



Fresh Herbs- not just for the kitchen any more

For the culinary herbs, here's a handy chart to use:

- Burnet with salads or poultry
- Chervil with salads or fish
- Cilantro with pasta, salads, fish, or salsas
- Sweet basil with chicken or fish, pasta, tomatoes and other vegetables
- Dill with chicken or fish
- Lemon balm with fish or fruit
- Oregano with vegetables or pasta
- Mint with salads or fruits
- Rosemary with chicken, veal, lamb, or potatoes
- Summer savory with vegetables or dried beans
- Tarragon with fish, chicken, or salads
- Thyme with meats, poultry, fish, vegetables, or salads



But, there's more to derive from an herb garden than extra flavour on your food. If it's the end of a long, hard day at the office, or at home with the children, herbs can be comforting and soothing. Or, maybe you've just come inside from a brisk walk, gardening, or some other exercise and your muscles are tight from the chill. You need relief and can find it with herbs.

Here's some of the herbal treatments to use whenever you need a lift or respite from a difficult, busy day.

First, treat yourself to a **facial sauna**. There's nothing simpler or more effective for cleansing and purifying one's complexion. You'll be amazed how this pleasant herbal steam penetrates deeply and cleanses every pore.

Simply boil three cups water and add these herbs: 1 heaping tablespoon each of chamomile, lavender, fennel, lemon balm, sage, and rosemary. Simmer for 15 minutes; turn off the heat. Pour into a metal bowl.

Pull back your hair away from your forehead and bend over the bowl, keeping your head at least 15 inches away so you don't scald your skin. Drape a thick towel over your head to confine the vapours. Inhale the herbal mist for 5 to 15 minutes, and then splash cold water onto your face and neck to close the pores. Your skin will be soothed and your complexion will have a healthy, rosy glow.

Next, hop into your bathtub for a long, soothing cleansing **herbal soak**.

You can prepare an herbal infusion on the stove or make up bath sachets to have ready in a pretty basket sitting beside your bathtub.

To make an infusion: pour boiling water over a handful each of rosemary leaves, mint leaves along with some thyme, lemon balm, and lavender flowers. Let steep for about 20 minutes. Add to your bath water and soak for 5 to 15 minutes.

An herbal bath helps you in two ways: first, your skin absorbs the essential oils from the herbs through the hot water, and then the steam makes the volatile herb oils vaporize in the air and release their marvellous fragrances.

Some herbs stimulate your circulation; some soothe and calm you down, while others provide deep cleaning. It's the combination that provides the harmonizing effect that makes herbal baths so pleasurable.

Bath bags are easily made out of unbleached muslin, tied with twine. Using pinking shears cut the muslin into 8-inch squares. Mix together 1/2 cup dried hibiscus flowers and chopped lemon balm, mint, chamomile, lavender flowers, and rosemary leaves. Place about 2 tablespoons in the centre of each cloth square. Gather the muslin tightly around the herbs and tie with twine, first making a double knot and then a bow.

Several minutes before getting into your bath, swish one of the herbal bath bags round in the hot bath water. It'll scent the water and the room, soothing your skin as you soak.

Keep the bags in a pretty basket near your tub to have ready for the next time. They'll scent the bathroom at the same time.

Soak away sore spots on your feet with an **herbal foot bath**. This steamy herb combination will stimulate your foot circulation, soothe your foot muscles, and soften the skin.

Combine 1/2 cup of each of the following herbs: chamomile, comfrey, lavender, and rosemary. Infuse the herbs in a quart of warm water and put into a foot basin partially filled with warm water. Wrap some of the herbs in cheesecloth to form a compress. Gently apply or massage this compress into any sore spot while soaking.

Now the herbs have worked their magic on your exterior body, treat yourself to nature's **herbal nightcap**, a tranquil herbal tea. Mix together 2 ounces dried peppermint leaves (nature's digestive), 2 tablespoons dried rosemary leaves (nature's tranquilizer), and 2 teaspoons dried sage leaves (nature's sleep producer). Mix and store in a tightly closed glass jar. Add 1 heaping teaspoon of the herb mixture to a cup of boiling water. Let steep for 1 minute and strain. Sweeten to taste with your favourite sugar substitute, and sip slowly. Enjoy a wonderful, restful sleep.