

# How to Make a Tincture at Home

In the simplest of terms a tincture is a concentrated liquid extract made with herbs.

Tincturing herbs is another safe and effective way to preserve fresh, homegrown herbs...one that our ancestors knew very well.

The empowerment and sense of satisfaction you will receive after preparing herbs using this traditional method is extremely rewarding!

## Tincturing Basics

Tinctures can be created using a variety of different solvents (or menstruums), such as:

### Alcohol

- Most commonly used solvent.
- Extract many healing properties from the plant material.
- Vodka (100 proof is best, 80 proof will do), brandy or rum are the types of alcohol used frequently.
- Tinctures created with alcohol are the most resistant to contaminants and have the longest shelf life – retaining potency for 5 years or more.

### Vinegar

- Tinctures made with vinegar must be used within 1 year of straining.
- Use raw apple cider vinegar and warm it slightly before adding to herbs for best results.
- The vinegar should contain at least 5% acidity.
- Do not dilute, use full-strength.
- Vinegar tinctures are not as potent as alcohol tinctures.

### Vegetable glycerin

- Use nothing but food-grade vegetable glycerin for tincturing.
- Not as strong as an alcohol tincture.
- Great for those who do not want to consume alcohol.
- Is very sweet...great for children's taste buds.
- Must be diluted at a 60% vegetable glycerin 40% water ratio prior to adding to herbs.
- Should keep for 2-3 years after straining in a cool, dark place.

## Tincturing – A General Recipe

### Ingredients

- 4 ounces fresh herbs, chopped (or 2 ounces of dried herbs)
- quart-sized glass jar
- 100 proof vodka to fill (approximately 16 ounces)

### Method

1. Measure the herbs you will use in your recipe using a small kitchen scale.
2. Chop the fresh herbs until fine using a blender, food processor, or by hand.
3. Place plant material into the quart-sized glass jar.
4. Pour your solvent, in this case vodka, over the herbs until it reaches approximately 2 inches above the herbs.
5. Stir well to combine. Then place a lid on the jar and shake.
6. The jar should rest in a warm place, near a sunny window, and it should be shook at least once daily (twice is best).
7. Steep for 4-6 weeks, although it may be strained after 2 weeks if needed.
8. Strain tincture through a cheesecloth lined fine mesh sieve.
9. Keep the strained tincture in a colored glass bottle or clear glass in a cool, dark place.
10. Label each bottle with the name, date, and contents.

### Good Practice

You may hear many older herbalist and great-grandparents who speak about tincturing with the cycles of the moon. There is a lot of good research out that supports the validity to this practice. Therefore, consider setting your tinctures to steep on the new moon and wait a full 30 day lunar cycle prior to straining.