



Herbal Infused Oils

What is an Infused Oil?

Infused Oils are a very simple type of herbal preparation which use fixed oils to extract the constituents from herbs. You may have seen them already in the kitchen - for example as chilli or garlic oil. Herbal infused oils can be applied to the skin to form a protective covering which also holds your herbs' medicinal properties on the skin. You can use them directly on your skin as a massage oil, stick them in the bath, or they can also be used as the base for herbal ointments, creams, balms etc. You can make an infused oil using any oil of your choice, with different oils adding their own qualities to your remedy. Some commonly used examples are:

- **Sunflower Oil:** A light, inexpensive and readily available oil that makes a good carrier for herbs. Odourless and fairly colourless. Softening and moisturising.
- **Olive Oil:** A thicker, stickier oil with more colour and odour to it which can override the odour of the herbs. Soothing, nutritive properties.
- **Sweet Almond Oil:** A very common carrier which moistens, soothes and conditions the skin. Bland odour, light in colour. Beware of using with nut allergy sufferers
- **Coconut Oil:** A deliciously fragranced, white oil which is a solid at room temperature. Coconut oil is excellent for the skin with nourishing and moisturising actions.

How to Make an Infused Oil:

There are two commonly used methods for infusing oils: the Sun Method and the Double-Boiler or 'Digestion' Method.

1) The Sun Method

Sun infusion is a very simple method which harnesses the heat from the sun to gently warm the oil and extract the constituents of the herbs over a number of weeks. The key to a good infused oil is to try and limit the amount of water that you introduce into it. Some plants have a high water content. Water may deteriorate the oil and cause it to go rancid - water and oil just don't mix! The sun method is best for fresh flowers or other delicate parts of herbs; chunky roots or thick juicy stems will introduce too much water into the oil and it may turn rancid before you have finished extracting it.



Instructions:

1. Take your chosen herb and chop it as finely as possible, or even powder it if you have a grinder. If using fresh herbs it is a good idea to minimally wilt them for 12-24 hours to lower the water content first, or to fully dry them
2. Place your herb into a clean, sterilised jar that can be capped tightly

