

HERBAL ANTIBIOTICS

Natural Herbal Remedies
for Everyday Ailments



Richard Bray

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- **Richard Bray**



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BOOK SELECTION FOR YOU.

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SOMETHING NEW
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DISCLAIMER

The information presented in this book is meant for educational purposes and does not replace professional medical advice from a health care practitioner. This text is not meant to diagnose or treat diseases. Some herbs may cause adverse reactions; being included in this text does not mean they are safe for all to consume. The author and publisher of this book do not accept liability or responsibility for the use of plants in treating health or medical issues. A person should always consult a health care practitioner before taking supplements and should disclose any currently being taken.

This is by no means a comprehensive guide to all potential medicinal plants. It is a compilation of current research and recommended usages and does not cover all possibilities or concerns. There is a lot more research to be done, specifically around the best ways to ingest herbal medicine and appropriate amounts. If the specific information you are looking for is not contained in this book, it likely means that there is not enough research yet or not enough evidence to support use.

This is still an area of immense study, and all the answers are not available as of yet.

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INTRODUCTION



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you're reading this, then chances are you're interested in knowing how herbal medicine can help boost your health and wellbeing. This is exactly what this book aims to do. But before we get started, it's important to keep a few things in mind.

Firstly, herbal medicine, though very effective, is not based on the same methods and research as most conventional Western medicine. This means it cannot be administered in the same way. There are dosages to follow for specific ailments, and these will be outlined in the following chapters, but for many herbal remedies, dosages depend on your personal needs. Many of the ingredients we'll cover below are food items. Some can be found in your pantry while others are more exotic, but they all have one thing in common; they can be included in your diet for a more holistic form of healing. Because of this, for some herbs in this book, specific dosages will be mentioned, while the dosages of other, milder herbal remedies can be judged by your own taste and needs. However, of course it must be said that if you have any concerns or need further guidance, always contact your physician for advice.

This book can be used in several ways. From a general point of view, it provides insight into the large variety of herbal remedies that are available to boost your wellbeing. Herbal medicine is a holistic method of healing. Therefore many remedies are seen as tonics that support one's wellbeing as a whole, through the promotion of a healthy immune system.

However, this book also details herbal remedies one by one,

teaching you about the multiple (and often tasty) ways each herb can be prepared and taken. This is ideal if you are eager to learn about the history, uses, and preparation methods of each herb.

Lastly, if you are looking to quickly dip into the book to reference a remedy for a specific ailment, you can do that too. At the back of the book is a handy, easy to read A-Z guide of ailments and their corresponding remedy. Ideal if you need quick instructions to help you get your health back on track.

So with that said, let us begin our journey into herbal antibiotics, and find out what they can do for you.

CHAPTER 1



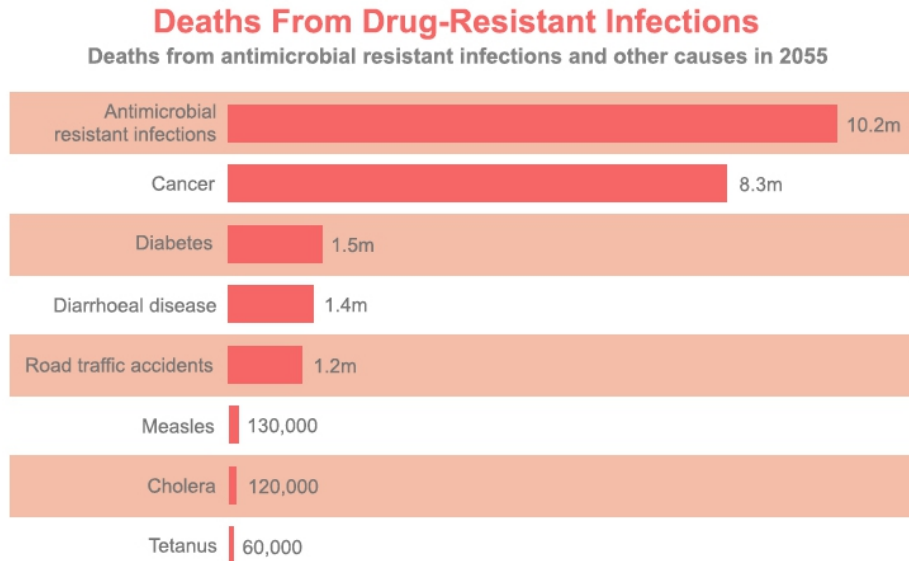
THE BASICS

As many people know, antibiotics have helped people recover from serious illnesses for decades. Since the 1940s, prescription antibiotics such as penicillin have been a mainstay in our medical arsenal helping us get rid of ailments caused by bacteria such as respiratory tract infections, pneumonia, ear and throat infections, just to name a few.

However, modern antibiotics aren't always effective for everyone. And some of you might discover that drugs such as penicillin can cause an allergic reaction or unfavorable side effects.

For example, recent research undertaken by the NHS in the UK concluded that 1 in 10 people suffer from digestive stress from antibiotics such as pain, vomiting or diarrhoea. Meanwhile, the NHS estimates that around 1 in 15 people are allergic to them altogether.

Furthermore, the over-prescription of antibiotics for certain ailments, coupled with genetic changes over time, has meant that many people have become resistant to the positive effects of antibiotics. This is called antimicrobial resistance and according to the World Health Organization, is fast becoming a serious threat to people's health.



So what does this mean? Firstly, it means that for some people, popularly prescribed antibiotics may not be an option because they simply won't work any more. Secondly, it means that due to side effects, allergies or resistance, people are searching for healthy and effective alternatives in order to treat their ailments.

This means many of the natural, herbal remedies that were left forgotten, have resurfaced to treat illnesses that modern antibiotics can't.

If you're not familiar with herbal medicine, it can easily be described as the use of fresh or dried plants to treat ailments. This can be done through using various parts of a plant such as the flower, root, bark, berries or leaves. Each of these parts has its own different use, and they all have different chemical make-ups which require them to be extracted and prepared in different ways.

We'll go into more detail about the various methods of extraction and preparation in later chapters, but let's have a quick look now at the various types of herbal medicines that are available.

Water Based Herbal Medicine

1. Syrups – These are often the most popular and easiest form of herbal medicine to ingest as the herbs are mixed into a sweet, easy to swallow liquid. These have a similar consistency to cough syrups.

2. Lotions – These aren't too dissimilar to the usual lotions that we use on our skin. The only difference is that these contain active ingredients derived from herbs that can benefit our skin in a medicinal way.

3. Poultices – You may have heard your grandmother talk about these. Usually thought of as being an old fashioned way to treat skin conditions, they have had a resurgence in recent years for their efficacy and ease of use. A poultice is a moist bundle of herbs that is held in place over an area that needs to be healed. Usually it is secured with a soft piece of cloth such as a length of muslin.

4. Compresses – Similarly, compresses are also used for healing specific areas. However, unlike poultices, they do not contain herbs, but are rather made up of cloths soaked in infusions and decoctions. These are then placed upon the area which requires treatment.

5. Decoctions – They may sound complicated, but these are actually very simple to make. Decoctions are simply a liquid remedy that has been prepared by boiling herbs on a stove.

6. Infusions – In a similar fashion, infusions are also created by placing herbs in hot water. However, instead of boiling them, they are steeped, somewhat like a tea.

Tinctures

A tincture is created when a plant is extracted through alcohol, specifically ethanol. There are various strengths of tincture ranging from 20% all the way up to 90% depending on what its

purpose is. However, in herbal medicine, the most commonly used concentration is 20%.

In certain circumstances, alcohol may not be the best substance to ingest. In these cases, vinegar or glycerol may be chosen instead. Tinctures created with glycerol are called a glycerite and are often a popular type of tincture to take for a number of ailments. However, glycerine is believed to be a poorer solvent than ethanol, so glycerites may not be as effective as alcohol based tinctures.

Vinegar, however, as a highly acidic substance is an incredibly efficient solvent for processing alkaloids. This means that it cannot be used as a solvent when trying to obtain acids.

The production of tinctures can take several weeks as the herbs need to be soaked for a long period of time for their medicinal properties to be absorbed. But they are easy to take and are simply placed beneath the tongue with a dropper.

However, it is worth noting that currently, the FDA do not monitor the production of tinctures. So if you are concerned that they could interact with any medication you are currently taking, it is advisable that you consult your doctor.

Herbal Oils

Also referred to as a macerated oil, these are created by a carrier oil being infused with the healing properties of a herb. There are many carrier oils, but some popular ones are almond, olive and sunflower.

These herbal oil-based infusions are used to treat skin ailments, and they can be incorporated into balms, soaps, butters and creams. However, they can also be used to condition hair.

One thing to remember is that dried herbs are preferable to infuse in oil. This is because fresh herbs contain a certain amount of

moisture, therefore they can introduce bacteria into your oil making them rot, grow mould or spoil.

Juices

We all know that juices are a great way to introduce essential nutrients into our diet. But they can also be a method in which to ingest herbal remedies. One benefit of consuming herbal antibiotics in this manner is that they need very little digestion. This means they can reach our bloodstream and benefit us almost instantly!

There are many herbs that can be added to juice. However some popular ones include:

- Turmeric
- Dandelion
- Echinacea
- Ginger
- Chamomile
- Sage
- Lemon balm
- Garlic
- Parsley

In later chapters, we'll discuss herbs individually and talk about what they all do and how they can benefit you and your ailments.

Powders

Nearly all of us have powdered herbs in our pantry, from cinnamon to rosemary. But sometimes we can take for granted how powerful powdered herbs and spices can be. For centuries,

powdered herbs have been used for their medicinal properties, with some being known for their curative powers before being used in the kitchen.

For example, it has been shown in recent research that cinnamon can reduce blood sugar levels and sage can improve cognitive function. Meanwhile, peppermint can reduce nausea and turmeric contains powerful anti-inflammatory properties that can fight Alzheimer's, heart disease and arthritis. And did you know rosemary can treat allergies and a blocked nose?

Is Herbal Medicine a Cure-All?

So with all these benefits being held within herbs alone, can we assume it can treat everything? Well, almost. It can help with your joints and bones, your circulation, heart and respiratory health, skin, fertility and hormonal health, emotional and mental health, digestion, treat allergies and generally support your immune system. Phew!

