



DECOCTIONS

A decoction is another method of preparing herbal teas, particularly useful for extracting compounds from more resilient plant materials such as roots, bark, seeds, and woody stems. Unlike infusions, which are generally made with delicate plant parts like leaves and flowers, decoctions involve simmering the plant material in water to release its beneficial components. Here's how you typically make a decoction:

- Preparation: Use approximately 1 to 2 tablespoons of dried herb (or 2 to 4 tablespoons of fresh herb) per cup of water. For more robust herbs or larger quantities, you might adjust these amounts accordingly.
- Boiling Water: Place the herb and water in a pot or saucepan.
- Simmering: Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat and let it simmer gently. The simmering time can vary depending on the herb, but it generally ranges from 20 to 45 minutes. Some harder materials may require longer simmering.
- Straining: After simmering, strain out the plant material using a fine-mesh strainer or cheesecloth.
- Consumption: The resulting decoction can be consumed as is or sweetened with honey, lemon, or other flavorings if desired.

Shelf Life and Storage:

- Refrigerated: Decoctions can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 to 5 days. Beyond this period, they may begin to lose potency and could spoil.
- Room Temperature: It's best to consume decoctions within 24 hours if kept at room temperature to prevent bacterial growth.
- General Tips:
- Herb Types: Decoctions are ideal for tougher plant parts like roots (e.g., ginger, licorice), bark (e.g., cinnamon), seeds (e.g., fennel), and woody stems. These materials often require longer extraction times to release their full range of beneficial compounds.
- Water Ratio: Adjust the amount of water based on how concentrated you want the decoction to be. For a more potent extract, use less water and simmer longer.
- Monitoring: Keep an eye on the water level while simmering to prevent it from boiling down too much. Add more water if necessary.

Decoctions are a traditional method of preparing herbal remedies, especially when working with more resilient plant materials that need extended cooking times to fully release their medicinal properties.

TOOLS / INGREDIENTS

- HERBS
- WATER
- QUART - TO GALLON-SIZE POT
- MESH STRAINER

