 for a couple of dollars as well.
- Having a good tea towel is a necessity. Just about everything around the act of making herbal tea involves heat, so making sure you can clean up a mess and keep your skin away from hot surfaces is a good idea.
- If you don’t have a water filtration pitcher at home, this is a good excuse to buy one. Using chemically treated tap water can take away or alter your herbal tea brews. Instead, using filtered water that doesn’t come from a bottle is a great way to get clean water and powerful tea!

That’s all it takes to create amazing herbal tea infusions in your own kitchen anytime you want them!



CHOOSING THE PERFECT HERBS

In order to brew the perfect cup of herbal tea, you need to start with amazing herbs. Learning how to pick the best herbs every time is simple once you know the basics, and in this section I’ll show you how to be an herbal tea selection expert!

There are two ways to work with herbs when making tea: pre-packed and loose.

Pre-packaged herbal teas have been crushed, sifted, placed in tea bags, and then sealed up in a bag or box. When shopping for pre-packaged herbal teas, use this checklist to make sure you get the best quality for the money you spend...

- Ensure that the only things on the ingredients list are plants. Added 'natural flavorings', oils, preservatives, or anything else non-herb related may mean you should keep looking.
- Herbs break down over time and lose their healing potency, flavor, and aroma. Make sure that the pre-packaged tea you buy has a 'best by' date so that you know just how long your tea has been in the bag.
- Choose organic whenever possible. Herbs are delicate and are extremely sensitive to chemicals. Whatever small amount extra you may pay for organic herbal tea is totally worth it.
- Check to ensure your herbal tea has not been irradiated. A symbol that looks like a dashed circle around a plant will appear if irradiation has taken place. There are better ways to get clean herbs than this method.
- Check to ensure that the herbal tea you buy is fair trade. Many herbs are exotic and are grown in faraway lands. Do your part by only giving your money to companies that make sure the farmers and harvesters who work hard for you get what they deserve.

Loose herbs can be purchased at your local herb store, health food store, or online. At the end of the book I'll share some of my favorite online herb retailers with you. Loose herbs are harvested and dried carefully and are left in their natural state to give you the best tea experience possible. I love buying and using loose whole herbs because they can be bought in bulk which saves money, I get to interact with them more, and the flavor and potencies tend to be at their best.

Here are a few things to look for when buying loose herbs for tea...

- The herbs should be vibrant, colorful, and aromatic. Just because an herb has been dried doesn't mean it should look old, dead, or dusty.
- Herbs should be stored in an airtight jar or bin.
- Herbs should list their common and Latin names (for easy and proper identification), as well as information about whether or not they are organic, irradiated, and fair trade.

When buying bulk herbs, keep in mind you need somewhere to house them. Plastic baggies are a definite no-no! Instead, choose glass jars with an airtight lid. Brown, amber, or cobalt jars are best as they don't let in light, but clear canning jars will work fine if stored in a cool, dark cupboard.

Label your herbs the moment you put them in their clean jars. Add their common and Latin names as well as the date you brought them home to a piece of removable tape. This will let you know when their one year 'best by' date is up so that you can return them to the earth and replenish your stock with fresh herbs.



PREPARING HERBAL TEA

This is the best part! In this section I'll share the simple steps it takes to brew the perfect cup of herbal tea every time. Get your tea gear ready and let's brew!

Hot Tea

In order to brew tea, there are some essentials you need to have...

- Pre-packaged tea bag or loose tea
- Steeping pot, infuser ball, reusable tea bags, or fill-it-yourself tea bags if you're using loose tea
- Tea kettle
- Heat-proof mug

The average 8-10 ounce mug of tea should have about 1 measured Tablespoon of herbs in total for a good brew. Most teabags contain about that amount. If you're using loose tea, check with the manufacturer or an herbalist to find out how much you should use.

Put slightly more water in your kettle than your mug will hold and start heating it. We're shooting for the point just before the water begins to boil when making herbal tea. This makes the water hot enough to extract essentials from the herbs, but not so hot that it 'cooks' them or alters their amazing natural flavor.

While the water is boiling, place your pre-packaged tea bag into your mug, making sure that the tab or end of the string is outside of the mug. If you're using loose tea, go ahead and measure out the right amount of tea into your infuser ball, tea bag, or steeping pot.

When the water is just about to boil, take it off the heat. Be mindful since the kettle and water are extremely hot. Use a tea towel or hot pad to protect your skin from the heat.

Gently fill your mug or steeping pot. Your teabag or infuser ball should now be in the water, and you'll start seeing the herbs' essences mixing with the water instantly. If you're using a steeping pot, put its lid on and let the herbs do their thing! It's important that you keep your mug or pot covered while the herbs steep so that you don't lose important volatile oils and other healing aspects of the herbs. Use a saucer to cover mugs.

The average flower, leaf, or stem herbal tea takes about 6-9 minutes to brew for flavor, but steeping longer – up to several hours – is often suggested for a medicinal brew. Some herbs will become bitter if left too long, so keep an eye on a timer. If you're using roots, bark, or rhizomes, they should be broken down and cut up in order for normal brewing to work. If not, a decoction may be a better choice for you. You can find detailed instructions on making decoctions online.

Once steeping is complete, remove your teabag or infuser ball from the water and set aside. If using a steeping pot, hold the lid on tight with one hand while gently pouring out the tea with the other hand into your mug.

Give your tea some time to rest and cool off. Once the temperature is just right, commence to enjoying!

Iced/Cold Herbal Tea

Follow the instruction above. Instead of sipping your hot tea, pour it into a glass canning jar or other glass jar with a lid and place it in the refrigerator until cool. Pour into a tall glass and add ice cubes, lemon wedges, or fresh herb sprigs as desired! A splash of fresh squeezed fruit juice is also a great addition to just about any iced herbal tea, and it will create a warm weather drink that will leave your guests smiling!

You can also simply steep your herbs in a sealed glass canning jar in the fridge for 4-8 hours, strain, then enjoy. This method offers a truly 'raw' herbal tea experience!



HEALING & ENJOYING

As you sip your tea, there are some things you may want to keep in your mind to help make the most out of the experience. Consider these things 'tea meditations'!

- This is your time. Let the steam carry away your worries while the tea nourishes your body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Take just this time to forget your worries and have some much needed 'you time'.
- Choose to allow the herbs in your tea to do their work. With every fiber of your being invite them in and say 'yes' to the many good things they offer you.

- Take time to really taste and smell the tea. What do the flavors and scents of these herbs mean to you, say to you, and bring up for you? It's all relevant!
- If you are drinking tea for a specific reason (healing, clearing your mind, relaxation, etc.), so ahead and let that intention be with you while you drink. Remind yourself that the tea is an ally and that it is adding nourishment, strength, and energy to your goal.
- Stay positive. Honor and feel gratitude for the powerful natural healing of the herbs and the beautiful and ancient practice of brewing tea.
- Recognize how empowering it is to take care of your own health and well-being and to be accountable for just how much of a positive influence you can have over your own life!
- Celebrate this moment.



RESOURCES

Here is my absolute favorite place to get organic herbs, tea accessories, blends, and essential oils.

www.Shop.LivingHerbalTea.com

Books by Josh Williams available on Amazon.com

Healing Herbal Tea for Stress, Worry, and Anxiety

Quit Smoking with Herbal Tea

The 7-Day Herbal Tea Lung Detox

Join me for tea online!

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