It almost sounds too good to be true. So is there anything herbal medicine can't do? Well, for one thing it can't always be used for first aid. Sure, rub a dock leaf on that nettle sting or put a few drops of lavender on a minor burn. But if you're seriously injured, always seek the help of a health professional.

Furthermore, some herbal medicines may not be suitable for some people. This is especially the case if you are pregnant or on long term medication. Therefore, it is always advised that you consult a physician before embarking on your herbalism journey.

CHAPTER 2



THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

We can't talk about our health without discussing our immune system. But although we know that we need to have a healthy immune system, do we know exactly what it is?

In essence, it's a very complicated network of cells, tissues and proteins that's in place to fight infection. Without an immune system, we would have no way of fighting attacks from bacteria, parasites and viruses. Or indeed anything that can give us a disease.

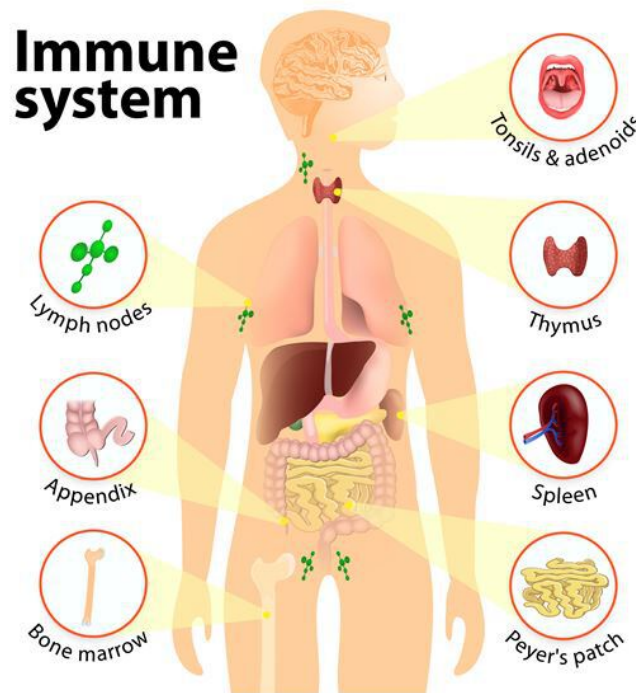
Right at the center of our immune system are our white blood cells. Also called leukocytes, these star players have the important job of protecting our bodies. However, there are different types of white blood cells that perform different roles.

For example, one type of white blood cell, phagocytes have the job of processing foreign organisms known as antigens. Meanwhile lymphocytes work in alliance with phagocytes by 'remembering' these antigens and eating them up before they can damage the body.

One way we can think of our white blood cells is as guards who are on constant patrol to ensure no diseases can harm our body. And these little guards are situated all around the body, being distributed throughout our blood vessels as well as our lymphatic system.

However, our little guards are also stored in various places within our body. You can think of these as watchtowers, but they are technically called lymphoid organs. These are situated in:

- The thymus gland below the neck
- The spleen, which is used to clean and filter our blood
- Our bone marrow which lives right in the middle of our bones
- The lymph nodes - Tiny glands that are placed all around our body at the back of our head, our necks, in front and behind our ears, above the collar bone, our armpits, arms, groin area and the backs of our knees.



So how does our immune system work? It may seem complicated, but let's break it down. Our immunity, as in our ability to fight infection is three pronged. Firstly, there is our **innate immunity**. This is something we're born with and is the immune system working at its most basic level. For example, using the skin as a barrier to germs and eyelashes stopping dirt and debris entering our eyes.

Secondly, we have our **adaptive immunity** . This is something

that develops as we grow older when we are repeatedly exposed to diseases or when we are vaccinated.

Thirdly, there is our **passive immunity** . You can think of this as a type of immunity that is inherited from someone else. For example, when a mother is immune to an illness, she will pass on this immunity to her baby through breastfeeding.

Of course, our immune system does a fabulous job at taking care of us. But it doesn't mean that it can't be given a helping hand from time to time.



There are many ways in which you can boost your immune system such as making sure you wash your hands regularly, having a healthy diet, sleeping enough and exercising regularly. You can also choose to have vaccinations. Yet another option is to explore what herbs are available to boost your immunity. This is especially useful if you want to prevent infections from occurring in the first place so you can lessen your reliance on antibiotics.

Throughout this book, we'll be looking at 3 categories of herbs that can improve our immune systems and train up those little guards to fight off infection better than ever:

- **Herbal Immunostimulants**

- **Herbal Immunomodulators**
- **Herbal Immune Tonics**

CHAPTER 3



HERBAL IMMUNOSTIMULANTS

This is a type of herb that can only be used in the short-term when you're in desperate need to stimulate your white blood cells. It is mostly advised that they are used in the developing stages of an illness or when you have been exposed to a contagious infection. They might be a quick fix, but they will not fight infection for the entire duration of an illness. Therefore, they need to be administered regularly to keep their levels topped up in the body.

Let's have a look now at the rock stars of the herbal immunostimulant world and what they can do for you.

Boneset

Although it is not well known, boneset is a plant that belongs to the same botanical family as daisies and echinacea. Mainly, it can be found in North America and has a long history of being used by Native Americans.

Previously, it was used for a whole host of infections, specifically those that brought on fevers. Later on, when Europeans began to settle in North America, they soon discovered its wondrous healing properties and used it to treat malaria.



Usually, parts of the boneset plant that are found above ground are used in herbal medicine. For example the flowers and leaves. Today, it is often used to treat minor infections such as the common cold. This works by stimulating white blood cell activity. However, some people swear that it can also be used to fight more serious illnesses such as influenza.

How to make boneset tea

If you're suffering from a dreaded cold or flu and have a temperature going through the roof, a calming boneset tea can help you recover quickly.

- Firstly, take 2 teaspoons of dried boneset or 1 spoonful of fresh boneset.
- Soak in boiling water and cover for 15 minutes. Once the water is at a temperature you can tolerate, remove the lid, strain the mixture and sweeten to taste. You can use sugar if you like, but other options such as agave

nectar, maple syrup and stevia also make great alternatives.

To attack that cold as much as possible, drink a small cup every hour until you start to feel a lessening of your symptoms.

Boneset tea can also be used to activate your digestive system, especially when taken after meals. Simply drink a small cup of tea or take 2 tablespoons directly after you've eaten.

Echinacea

If you've done any research on herbal medicine, one of the first herbs you'll learn about is echinacea, and with good reason. This powerhouse of a plant has been used for centuries and became popular within the United States during the late 1800s. Modern scientific research has been conducted on this plant for almost a hundred years starting with pioneering studies being conducted in Germany in the 1930s.



Similarly to boneset, it was also used widely by Native

Americans for many ailments. However, it held popularity for its efficacy at treating bites, stings and wounds. Later on however, once adopted by Europeans, it found a home in the realms of venereal disease thus becoming a treatment for syphilis.

Just as with boneset, the leaves and flowers are harvested for use and these days are used as a common treatment for colds. Many clinical trials have shown that using echinacea extract can lessen both the symptoms and the duration of a cold.

One such trial studied the effects of the common cold with employees of a nursing home. They were told to drink echinacea tea once cold symptoms presented themselves, and they soon found that their symptoms lasted around 2 days less than those who drank the placebo tea.

However, the jury is out on whether taking echinacea regularly throughout the winter can stop you getting a cold. On one hand, many clinical trials have concluded echinacea just simply doesn't work to prevent colds. On the other hand, a recent double-blind trial proved that the regular use of echinacea for up to four months decreased the amount of participants with the cold by 21%.

What the researchers do agree upon is that if you come down with the common cold, you should take it for around 7 to 10 days to boost your immune system's ability to fight infection.

But as well as the cold, it has also been shown to be a terrific treatment for many ailments. It has also been shown to reduce the symptoms of many problems such as cold sores, bronchitis, canker sores, gingivitis, ear infections and yeast infections. Modern research is currently being undertaken to study its efficacy in supporting the immune system of HIV sufferers.

A recent double blind trial concluded that 1 gram of echinacea administered three times a day to HIV patients improved immune

system activity. Meanwhile, the placebo had no significant effect.

How to take echinacea

The ways in which you consume echinacea are seemingly endless, but a popular way (and my favorite way) is to drink it in tea form.

Drunk on its own, people have reported that it tastes tingly and liken it to having the same spicy feeling as cinnamon. But don't be worried about this tingly sensation. In fact, the tinglier the echinacea, the more potent it is.

To enhance its taste, it can be combined with other ingredients such as peppermint. A combination I enjoy at the moment is echinacea, cherry and cinnamon.

Should you choose to make your own blend of tea, you can use the purple petals of the plant along with the roots and leaves.

Or you can choose to buy ready-made tea blends, sachets and bags for convenience.

Pre-prepared loose leaf echinacea tea is also readily available in many health food stores and combines the convenience of ready made tea with the potency and freshness that comes from harvesting the plant yourself. It is also incredibly easy to make.

How to make echinacea tea

- Simply bring some water to the boil, then let it cool slightly so it's just below boiling point.
- Pour the water over the loose tea and let it soak for around 15-20 minutes.
- Then all that's left to do is strain and serve.

If you don't like the taste of tea, or you're looking for a quicker

way to get your immune boosting hit, then tablets might be an option for you. Again, these can be found in many health food stores and are reasonably affordable.

If, however, you'd prefer to make your own medicinal remedy then perhaps you can try making your own echinacea tincture. It's not as difficult as it sounds and can provide you with a very powerful and potent mixture than can be super effective at strengthening your immune system.

One good thing about making your own tincture is that it is incredibly cost effective. Many tinctures available online and in stores can cost up to \$12 for a single ounce. But make your own in bulk and you can cut the price down to \$1 per ounce while stocking up for the colder months. That seems like a bargain to me!

To make it as affordable as possible, bulk buy the dried echinacea leaves online. The average price of a pound of good quality echinacea leaves starts at around \$20. This may sound a little pricey for some leaves, but bear in mind this can make around a gallon of tincture!

How to make an echinacea tincture

So what do you need? I'm sure you'll be happy to discover that you only need 3 items to make an effective flu busting tincture; dried echinacea, a glass jar and some alcohol.

