

Making Salves

Salves are such a simple, effective, and useful medicine! They can easily be slipped into a purse, pocket, or first aid kit. Although semi-solid at room temperature, salves soften once applied to the skin, making them less messy to apply than oils. They also make great gifts and are an easy and approachable way to introduce newbies to the medicinal properties of herbs. Plus, salves can be crafted for a wide variety of topical uses including: arthritis, bruises, cuts, rashes, inflammation, insect bites and stings, sores, sprains, strains, wounds, and other skin irritations and conditions. The addition of beeswax offers additional benefits including protective, soothing, emollient, nourishing, and healing properties.



To make salve, first craft your herbal infused oil(s). This will take several weeks, but once finished, the rest of the salve making process will only take minutes! You can also purchase pre-infused [herbal oils](#) if needed or if you wish to skip the process of infusing the oil.

Solar Method: When making herbal infused oils, we prefer the solar infused method. Place dried botanicals into a dry and sterilized glass jar. Some herbalists coarsely crush or grind herbs first, while others finely chop herbs and leave delicate flowers whole. Cover with [Extra Virgin Olive Oil](#) (or [other carrier oil](#) of choice with a stable shelf life) leaving at least 1-2" of oil above the herbs to allow the herbs to swell. Cap the jar tightly and place in a sunny, warm window. If desired, the jar can be covered with a bag or box so that the oil is not exposed to direct sunlight. Shake the jar once or twice per day, or as often as you remember. If the herbs absorb the oil, then add more oil so that they are always submerged. Allow to infuse for 2-6 weeks, or until the oil takes on the color and aroma of the herb. Once the oil is ready, strain using [cheesecloth](#), and bottle into dry and sterilized [amber bottles](#) for storage. Make sure to squeeze as much oil as possible from the herbs so that you do not waste any precious oil! Herbal oils will keep for approximately a year if stored properly in a dark and cool place. [Vitamin E Oil](#) may also be added to prolong the shelf life.

Quick Method: Another way to infuse oils, which is sometimes necessary when herbal oils need to be created in a pinch, is the quick method which utilizes heat. Much care needs to be taken when creating herbal oils this way because you do not want to deep-fry your herbs! Place herbs in crock-pot, double boiler, or electric yogurt maker, and cover with [Extra Virgin Olive Oil](#) (or [other carrier oil](#) of choice) leaving at least an inch or two of oil above the herbs. Gently heat the herbs over very low heat (preferably between 100 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) for 1-5 hours until the oil takes on the color and scent of the herb. Some texts recommend heating the oil 48-72 hours at a controlled temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Turn off heat and allow to cool. Once that the oil is ready, strain using [cheesecloth](#), and bottle into dry and sterilized [amber bottles](#) for storage. Store in a dark and cool place, [Vitamin E Oil](#) may also be added to prolong the shelf life.



- 8 oz herbal infused oil(s) of your choice. Choose one or a combination.
- 1 oz [Beeswax](#) (use [Carnauba Wax](#) for a vegan salve)
- [Vitamin E Oil](#) (optional)
- 10-20 drops [essential oil of choice](#) (optional). Some essential oils commonly used are Lavender and Tea Tree.
- [Glass Jars](#) or [Tin Containers](#)

Place Herbal Infused Oils and Beeswax over a double boiler, and gently warm over low heat until the Beeswax melts. Remove from heat and add the essential oil and Vitamin E Oil (if using). Quickly pour into prepared tins or glass jars and allow to cool completely. Salves should be stored in a cool location

where they will remain semi-solid and will not continue to re-melt and re-solidify. If stored correctly, salves will last for 1- 3 years. Yields 8 oz.

Note: The consistency of salves can easily be adjusted depending on your preferences. Use less Beeswax for a softer salve and more Beeswax if you'd prefer a firmer salve. You can test the consistency by placing a few spoons in the freezer before making your salve. When the Beeswax melts, pour a little salve onto one of the cold spoons and place it back into the freezer for 1-2 minutes. Once cooled, you can make adjustments by adding more oil (for a softer salve) or more Beeswax (for a firmer salve).



You can make salve with a single herb or multiple herbs, depending on your needs. It's useful to make a variety of herbal infused oils so that you can easily craft salve whenever you need it!

Arnica flowers: Can help treat physical trauma, bruises, bunions, strains, sprains, some kinds of arthritis, and muscle pain. Use immediately after strenuous exertion or injury to prevent, relieve, and reduce swelling, bruises and pain.

Burdock root: For treating psoriasis, eczema, and skin infections.

Calendula flowers: Wonderfully healing with all-around healing properties useful for a wide variety of skin irritations and conditions including wounds, insect bites, rashes, scrapes, abrasions, cuts, inflammations, and much more. Suitable for sensitive skin and babies.

Cayenne Pepper: Warming, good for arthritis and sore muscles, alleviates pain and itching.

Chamomile flowers: Hemorrhoids, minor abrasions, cuts, scrapes, and wounds.

Chickweed: Soothing, helps with skin conditions including psoriasis, eczema, minor burns, rashes, and other skin irritations.

Comfrey leaf and/or root: Relieves pain, swelling, promotes the growth of muscle, cartilage, and bone. Assists with healing a wide variety of conditions including sprains, eczema, dermatitis, viral skin infections, broken bones, arthritis, wounds, and bruises.

Echinacea herb and/or root: Antibacterial, beneficial for sores, wounds, insect bites and stings.

Ginger root: Warming, use for arthritis and sore muscles.

Goldenseal leaf and/or root: Antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, useful for treating wounds and skin conditions.

Lavender flowers: Soothing, calming, relieves hemorrhoids, pain, has healing properties beneficial for wounds and numerous skin conditions.

Myrrh Gum powder: Antiseptic properties, used for cuts, scrapes, scratches, and abrasions.

Nettle leaf: Anti-inflammatory, an effective treatment for many skin conditions.

Oregon Grape root: Skin disinfectant, antibacterial, anti-microbial, helps heal wounds.

Plantain leaf: Antibacterial, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antitoxic properties. Helps speed the recovery process, prevents infection, relieves and soothes insect bites and stings, pain, poison ivy, itching, rashes, sores, bruises, blisters, and damaged skin.

St. John's Wort: Craft the deep red-colored oil from fresh flowers. Anti-inflammatory and astringent properties. Beneficial for wounds, cuts, bruises, swelling, varicose veins, insect bites and stings, nerve damage, scrapes, rashes, burns, and pain.

Thyme: A strong antiseptic used for cuts, scrapes, and sore muscles.

Yarrow Flowers: Apply to bruises, sprains, wounds, cuts, rashes, eczema, scrapes, and areas with swelling and bleeding.

Please note that this is only a partial list, many other healing herbs can also be incorporated into salves.

Happy salve making!

- irene

[Mountain Rose Herbs](#)