- Firstly, take your glass jar and fill 2/3 with dried echinacea. Now all you need to do is cover it with alcohol. Strong spirits work best with an alcohol content of around 40% being preferred. Something like vodka would be perfect.
- Next, give the mixture a good shake. Hey, you can even

think of it as a good arm workout.

- Now all you have to do is wait. Ideally, it's best to leave the tincture to sit in a cool, dark place for around 3 months, but it can be used after four weeks if needed.
- When you are ready to take it, strain the mixture through something finely textured such as cheesecloth. But if you don't have that, coffee filters work great too.

The drained mixture will have a strong, herbal scent and be a deep brown color.

So what about dosage? As a tincture is an incredibly powerful way to take the remedy, you won't want to be chugging down cups of this stuff, especially not when it's made from vodka. It's best to place the mixture in a small bottle and take the drops as required. However, dosage is largely dependent on your weight.

For children between the weight of 50 to 100 pounds (23kg - 45kg), it is best to take a full dropper full of the tincture up to 3 times a day. A full dropper sounds like a lot, but it is only around 25 drops. Around a 1/4 of a teaspoon.

This dose can then be adjusted depending on your own size.

Herbal remedy expert and author, Susan Weed created a handy chart to ensure you get your right dosage. It is as follows:

Adults:

- 100 - 150 pounds (45kg - 68kg) - 3 droppers full.
- 150-200 pounds (68kg - 90kg) - 4 droppers full.
- 200+ pounds (90kg+) - 5 droppers full.

Weed also recommends that you take the largest dose when you feel the onset of cold and flu symptoms then lessen the dose as you begin to recover.

Wild Indigo

This magical sounding herb is another remedy that has been used throughout history as a cure for many ailments. However, it didn't start out that way. Initially, it was used in Europe as a blue dye. It wasn't until later that it was discovered to have healing properties. Only then did it start to be used to treat a whole host of infections, especially those affecting the mouth and throat. It was also used to treat ulcers and inflamed lymph nodes.

Currently, it can be found growing freely in the Midwestern states of the US, and should you wish to use it, make sure to only use the root.

Like the above, it has a history of being used to treat the common cold and increase the strength of our immune systems. It has also been proven to have antimicrobial properties. Another reason to keep this wonderful plant in your herbal kit.

Yet what is so remarkable about this herb is that it can be combined with other plants to boost their healing properties. For instance, when combined in a tincture with white cedar, boneset and echinacea, it can blast its way through that common cold and obliterate sore throats and lingering infections. (Later on, we'll go into more detail about how you can make your own plant combinations.)

Meanwhile, it has been discovered that wild indigo contains polysaccharides along with proteins. These two discoveries have been proven in test tube studies to strengthen the immune system. And it is especially good at fighting influenza.



Generally, it is assumed that although wild indigo does a tremendous job at boosting our immune systems, it can be made even more powerful when combined with other herbs. Popular options to add to wild indigo include echinacea and goldenseal which both work to boost its already powerful healing power.

If you were inspired by the ease in which you can make your own echinacea tincture, then you'll be pleased to know that making your wild indigo tincture is just as simple. Just like before, soak a generous amount of the dried herb in an alcohol such as vodka and leave in a cool dark place for a minimum of 4 weeks.

Once your tincture is ready, you can take around 20-40 drops up to 3 times a day when you are most ill. Once your symptoms subside, you can lessen your dose to suit your needs.

How to make a wild indigo decoction

Wild indigo can also be taken as a decoction. This is even easier than the tincture to make and only takes around 15 minutes. Perfect for when you're immediately ill and don't have weeks to

sit around waiting for a tincture.

- To make your decoction, boil the root of the wild indigo plant in water for between 10 and 15 minutes.
- Wait for the mixture to cool slightly, then take half a teaspoon of the mixture when you need it.

What is so great about both tinctures and decoctions made from wild indigo is that they can be taken to alleviate the symptoms of illnesses such as colds and flus, but they can also be taken to prevent them.

Garlic

No, it's not just good for fighting vampires and adding to mayo. It's also fantastic at strengthening our immunity. We all know it as a tasty herb in some of our favorite food. And it's been in use for a staggering 5000 years! It has also, however, been part of traditional Chinese medicine for almost as long. In fact, it has been used for so long it is even mentioned in the Bible.



Over the centuries, many wise scholars have publicly discussed the benefits of garlic, from Hippocrates to Pliny the Elder and

Galen. (Not to be confused with Galen from Planet of the Apes. That was a different doctor.)

Many of these men touted the uses of garlic for the treatment of parasites, digestive stress and respiratory problems. However, it wasn't until 1858 that legendary French biologist, Louis Pasteur studied the precise antibacterial properties of the garlic bulb.

At the moment, there is almost endless amounts of research conducted into the healing properties of garlic, and there are too studies many studies to mention them all. However, some notable studies include the exploration of garlic's ability to lower blood pressure for the treatment of hypertension. It was concluded that participants who were given between 600 and 900 mg of garlic per day for 4 weeks had noticed a moderate decrease in blood pressure. (A side note to this is that the lowering of blood pressure was more noticeable in participants who already had high blood pressure. Those who had a normal rate of blood pressure did not obtain as significant a response.)

Meanwhile, another study showed how being given 900mg of garlic a day could decrease the rate at which arteries hardened. This is while also lowering cholesterol. Furthermore, when garlic was taken at a moderate dose throughout the winter months, it was shown to reduce the amount of colds suffered as well as the duration they lasted. This is because studies showed that garlic directly fights against infectious microbes, protecting the body from potential illness.

Yet garlic has also been proven to treat topical ailments such athlete's foot. This is because it contains a compound called ajoene which is a powerful antifungal chemical. And that's not all, it can also remove parasites from both people and their pets. Killing off nasties like hookworm, pin worm and roundworm.

Who knew such a humble spice could do so much?

So is it just as simple as chomping down on some garlic to gain its benefits? Almost. One of the most effective ways to consume garlic is to eat it raw. Of course, this won't be the most pleasant tasting thing you've ever eaten, and you'll definitely need some breath mints handy. But it is one of the best ways to fight infection while reaping its many benefits.

You might be wondering why eating it raw is preferable. After all, can't you just cook with it and get the same effects? Sadly, no. Garlic contains a sulphurous substance called allicin which is its most powerful healing ingredient. However, once a garlic bulb is heated up in the cooking process, this allicin gets destroyed. Meaning the best way to get all that allicin into your body is through ingesting the bulb raw. Interestingly, when the raw bulb is crushed, such as in the chewing process, the effect of allicin is actually increased.

If you're brave enough to eat raw garlic, then around 2-3 bulbs a day is best for fighting infection and giving your immune system an overall boost. However, it's important to note that you'll get the best benefits from eating it on an empty stomach.

But be careful. Doing this regularly can cause an imbalance in your stomach's flora. So you may want to eat foods rich in probiotics too.

If popping garlic bulbs on an empty stomach doesn't appeal to you, then you can also add raw garlic into food so you're masking the pungent taste while getting the benefits of the raw bulb.

My favorite way to consume raw garlic is in pesto which can then be added to dishes such as pasta or spread in sandwiches.

Pesto is one of the easiest things to make and can be made to your personal taste.

Below are 2 very simple recipes to follow to make your own

pesto.

1 - Wild Garlic Pesto

Ingredients:

- Wild garlic (as much as you like.) Make sure to keep the sprouts.
- A hard cheese such as a parmesan would be perfect.
- Nuts. Both pine and hazelnuts work well.
- Olive oil.
- A teaspoon of lemon juice.
- Salt and pepper to taste.

Instructions:

This dish couldn't be easier to make. Simply gather your wild garlic (both bulbs and leaves) and add to a food processor. Next add around 50g of hard cheese to the mixture along with an equal amount of nuts. Add lemon juice and as much olive oil as you like. Adding more will give the mixture a runnier consistency while less will make it drier and more gritty. Add your salt and pepper and simply blitz away for around 60 seconds.

2 - Garlic, Spinach and Basil Pesto

If all that wild garlic is too strong for you, then you can mix it with other herbs and spices. This recipe is just as easy as the last, but will require a few additional ingredients.

Ingredients:

- 3 bulbs of raw, crushed garlic.
- 100g fresh basil.
- 2 tablespoons of parmesan cheese.

- Chilli powder to taste.
- 50g of nuts (pine, hazel or Brazil taste great with basil).
- Olive oil.

Instructions:

Just like before add your ingredients to your blender and mix for 60 seconds.

What's great about making your own pesto is that there are no set amounts of ingredients, so you can add as little or as much of anything as you like. Personally, I love to load up on the spinach and add just enough basil to taste. No more than a few leaves. And of course, a spicy kick of chilli tastes wonderful together with the garlic. It's a heated and tangy mixture that tastes fabulous over potatoes. Who knew a potato salad could be considered medicine?

If you're certain that eating raw garlic isn't for you, then thankfully there are other ways you can get your allicin hit. Many health food shops and even supermarkets now sell garlic pills for a reasonable price and some, you'll be pleased to know, have zero odour.

Honeysuckle

This wonder herb has a long list of benefits. As well as being an immunostimulant, it is also antiviral, antibacterial, a decongestant, an astringent and a diuretic. It's also a fantastic antioxidant and has powerful anti-inflammatory properties.

Many people find great relief in honeysuckle from colds and flus and conditions that affect their throat and lungs such as tonsillitis, laryngitis, pneumonia and bronchitis.

Despite it being such a tremendous healer, you might wrongly

assume you have to find a special or expensive herbalist to find it. While seeking out a professional is advisable, you don't have to struggle to locate honeysuckle or pay a fortune for it. In fact, in North America it grows freely with some people even seeing it as quite a nuisance!

Usually, you can find it deep within thickets, forests and pastures or even along the roadside. You can also plant your own honeysuckle, but be warned, it can soon take over your garden.



With it being so accessible, you can easily pick some for yourself. Firstly gather the flowers, preferably the buds which are believed to have greater healing properties than their bloomed counterparts. You can safely consume the flowers by either drinking them in a tea, or creating a tincture.

However, you must take care to discern which species of honeysuckle you have harvested. Not all species of honeysuckle are good for your health. For some species such as the Japanese Honeysuckle, consuming the other parts of the plant such as the berries and leaves is harmless. But with others it can be

poisonous. So always be careful.

How to make honeysuckle syrup

If you want to take honeysuckle it couldn't be easier. If you have some sugar in your pantry and access to water, then you're good to go to make your own syrup.

- Add 2 cups of water to a pan and add 1 cup of fresh honeysuckle flowers.
- Next, bring the water to a boil. As soon as the mixture reaches boiling point, lower the heat and let it simmer gently.
- Once the mixture has reduced and there is half as much water left in the pan, strain it and put the flowers aside. You can choose to throw these out if you like. But they can also be composted. Now you'll be left with the flower infused water to which you can add the sugar. You can add as much or as little as you like, but it is advised to add around a cup of sugar of your choice.
- Stir the mixture vigorously and pour into a jar to be refrigerated.
- Kept chilled, it can be preserved for up to 6 months.

Now that you've got the syrup made, you may wonder what to do with it. When we think of medicinal syrups, we tend to think of the foul tasting spoonfuls we were fed as children to soothe our sore throats and coughs. Thankfully, honeysuckle syrup doesn't have to be a chore to take, and there are many things you can do with it. For example, you may choose to sweeten desserts with it or pour it over waffles or pancakes. You can even bake with it or use it as a replacement for honey. Or you can use it as a

sugar substitute for sweetening tea. But of course, there's nothing stopping you from taking a spoonful of the sweet stuff too if you need it.

How to make honeysuckle tincture

If a sweet syrup isn't to your liking, then you may opt to make a tincture. Once again, it's incredibly easy to make and only requires 3 ingredients:

- Honeysuckle flowers.
- Vodka or any strong alcohol.
- A glass jar.

Instructions:

Thankfully, there are only 3 easy to follow steps.

- Add the honeysuckle flowers to your jar. You can use as many as you like, but a good amount would be around a cup's worth.
- Cover the flowers in your alcohol of choice.
- Let sit for at least 4 weeks. The longer you leave the tincture, the more potent it will be. But if you do only want to wait 4 weeks, then you can "activate" the flowers and quicken the process by shaking the jar once a day. This will make sure the ingredients from the flowers really permeate their way into the vodka.

Prickly Ash

This plant has always been popular in the world of herbal medicine due to its versatility and strength. Like many herbal

medicines, prickly ash had a place within Native American society where it was used to treat many ailments such as stomach cramps, skin infections and sore throats. It was also used as a way in which to increase the production of saliva. Later on, during the 1800s, physicians would prescribe their patients prickly ash to smooth out any digestive issues and relieve constipation.



However, it was also used to give the overall immune system a much needed boost during times where illness was prevalent. This was especially the case during the cholera epidemic.

One other use for prickly ash is as a numbing agent for toothache. This is because it contains an alkaloid called herculin along with alkaloids. This means that when placed on a specific area such as an achy tooth, it will create a feeling of numbness. This is why in certain places, the plant is also called the Toothache Tree. This can be applied to the area by chewing on the twigs or turned into a powder that can be brushed either along the gum line or directly onto the tooth.

Usually, it is the bark and berries of the prickly ash plant that is consumed as a tincture. Or for those who are brave and not afraid of a tingly mouth, in tea form.

Taken in very small doses, it can work as a feel-good tonic that gently boosts the immune system while adding some much needed movement and energy to the lymphatic system.

One thing that should be noted about prickly ash is that although it can be a wonderful remedy, it can also counteract anticoagulant medication such as blood thinners. And it must never be used if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

If you think that prickly ash is right for you there are 3 ways to take it. Supplements are a popular way to get a high concentration of its active ingredients with minimal effort and you can buy prickly ash powder in tablet form. Depending on what ailment you're wishing to treat, dosages can vary between 250mg to 750mg. So always make sure you consult a professional to decide what is the best dosage for you.

If you feel that pills aren't for you, and you'd rather embark on your prickly ash journey through your own kitchen, then you can decide to make your own tincture. Once made, you can take up to 20 drops up to 3 times a day.

Or, if tea is more to your taste, you can simmer 1 teaspoon of prickly ash bark in hot water for 15-20 minutes. Drink one cup twice a day.

Usnea

This peculiar sounding plant also has the rather endearing common name of Old Man's Beard. And what sets it apart from the other herbs on this list is that it's not a plant at all, but rather a fluffy lichen. This means it somewhat lays in the middle of the spectrum between an algae and a fungus.

Those two things might not sound to be the most appealing of things to consume, but usnea has a long history within medicine. It was used in Ancient Egypt, Greece and China and its popularity has remained steady for almost 3000 years.

Historically, it was used to treat indigestion, however, recent research has shown it to be beneficial for common colds, coughs and sore throats. This is because it has terrific antiseptic properties while also containing something called mucilage which is very effective at tackling coughs. In addition, there is evidence to show it can directly fight against microbes. Meaning those nasty little germs can be destroyed before they can do any damage.



However, it does have a bitter taste. So to make it more palatable, many people choose to mix it with other plants with soothing, healing properties, such as elderberry.

This can be done by blending an usnea tincture with other ingredients. Let's have a look now at how you can make your own usnea tincture.

How to make an usnea tincture

I know we've gone over the tincture making process before, but with usnea, you might find that the process gets a little more complicated. Don't worry, it's not too complex, but it does require a little more of your attention. You'll at least be pleased to know that although there is more work required, it'll take just days to make, rather than weeks.

Ingredients:

- Fresh usnea (about 1 cup is recommended).
- Alcohol with at least 40% alcohol content.
- Something to grind your usnea with such as a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder.
- A glass jar.
- A crock pot.

Instructions:

- Firstly, take your usnea and grind it. Some people choose to use a pestle and mortar for this step. This is because, although it takes longer, it doesn't heat up the plant like a coffee grinder would. Therefore ensuring that the plant's active ingredients are not compromised or "cooked out" in the heating process. However, if you'd rather not spend a long time bent over a pestle and mortar, a coffee grinder is perfectly fine. Just make sure to not heat it up too much. You can do this by using it in short, sharp blasts for a few seconds at a time.
- Now you should be left with a green powder that doesn't look too dissimilar to matcha tea.

- Next, place your powder into your jar and pour over your alcohol of choice making sure all of the powder is covered.
- Now it's time to switch on your crock pot. Turning it on to the lowest heat setting, place your jar in the center and surround it with water.
- At this point, all the hard work is done and you can leave it for around 3-4 days.
- It is advised that once a day, you take the jar out of the crock pot. This is for 2 reasons. Firstly, as the slow cooker has been simmering, water will be evaporated into the air and will need to be topped up. This may seem obvious, but if you were to top up the slow cooker while the jar was still inside it, it would most likely explode. This is due to pressure building up inside the jar over the many hours spent in hot water combined with the temperature changes of the new water being added to the old. So, taking the jar out while you top up the water is definitely advisable!
- Secondly, you'll want to take the jar out to let it cool. Once cool, unscrew the lid and release any gaseous build-up from inside the jar. Once done, place the lid back on and return to the refilled slow cooker for another 24 hours.
- After your 3-4 days are finished your tincture is ready. All you have to do now is strain the usnea from the alcohol. You can do this using a mesh material such as a strip of muslin, cheesecloth or a clean tea towel. I have my own set of Egyptian cotton tea towels especially for this straining process and find that they work just as

well as cheesecloth. You can, however, also use a coffee filter if you prefer.

With your mixture now strained, you'll be left with an earthy brown liquid that you can take as needed. Some people swear by taking up to 60 drops 4 times a day. But if you're unsure, simply start off slowly by taking a few drops at a time and working your way up until you feel like you've reached the correct dosage.

Although herbal medicine is a science, it is also deeply intuitive. Especially when you yourself are involved in the making of your own medicine. So although it is 100% advisable that you refer to a medical professional, you may find that your body will also give you some guidance in telling you what you need.

Myrrh

Along with gold and frankincense we all became familiar with myrrh when we learned the story of the Three Wise Men. I remember as a child finding the gift of myrrh to be most peculiar. What would baby Jesus want with some bits of a weird plant? And how could it ever match up with gold?

Although it may not be as pretty as gold, it is certainly valuable. Traditionally grown in the desert, it can be found as a shrub growing throughout Africa and the Middle East. Technically, it's not quite a herb, but is rather considered to be a gum or resin that is taken from the tree called the commiphora myrrha. However, like several other remedies discussed in this book, it is often included under the umbrella of herbal medicine due to it being harvested from a plant and being an effective, natural healer.

Usually, it goes through the process of being turned into a resin which comes out a deep reddish brown color. A rather macabre though interesting fact is that it was once used to preserve mummies in Ancient Egypt.

Meanwhile in Ancient China it was used to combat bad breath and toothache. This is because it can be turned into something called volatile oils, which can then be turned into a natural antibacterial mouthwash. Yet these magic volatile oils don't just kill bugs in the mouth, they can also rid the body of parasites.

A clinical trial was conducted where patients were treated for the tongue-twisting parasitic infection, schistosomiasis. They were given both myrrh resin and its volatile oils. Incredibly, at the end of the trial, a staggering 98% of the participants were completely cured.

Similarly, a different trial administered 10mg of both myrrh resin and its volatile oils for every 2.2 pounds (1kg) of body weight the patient held. This was administered for just 3 days. After the three days, 91.7% of the patients were cured. But what about the remaining 8.3% of patients?



Well, out of the remaining participants who were not cured in the initial 3 days of treatment, 77% of them were cured when the treatment was carried out for a further 6 days. This eventually brought the cure rate of schistosomiasis up to almost 100% with

just the use of myrrh alone.

Later on, it would gain popularity for treatment of diseases such as syphilis and even leprosy. However, in recent years, it is known as a traditional herbal medicine with powerful anti-inflammatory agents.

It is also fantastic at boosting our immune systems. This is for two reasons. Firstly, it kills infectious microbes while secondly, it stimulates the production and activity of macrophages, a white blood cell. You don't need to look further than myrrh to find an effective, natural treatment to heal our bodies and boost our ability to fight infections, bugs and germs.

If you think myrrh would be great for you, there are many remedies you can make yourself to gain its benefits. But outlined below, are two of, not only my favorites, but the most cost effective and powerful recipes around.

Myrrh infused oil

Not to be confused with essential oil, infusing oil is simply the act of letting the active ingredients of a herb be soaked into an oil. These oils can then be used directly on the skin or added to body lotions, butters, soaps and just about anything else you can think of.

What I like to do with infused oils is to use them topically, particularly as a facial oil.

With all the nutrients packed into herbs like myrrh, it's no surprise that they can fade dark spots, even skin tone and smooth out fine lines and wrinkles. Think that sounds good to you? Then read on.

Making an infused oil is super easy and requires 3 things:

- Myrrh chunks.

- A glass jar that can be sealed.
- A carrier oil. This may depend on your skin type. If you are prone to easily clogged pores, then you'll require an oil that is not comedogenic. Comedogenic oils include olive and coconut oil. Oils at the opposite end of the spectrum that do not block your pores include sunflower, argan, jojoba and almond. Almond is wonderful for erasing dark circles under your eyes so is a terrific choice if you suffer from tired skin. If you are looking for an oil that's light, smells great and is easy to apply, then jojoba is the one to go for. This is because its texture is almost identical to the skin's natural oil, making it easy to absorb. Sunflower oil, on the other hand, is a great all rounder and works as a generally good moisturizer for most skin types. It's also very easy to find and affordable.

Once you have chosen your carrier oil, you can set to work on breaking up your myrrh chunks. It can be quite a challenge to take a large piece of the resin and shrink it down into small enough pieces. But a mess-free way in which you can do this is to place your resin in a sandwich bag and smash it with a rolling pin. That way, you'll be left with manageable sized pieces that will fit nicely in your jar.

Now that you've got your oil and myrrh chunks ready all you have to do is follow 3 steps.

- Place your myrrh in the jar and cover with oil.
- Heat the oil. An efficient way to do this is to place it in a bain marie for 2-3 hours.
- Strain the oil free from the myrrh pieces so you're left with the infusion.

Now you'll be left with your myrrh infused oil to use for any skin ailments. It can be a great healer for skin complaints such as eczema, wounds, ulcers, acne or inflamed itchy skin. It can also be used to massage skin. Not only will this give you a sensual experience, but it will relax both your body and mind. Also, through the motion of massage, the body will absorb the myrrh oil which will soothe the body while aiding the elimination of toxins. It is especially good for relaxation when you are suffering from muscular pain, tension headaches or menstrual cramps.

Or perhaps you'd rather use your oil for your hair. Not only can it heal an itchy flaky scalp and prevent dandruff, but it can also stimulate blood flow and increase hair growth. As well as healing skin ailments, myrrh works wonders at eliminating toxins and bacteria in the mouth. Which is why it works great as a mouthwash.

Myrrh mouthwash

Want healthier teeth and gums and to fight tooth decay without having to buy chemical laden mouthwashes? Then this bacteria busting DIY mouthwash is for you.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of water. This can be filtered or bottled.
- 1 teaspoon of salt. Sea salt or Himalayan salt is preferred as it has not been as processed as table salt. However, if you only have access to table salt, it will work.
- 2 drops of myrrh essential oil. It does have to be the essential oil and not the infused oil.

Instructions:

- Simply heat up your water and add in your salt and

myrrh. If you'd like your mouthwash to taste more like a conventional mouthwash, you can also add in a few drops of peppermint essential oil. Not only will this give you that expected minty taste, but it will also add some extra bacteria fighting power.

- Once the water reaches a temperature where all the salt has dissolved, remove from the heat and let it cool.
- You can use as often as you like.

Myrrh has many great uses for healing internal ailments too, and this can be done through using it in essential oil form. For example, if you're suffering from a sore throat, cough or runny nose, place a couple of drops in a bowl of boiling water and breathe in the steam. Inhaling the oil this way lets it quickly be absorbed into your body so you'll reap its benefits almost immediately. You can do this as many times as you need to. And don't worry, it's perfectly safe and approved by the FDA. Meanwhile, if you are suffering from stomach issues such as cramps, diarrhoea or indigestion, you can consume myrrh oil and tinctures for fast relief.

Spilanthes

Also known as paracress, this is another powerhouse of a plant that really packs a punch when fighting against infection. Much clinical research has concluded that spilanthes can fight against harmful bacteria and combat the symptoms of many illnesses such as colds flus and sinus infections.

It has many actions other than being an immunostimulant. It is also antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and works as a sialagogue, which means it activates the production of saliva. Therefore, if you choose to consume the fresh spilanthes plant, you'll have to be prepared to drool a lot!

As it's very versatile and reacts well with other herbal medicines, it can be mixed with both echinacea and Japanese Honeysuckle to make it even more powerful. Or it can be added to salt water which you can gargle to relieve a sore throat.



However, it can also be used as a preventative measure and general way of boosting your health and vitality. Some people also choose to take it at the onset of an illness when they first start to notice those first signs of a runny nose or scratchy throat.

However, its real talent shines through when used to treat toothache. Which is why in many countries it is also referred to as the toothache plant. This is because it contains a compound called spilanthol. This works in conjunction with bioflavonoids to stop little things called prostaglandins. But what the heck does that mean? In essence, it means that spilanthol can work to stop the brain thinking the body is in pain. And as spilanthol also has such great anti-bacterial properties, it means it works wonders for getting rid of toothache.

If you're suffering from toothache and would like to use spilanthol to soothe your pain, then you can always give some

home-made tea a try.

Spilanthes tea is easy to make and its mild peppery taste can be complemented well with other herbs, especially ones with a bit of a kick such as ginger.

Spilanthes toothache tea

Ingredients:

- Dried spilanthes. It is usually advised to use dehydrated flowers. And, as they are quite powerful (remember the drool!), aim to use no more than 2 per cup. For this recipe, as we'll be making 2 cups of the tea, we'll be opting for 4.
- 1/2 teaspoon of grated fresh ginger.
- A generous handful of dried peppermint leaves. This will not only enhance the taste, but it will also give an extra anti-bacteria boost for tooth infections.
- A handful of fresh lemon balm leaves. This subtle herb makes a great addition to this tea for its ability to calm and relax the mind and body.
- 2 cups of water.

Instructions:

Making the tea is easy.

- Add all the ingredients to a pan and boil.
- Once the water reaches boiling point, remove from the heat and let steep for 10 minutes.
- Pour and serve.

To let your teeth get the maximum benefit of the mixture, take a

sip and let the tea sit around your aching tooth for as long as possible. Soon enough, you'll start to notice the pain subside.

Warning

A word of warning must be given to people with allergies to ragweed and chamomile. If you have shown a sensitivity to these herbs, then you may also have a negative reaction to spilanthes and it could be a serious one. It has been known that some recipients of spilanthes have had their throat close up. So definitely consult a professional before taking it and always start with a very small dose.

CHAPTER 4



HERBAL IMMUNOMODULATORS

As well as herbal immunostimulants, there are also herbal immunomodulators. By nature, these are slower acting than their immunostimulant counterparts and have longer lasting effects.

They go by different names, and some herbalists choose to refer to them as deep immune tonics or amphoterics. Unlike immunostimulants, they are not taken to have fast-acting consequences or to stimulate the body. Instead, they are used to work gently and harmoniously with the body's natural healing processes in order to bring balance and calm.

Because of this, they can be more widely used and are less likely to have aggravating results among more sensitive people.

However, don't be fooled by their gentle nature. Their positive effects are powerful too. And they are very efficient at bringing much needed balance and strength to our endocrine and nervous systems while boosting our immunity and overall health.

As you will soon discover, a great many of these immunomodulators are also known as adaptogens. These are herbs that work intuitively with the body to help us adapt to stress, both mentally and physically. There are many popular kinds of adaptogens such as peppermint and ashwaghandha, herbs that are both wonderful treatments for lowering the stress hormone cortisol and bringing peace to the body.

But how exactly does an immunomodulator work as an adaptogen? And how can it really bring all this peace and harmony to our bodies? To explain this, we'll head over to the science side of herbal medicine. In essence, herbal adaptogens within the immunomodulator category, work by bringing the endocrine system and nervous system together.

They do this by equalising the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. This is also known as the HPA for short, and is a feedback network which joins together the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland and the adrenal glands. The function of this rather complicated sounding network is to process stress and

regulate hormonal function, which in turn affects our immune system.

So these humble adaptogens can aid this process through the regulation of stress that our bodies have to cope with which means that our body can do its job of fighting infection without pesky stress getting in the way.

Due to the adaptogenic nature of immunomodulators, and their gentleness on the body, they can be taken every day. This is especially advisable during the colder seasons where you are more at risk of catching an infection.

Furthermore, many immunomodulators have gained in popularity in recent years for the treatment of cancer. This is mainly because they have powerful anti-inflammatory agents. Of course, they can't cure cancer, but they can lessen some of the symptoms, and can work congruently with conventional cancer treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

Let's now take a look at some of the most effective and widely used immunomodulators.

Ashwagandha

Also known as Indian Ginseng and Winter Cherry, ashwagandha is part of the pepper family, and can be found in many places in India and Africa. However, due to its increasing popularity, it is easily accessible within Europe and the United States too, and can be found in many health food stores.

Traditionally, the root of the plant is used for its potent medicinal purposes and has its place within Ayurvedic medicine, one of the world's most established medical systems that dates back 3000 years to India. In fact, its name can be translated from Sanskrit to mean the scent of a horse. This is not only because of its distinct musky smell, but because it is said to give you the strength of a stallion.

It has many uses such as improving concentration while increasing mental and physical energy levels. This is because it contains little things called anolides which have been proven to fight inflammation.

Meanwhile, various studies have shown that it can lower blood sugar levels. For example, one recent test tube study concluded that it boosted the production of insulin. But further research was also conducted with participants to test the effects of ashwagandha on people with and without

diabetes. Remarkably, it was discovered that it could lower blood sugar levels in both sets of participants.



Additionally, recent research has been undertaken to ascertain if it can fight cancer. Although much more research needs to be done to discover if this is the case, some preliminary findings have shown there could be some promise in the theory. For example, a compound within ashwagandha, withaferin, was proven to help a function called apoptosis – the destruction of cancerous cells.

Further animal studies have shown that it could possibly treat various types of cancer such as breast, lung, colon and ovarian. An example of this is the treatment of mice with ovarian tumors. When treated with withaferin, it was observed they experienced a 75% reduction in tumor size. And it also slowed down or stopped the spread of the cancerous cells to other parts of the body.

Another remarkable use for ashwagandha is the reduction of the stress hormone cortisol. This is released by the little glands in our bodies, adrenal glands when we are having a chronic response to stress, but also when we're hungry and our blood sugar levels dip.

What's dangerous about the production of cortisol is that when it is elevated for prolonged periods of time it can play havoc with our bodies and cause a range of symptoms. These include:

- An increased risk of infection.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Extreme fatigue.
- Risk of developing high blood pressure.
- Yet it can also be responsible for an increase in fat storage deposits around our stomachs.

Thankfully, ashwagandha can help combat these high levels of cortisol. One study using highly stressed participants found that those who took the highest dose throughout the trial reported a 30% reduction in the negative symptoms of stress.

Because of this plant's incredible ability to lower cortisol levels, and stress in general, it's no surprise that it can lower levels of anxiety too. One group of researchers discovered during a trial that ashwagandha could literally block the stress pathways in the brain by taking control of the way the nervous system sends chemical signals.

Also, a 6 week clinical trial reported that 88% of people taking a dose of ashwagandha had reduced symptoms of anxiety.

Therefore, it would make sense that if it could minimise the unpleasant symptoms of stress and anxiety that it could also aid other areas of our mental and emotional well-being.

One clinical study that took place over 60 days with 64 participants who suffered from extreme stress and depression revealed that participants experienced a 79% decrease in depressive symptoms. This is in comparison to a 10% decrease in participants who took the placebo.

Surprisingly, ashwagandha's benefits are still forthcoming. And one unlikely benefit of taking the herb is that it can boost levels of testosterone in men thus increasing fertility.

When 75 infertile men were treated with ashwagandha, they discovered that their sperm count increased and their testosterone levels spiked. And that's not all. It was also discovered that their antioxidant levels had increased too.

At the same time, a study was being done to determine how ashwagandha could treat stress among men. One peculiar, though fascinating outcome was

that 14% of the participants' partners became pregnant within 3 months.

Since ashwagandha has been proven to boost testosterone levels, it makes sense that it would also boost muscle mass. And when given to regular gym goers, it doubled the percentage of body fat loss.

Finally, if you weren't impressed enough with the positive effects of ashwagandha, you may be surprised to learn it can also lower cholesterol.

At this point you might be off your seat ready to run out and grab some ashwagandha for yourself. But before you do, you might ask yourself if it is safe for you, or whether it has any side effects.

Firstly, although it is regarded widely as being a gentle herbal remedy with many health benefits, there has been no research done in its long term effects. Therefore, at the moment we are uncertain what it can do to the body if it is taken for a prolonged period of time. For example years.

What we do know, however, is that it must not be taken by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. And should also be avoided by people who have autoimmune diseases such as those who suffer from type 1 diabetes or lupus.

Furthermore, it's important to note that it can raise the hormone levels in our thyroid. Although this is not significant for many people, it might pose problems for those who suffer from thyroid diseases.

If you are in any doubt about taking ashwagandha, be sure to consult your physician. But if you do choose to introduce this wonderful healing herb into your healthcare routine, then it is suggested that you take between 450-500mg daily. You can do this through taking it in either capsule form, or by ingesting the root or powder.

Thankfully, taking it in powder form doesn't have to be a chore. In fact, you can make it part of a tasty breakfast routine by adding it to your morning smoothie. Not only will it be easy, nutritious and tasty, but it'll boost your energy levels as soon as you're out of bed and will keep you feeling great throughout the day.

Energy boosting ashwagandha breakfast smoothie

Ingredients:

- 1 large banana.

- 300ml milk of choice. Almond and oat are options that are not only dairy free, but taste great too. But you can also choose, soya, rice or any milk at all.
- 2 teaspoons of ashwagandha powder. You can either buy the powder or open a few capsules.
- A pinch of cinnamon.
- 1 tablespoon of nut butter. Is there anything greater than bananas and peanut butter? Of course, you can always choose almond or hazelnut instead.
- 2 heaped tablespoons of oats.
- 1 heaped teaspoon of your sweetener of choice. Apple sauce is a popular choice, but others may choose to add a handful of prunes, dates, apricots or agave nectar.

Simply whiz all the ingredients in a blender for 60 seconds and voila!

Cordyceps



Another powerful herb that technically isn't a herb at all is the cordyceps mushroom. With its medicinal roots dating back to Ancient China, it was used inside Chinese Emperors' palaces, and it's no surprise because this remedy is certainly fit for a king. Despite being a mushroom, it enters the world of herbal medicine due to its natural ability to boost one's immune system in a similar manner to many herbs. Cordyceps straddle the fine line between being a plant and a herb. However, they are neither and can be described more accurately as the sprouting body of a fungus.

These little mushrooms go by many names such as Himalayan Viagra, Winter Worm, Caterpillar Fungus and Dong Chong, and can be discovered across many parts of Asia.

The first official record of the mushroom was written in 620 AD during the Tang Dynasty. Soon, its use would be widespread among Ancient Chinese physicians who used it for a whole range of ailments and prescribed it to their patients in the form of tonics.

However, its power only became known to the rest of the world during the 15th century when French priests brought it to Europe. It would take 250 years before people latched onto its healing properties. Only then was it written about in a medical text – The New Compilation of Materia Medica. But from then on, its popularity has snowballed and now it is as loved as ever.

Its principle use is to empower the immune system by activating the white blood cells. And it has been shown to increase white blood cell production by 74%. In addition, it was discovered that these magical mushrooms contain a vast amount of polysaccharides which enables our immune system to defend itself. This means that due to its ability to fight infection, it can be taken for a wide variety of ailments, or indeed any illness that needs you to be at your strongest.

One interesting use was originally discovered by Yak herders in Tibet who needed to help their lungs cope with the high altitude of the mountains. It was found that when taking cordyceps they could breathe easier.

It was later discovered that this was due to the mushroom's ability to process oxygen more efficiently. It's no surprise then that people around the rest of the world have sought out the benefits of cordyceps for their own breathing difficulties. And today many people rely on the phenomenal fungus for illnesses such as bronchitis, asthma and even emphysema.

With its track record for making us stronger, it would make sense that people would use cordyceps to enhance their physical capabilities, especially athletes who are looking for a natural and safe way to increase strength and stamina.

However, during the 1993 National Games in China, cordyceps would see itself become the center of some controversy. One of the women's field teams at the time broke a staggering 9 world records! The authorities immediately

placed them under investigation suspecting them of taking illegal performance enhancing drugs. But soon they discovered that all these ladies were guilty of taking were these little mushrooms.

So how exactly did a herb help the team break 9 world records? It is theorized that cordyceps promotes the cellular turnover of the molecule that releases energy into our body. But couple this with what we talked about previously with its ability to advance our oxygen intake makes cordyceps absolutely kick butt.

But what if I told you it could do even more?

Well, it's not called Himalayan Viagra for nothing. With its ability to raise testosterone levels it wouldn't be surprising to learn that it can also increase blood circulation to the genitals. In men, this means an increase in stamina, erectile function and longevity. While in women it can be helpful to take during the menopause when hormones are in flux and sex drives aren't what they used to be.

Cordyceps are also great for those of you who would rather eat their medicine than take it in a pill, tincture or oil form.

Mild in taste compared to other mushrooms, they make a great addition to many dishes, especially pasta where they have the perfect texture and consistency to accompany linguine or spaghetti.

Cordyceps spaghetti with white wine and shallots

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces of fresh cordyceps. They can usually be found fresh and ready to cook in many Asian supermarkets.
- Lashings of olive oil.
- 2 small shallots, chopped.
- Pinch of chopped chives.
- Pinch of chilli flakes. This is optional but tastes great if you like a little extra kick.
- Sea salt to taste.
- 4 ounces of spaghetti. Make it healthier by either choosing whole

wheat, or opt for brands that make their pasta from legumes such as lentils or black beans.

- Half a glass of white wine. You can choose any wine you like, but a sweeter choice would taste wonderful with the shallots.

Instructions:

- Add your olive oil to a heated pan and add the shallots. When they become soft, add the wine.
- Keeping on a high heat, wait until the wine begins to reduce and you are left with half the mixture.
- Add the cordyceps to the wine and shallots and lower the heat to medium.
- While the cordyceps are softening, you can get to work on the spaghetti. Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add a pinch of salt and add the spaghetti. It is recommended that you remove it from the water once it reaches al dente. A softer texture of spaghetti will taste somewhat bland and wilted when mixed with the taste of the cordyceps.
- Add the spaghetti to the pan with the shallots, wine and mushrooms. Add your chilli flakes and chives, make sure it's heated well through and serve.

Not a fan of pasta and would rather have an easy to make soup? Then a simple to make mushroom broth might be the answer. After all, what's better than a nourishing soup when you're feeling under the weather?

This cordyceps broth is the perfect winter pick me up that will give you a boost of energy, some much needed hydration and the nutrients needed to fight off bugs and germs. And what's more, you don't need to source your own fresh cordyceps. For this recipe the powder will do just fine.

Immune boosting cordyceps broth

Ingredients:

- Tablespoon of olive oil.
- 1 large onion.

- 2 fresh cloves of garlic.
- 3 carrots.
- 2 large leeks.
- Salt to taste.
- 8 cups of water.
- A pinch of dried thyme.
- 1/2 a cup of cordyceps powder.
- 4 vegetable stock cubes. Or 4 teaspoons of vegetable bouillon powder if you'd prefer.
- 1 cup of mushrooms. Chestnut would taste great, but you can also choose shiitake.

Instructions:

- In a large pot, place your olive oil. While the oil is heating up, you can chop your carrots, leeks, mushrooms, onion and garlic.
- Once the oil is hot, add the chopped vegetables to the pot and fry gently for around 5 minutes to soften.
- Add the water and bring to the boil.
- Add your stock cubes and thyme. You can also add any salt and pepper to taste and a quick pinch of chilli flakes wouldn't hurt either.
- Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for an hour.
- Now fully cooked, you can either eat the broth as a chunky soup, or you can blend until smooth.
- Add the cordyceps powder. Stir well and serve steaming hot.

It is important to know that cordyceps, being a fungus, are not suitable for those who suffer from an allergy or sensitivity to fungi. There are no fatal or serious effects of taking cordyceps if you are allergic, but some unpleasant symptoms have presented themselves such as a dry mouth, loss of appetite

and stomach distress.

Holy Basil

Not to be confused with the herb we sprinkle on our food, this plant is also known as tulsi. With its roots in the ancient Indian Ayurvedic tradition, it is known amongst its users as the queen of the herbs.

Like many of the herbs in this book, holy basil is an adaptogen, meaning it can treat a wide range of conditions in a gentle manner that is in harmony with our body. Currently, it is mostly used for treating stress and generally enhancing the immune system's ability to fight infection. However it can be used to treat a whole range of illnesses due to its anti-inflammatory properties.

What's so unusual about holy basil is that all the parts of the plant can be used to treat different ailments. For example, the leaves and seeds can treat malaria, while its fresh flowers can combat the symptoms of bronchitis. Meanwhile, the entire plant can treat stomach ailments such as diarrhoea and vomiting. An essential oil made from the plant works wonders to take away the itch and pain from bug bites.



Much research has been done to figure out how this type of basil can be so effective and it's mainly put down to its magnificently high nutritional content. For example it contains high levels of both vitamin A and C, calcium, iron and zinc and vast amounts of chlorophyll.

It is also exceedingly high in anti-oxidants, meaning it can both detox and

cleanse the body while defending us against germs and toxins. It is also antibacterial, antifungal and an analgesic. Because of all this, it has been used by many people to cure many serious skin problems such as ulcers and acne as well as wounds from surgery.

Similarly to ashwagandha, it can also do wonders for lowering blood sugar and cholesterol. But it really excels in the field of mental health where it has been shown to dramatically reduce levels of anxiety.

The results of a study published in the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine concluded that holy basil works similarly to anti-depressant medication. This was based on the findings from research done where participants were each given 500mg of holy basil a day. At the end of the study, the participants didn't only feel less depressed and anxious, but they also reported being more sociable.

It is mostly recommended that holy basil is consumed in tea form. However, this isn't popular with everyone because of the herb's unusual taste. Therefore, for those of you who are not fond of the taste, you can find alternative ways to ingest it. For instance, you can take it in pill form or as a tincture.

However, some people do enjoy its spicy taste. Especially those who enjoy spicy food and it is a popular addition to many Thai dishes such as stir fry.

One stir fry dish in particular, Pad Kra Prow translates as *stir fried with holy basil*. Let's take a look at how to cook it up now.

Pad Kra Prow

Ingredients:

- 4 cloves of garlic.
- 4 chillies. (Bird's eye are suggested, but if these are too spicy then by all means choose a milder variety.)
- 500g of either beef, chicken, or meat substitute.
- 1 teaspoon of brown sugar.
- 1 large onion.
- As many green beans as you like.

- 2 tablespoons of fish sauce.
- 2 tablespoons of soy sauce (preferably light but dark is also fine).
- And of course a large handful of fresh holy basil leaves.

Instructions:

- In a blender, add your garlic and chillies and blend until they become a smooth paste.
- Fry the paste in some vegetable oil on a medium heat until it turns a light brown color.
- Now you can add your meat to the mixture and lightly fry until cooked all the way through.
- Begin to add the rest of your ingredients, tossing in the fish sauce, soy sauce and sugar.
- Toss in the chillies and green beans and cook for a further minute until they soften slightly.
- As a finishing touch, add your holy basil leaves and stir well.
- Serve over rice or noodles.
- And as an extra touch, top with a fried or sliced boiled egg.

Siberian Ginseng

Also known as the magical sounding eleuthero, this herb is another adaptogen with a long history of use within Asia. It can mostly be found in Japan, China, North and South Korea as well as some areas of Southern Russia. Although it may share some of its name with American Ginseng or True Ginseng, it is actually very different and holds many different properties. It gets its peculiar name, eleuthero from the elements it contains called eleutherosides which are rich in vital ingredients.

It is also versatile because of the many ways it can be taken. For instance it can be consumed in liquid form, such as a syrup or tincture, as a powder, in tablet form, or dried out and drunk in a tea.



The Siberian ginseng is a distinct looking plant that can grow up to ten feet tall. With long branches covered in thorns, it sprouts colorful yellow and purple flowers that form an umbrella shape. During the warmer months, these flowers turn into juicy black berries.

As an adaptogen, it works congruently with the body to manage stress and boost the efficacy of our immune systems. There are many traditional uses for Siberian ginseng, so let's take a look now at some of its potential benefits.

Firstly, it can boost your immune system and help you fight off colds and flus. Russian researchers discovered that if taken within 72 hours of experiencing the symptoms of colds and flus, participants felt a reduction in these symptoms and also a decrease in the duration of their illness. This was especially the case when mixed with another herb, green chiretta.

In another study, it was found that patients who took Siberian ginseng had an increase in t-cells, a kind of lymphocyte that strengthens your immune system.

Siberian ginseng has also been shown to enhance our mental performance. And one study showed that people who took the herb had an improved memory and greater level of mental alertness.

Yet just like improving mental performance, it can also strengthen muscles and improve overall physical strength.

With its ability to strengthen the body in a holistic capacity, it can also help the healing of wounds and generally speed up the healing process of many skin conditions. The little eleutherosides have been seen to work their magic on the healing of ulcers in diabetic patients. And it has even been seen to prevent ulcers forming in the first place.

But that's not the only reason diabetic patients should seek out Siberian ginseng. For patients suffering from type-2 diabetes, they'd be happy to know that it can greatly reduce insulin resistance.

A study was conducted in 2013 where type-2 diabetic patients were given 480mg of Siberian ginseng and it was soon discovered that their blood sugar levels were both lowered and stabilized.

There are many other claims given to this wonder herb but most of these require further research and exploration. For example, it has been claimed to stop nerve damage, improve the efficiency of lymph nodes, reduce edema, heal respiratory infections, limit the symptoms of estrogen withdrawal during menopause, build bone density and even prevent cancer.

However, despite Siberian ginseng being a mainstay in the herbal medicine world for hundreds of years, it is a relative newcomer to modern medicine. Therefore, there is a lot of scientific research that still needs to be done to ascertain how it will fit into modern medicine.

If you think that Siberian ginseng is for you, then it is a fantastic little herb to add to your natural medicine cabinet. However, it can have some interactions with other medications. For example, it cannot be mixed with the following:

- Anti-depressants
- Sedatives
- Ginkgo biloba
- Alcohol
- Allergy medications
- Liver medications
- Blood thinners
- Hormone regulators

Furthermore, like many medicines, some people have reported mild side effects such as headaches, insomnia, drowsiness and skin rashes.

If you are ever in doubt, always consult your physician.

Astralagus



Unlike Siberian ginseng, astragalus has undergone more rigorous research, especially looking into the link between its medicinal properties and their effects on immunity.

For example, there is evidence to show that taking astragalus can make our bodies produce more of those much needed white blood cells to fight infection and inflammation. Furthermore, it has been shown to kill bacteria and viruses. This means it would be great at fighting off that cold that's been annoying you.

Further studies have also been done into its ability to fight heart disease. One clinical trial was conducted with patients who had recently suffered heart failure. Along with their conventional hospital treatment, they were given 2.25 grams of astragalus twice a day and monitored closely. It was revealed that their hearts were healing far better than the patients who were just given conventional treatment alone. This is because it is thought that astragalus can widen blood vessels so that more blood can be pumped to the heart. Thus increasing the heart's strength and functionality. Also, when doing research into myocarditis, a condition that inflames the heart, astragalus was seen to reduce the symptoms.

But the heart isn't the only organ it can help. Because of its ability to widen blood vessels and increase blood flow, it also means it can improve the function of our kidneys and their ability to filter out toxins from our body.

For example, when our kidneys are not working to full capacity and are struggling to do their job, one thing that starts to become noticeable is a build up of something called proteinuria. This basically means there is a high amount of protein in your urine that shouldn't be there. Usually, it is regarded as one of the first signs that something is wrong with our kidneys.

However, astragalus has been shown to reduce the amount of proteinuria in urine, and it has also been proven to reduce kidney infections.

One study aimed to discover the effects of astragalus on patients with the kidney disorder, nephrotic syndrome. Participants were given up to 15 grams of the herb every day for up to 6 months. The results concluded that the risk of infection amongst participants dropped by 38%.

There are many ways to take astragalus, and one popular method is to take it in a tea. However, some people swear that it can make a tasty addition to much loved chicken noodle soup. Adding 2-3 teaspoons of the herb can give us that much needed boost while we also enjoy the positive effects of the soup.

It can also be used in oil form, with it being added to creams and lotions to treat skin conditions. However, make sure to use a mixture that only contains 10% astragalus as it can be very potent.

As with many herbs, astragalus can be beneficial to the great majority of us, especially those with weak immune systems but it can have adverse effects on those who may not find it to be a suitable treatment. For example, it can interfere with how corticosteroid medications work and it can also have a negative effect on those who take the drug cyclophosphamide, the medication given to those who have recently undergone an organ transplant.

Licorice

When you think of immune boosting medicinal herbs, licorice might not be the first thing that comes to mind. Usually, when you mention the word licorice, you might be more likely to think about the peculiar bitter straps of candy your grandmother gave you. I have my own memories of licorice and used to frequently dip a stick into a bag of sherbet as a child.

To some of us, you might recall its name as sweet root, mostly because of its use to sweeten candy and drinks. However, what I certainly didn't know when I was dipping it into sherbet candy when I was 7 was that I was actually eating a very powerful medicinal plant.

Used for centuries, its use as a medicine dates back to Ancient Egypt where it was taken in tea form as a general panacea to cure everything.

Modern medicine, however, has tasked itself with finding out just how it

works with curing everything from upset tummies to fighting tooth decay.

A study conducted in 2017 at the International College of Chinese Materia Medica worked to discover if licorice could really live up to its claims that it could work as an effective immunomodulator and anti-cancer medication. The conclusion of the study was that licorice polysaccharide displayed a powerful ability to stop tumors growing while increasing the strength of the immune system.

One thing that has been found is that it contains something called a glycyrrhizic acid which works to enable our immune system to do its job to its best ability. Meanwhile, this strange sounding acid has large amounts of anti-inflammatory properties giving licorice a double whammy of infection fighting power.

Research taken to determine the effects of licorice root on the bacteria, *H pylori*, (a bacteria found in around 60% of us and causes many stomach ailments) found that it actually stopped it from developing. The licorice was also found to prevent ulcers and heartburn.

Another use for licorice is to take it when you have a bad cough and are having a hard time expelling mucus. One of the things licorice can do when taken as a liquid is increase your production of phlegm. While this initially doesn't sound pleasant, it is actually a good thing and works as a way to flush out old phlegm and backed up mucus.

Surprisingly, licorice also reduces cortisol levels by giving the adrenal glands (the little glands that pump out the stress hormone) nutrients that it desperately needs to balance itself.

Licorice can also work very well with other medicinal herbs such as echinacea to treat a variety of infections such as sinusitis, strep throat, migraines, thrush, bee strings and allergies.



But for a moment, let's return to that pesky tooth decay. Can something as sweet as licorice really help keep our teeth healthy? Well yes... But that doesn't mean you can start chowing down on licorice candies.

In 2012, The American Chemical Society reported that dried licorice root was able to destroy the bacteria responsible for tooth decay and gum disease. This is because licorice root contains two substances, licoricidin and licorisoflavin A which kill harmful bacteria.

So are there any side effects? Well, just like many herbs and medications, there are some harmful effects if you either take too much, or take it for a long period of time. For example, you may find that it makes your body latch onto salt, which is never a good thing as it can make you pile on water weight. And it can also make your body excrete too much potassium. Again, not good. But this is only if you exceed the recommended dose and do so for many months.

Also, taking more than is recommended can cause high blood pressure and headaches.

There are also certain conditions that you have to be mindful of when deciding if licorice is right for you. For example, you must never take it if you already have low levels of potassium or high blood pressure. And you must never take it if you have hepatitis, kidney problems or hypothyroidism.

It is also inadvisable to take if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you are a heavy drinker.

And if you are a fan of fasting, whether that be intermittent or for a prolonged period of time, then taking licorice can result in an imbalance of your electrolytes.

Finally, it can affect the way in which certain medications react with your body. So it is not recommended for those of you who take blood thinners or medication for high blood pressure.

CHAPTER 5



HERBAL IMMUNE TONICS

Okay, so we've covered immunomodulators and immunostimulants and how they can make us healthier and strengthen our immune systems. But what other herbs are there to manage our immune systems?

Another group of herbs we'll cover are ones that can be used for immune tonics. These are, for the most part, very similar to immunomodulators except they have more of a traditional history and have not been researched to the same length and degree as the ones mentioned above. This doesn't mean they are any less effective. But rather that they have not been given the seal of approval from the folk in white coats. Well, not yet anyway.

Let's take a look now at these immune tonics and see what they can do for you and your immune system.

Calendula

The name of the calendula herb comes from the Latin word Calends, which as you can imagine has a close relation to the word calendar. This is because the calendula plant grows throughout all the months of the year.

Usually, it is the parts of the plant above ground that are used for medicinal purposes, such as the flowers which are a vivid and unmistakable orange/yellow. And it is its distinct color that inspired the Romans to name it Sponsa Salis, which is Latin and translates as The Bride of the Sun.

A little fun fact about calendula is that during the Roman era, it was believed that if the flower closed up tight, it predicted rain. Many people today still follow the tradition of looking to see what the position of the plant is and using it to predict the weather.

Many of you will have seen it listed as an ingredient in skincare products such as moisturizers because of its ability to heal the skin. Yet it has been used for cleansing the skin and treating injuries for hundreds of years. Mainly, this is because it contains vital chemicals that can kill bacteria and

therefore stop infection spreading from wounds. It also has powerful anti-inflammatory agents, so combined with its ability to kill germs, it is a great herb to treat any sort of external ailment. Some things that have been known to be treated by calendula include:

- Sores
- Achy/pulled muscles
- Frostbite
- Chilblains
- Varicose veins
- Sprains
- Bruises

But how does this work? Let's have a look at the science behind calendula's seemingly magic healing properties.

It contains anti-inflammatory components called triterpenoids. This means it works well to reduce pain, bruising, swelling and redness. Think of it as a cooling relief for angry skin conditions.

And it is because of its ability to reduce inflammation that it is also effective at reducing illness within the body and fighting infection. It works especially well in stimulating the lymphatic system, helping to reduce the size of swollen lymph nodes. It does this by boosting the movement within our lymphatic system and eliminating toxins.

It has even been found to work effectively to complement and speed up the efficacy of modern antibiotic medication. This is especially the case with patients suffering from stomach problems such as peptic ulcers. It is also great at reducing other stomach ailments such as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and heartburn.



What is also fantastic about calendula is that it can be taken by almost everyone. In fact, its one of the safest herbs there is. It can be used by everyone at any age and can even be taken by pregnant and breastfeeding women.

There has been evidence that a small amount of the population could be allergic to the plant but there is less than a 1% risk that you could have adverse effects when ingesting the fresh flowers. Cases of people having any sort of side effect from the plant are almost unheard of.

If you haven't been won over by the power of calendula yet, then you may be happy to know it also has some cosmetic powers other than treating skin ailments. Many people report that drinking the tea can reduce dark circles under the eyes and puffiness. Which is always a win in my book!

Chaga

Another mushroom entering the world of herbal medicine is the chaga mushroom, famed for being one of the ugliest fungi ever seen. From the outside it looks like a burned and gnarly black tumor growing on the side of a tree. In technical terms it is referred to as a parasitic conk with the appearance of burned charcoal. Again, not the most appealing sounding herb. But once harvested and chopped up, you can see that its interior is a wonderful auburn color.

Regardless of the way it looks, it has been used across Siberia and Asia for centuries and is one of the most powerful herbs around. Due to being found in Siberia and many mountainous parts of Asia, it is assumed that it grows best in colder climates, particularly in chilled forests where the air is clear and pure.

Although the mushroom has been used across these areas for centuries, it has only recently become well known in other parts of the world and first became known to Europe and America when it was discussed in a fictional book, *Cancer Ward*, written by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Although the book might have been fictional, claims that it can be used to treat cancer aren't.

In fact, many trials have been conducted to discover if the mushroom has any effect on cancer cells. Unfortunately, the majority of these tests were undertaken in a laboratory which means specific cells were tested on rather than human participants. However, these trials produced some overwhelmingly positive results.



For instance, it was discovered that the chaga mushroom has anti-viral and anti-inflammatory properties. However, the most astonishing result of all was that it can fight cancer. The chaga mushroom was shown to actively kill cancer cells without affecting nearby healthy cells.

In Chinese medicine, although it has been known to fight cancer and inflammation, it has also been used for a wide range of other ailments, particularly those caused by stress. This is because chaga, when used as a tonic, can fight many of the stress induced markers that affect the body.

Paired with its ability to fight inflammation, it works as a powerful and natural method in which to soothe the body and bring it back into balance while releasing its natural vitality.

Furthermore, it has been known to be a great treatment and method of support against many of the modern conditions that affect a great proportion of the population today, conditions such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

As well as fighting these diseases, it can also work as a terrific tonic to boost your immune system and increase your overall strength, energy and fitness. This is because it contains polysaccharides that work as biological signals. What is so ingenious about these is that not only are they able to tell the body when its cells need to fight infection and boost immunity, but also when it needs to produce less white blood cells and suppress immunity. This is especially needed when people have an autoimmune disease where their immune system is working on overdrive and producing complications. So it would seem these polysaccharides know just what your body needs to protect itself and keep it at its best and healthiest.

As chaga works as an anti-viral agent, it is able to protect the body against viruses. Many studies have explored to what extent it can do this. One surprising study showed that it was able to reduce hepatitis to a hundredth of its strength in just ten minutes! It was also discovered to combat the effects of herpes while significantly lessening the symptoms of HIV.

But just why is this strange and ugly looking mushroom so powerful? It appears that its strength lies in the vast amount of vitamins and nutrients it contains. It doesn't just hold a few good chemicals, it literally contains hundreds.

Currently, it is estimated that the chaga holds up to 200 phytonutrients. These are the chemicals found in plant matter that are known to fight diseases. And with 200 of them, that's a lot of disease fighting potential!

But that's not all. It is also an abundant source of niacin, riboflavin, vitamins B+D, calcium and zinc. It is also packed with healthy minerals such as potassium and germanium; two big components in keeping your body alkaline.

Personally, one thing that I love about the chaga mushroom is its ability to fight mental distress, especially anxiety. It is filled with something called pantothenic acid which to some of you is known as a treatment for acne. But

it can also be used as a nutrient to nourish your adrenals when your body is stressed and working on overtime. When you are anxious or mental distressed, your poor little adrenals start pumping out cortisol like your life depends on it. But pantothenic acid works to bring those pesky adrenals back into check so you can remain calm, even under pressure.

Right now, you'd be forgiven for thinking chaga didn't have anything else to offer. After all, what more could it possibly do than boost your immune system, fight cancer and multiple diseases and stop stress affecting you? Well, there is one more thing this little miracle mushroom can do.

One trial discovered that it had the ability to boost cognitive function, making it easier to learn things while increasing your memory. That's right, as well as doing all of the above, chaga can also make you smarter.

So at this point you'll be eager to get your hands on some chaga yourself no doubt. But what is the best way to consume it?

Well one thing you'll be glad to know is that despite being a potent healer, it has a very subtle taste. So for those of you who hate the taste of mushrooms, you'll be pleased to know it tastes absolutely nothing like mushrooms at all.

For many, a popular method of taking chaga is to use the powder form to add to drinks. This way it can be an easy nutritional addition to any beverage without being difficult to choke down like many unpleasant tasting supplements.

By far the most popular way to drink chaga is in tea form and there are two ways you can do this. The first and easiest way is to purchase ready made chaga tea bags from health stores and use them like any other tea bag. But the freshest and most effective way is to brew the tea yourself using chunks of the chaga mushroom.

How to make chaga tea

- First make sure the chunks are no bigger than 1 inch square. This might be difficult to do as dried chaga is often difficult to break apart, having the toughness and consistency of a coconut. So you might find that breaking it against a hard surface is in order. Or you might even have to use a hammer.
- Next, add the chunks to hot water. Make sure not to bring the water

to boiling point as this will destroy many essential nutrients such as anti-oxidants.

- Now it's time to steep the tea. Unlike with regular tea which only takes a few minutes to steep, chaga chunks take around 4 hours. This might seem like a huge inconvenience, but some people like to brew a big batch of tea in one go and save it for later. Some people also like to simmer the chunks in hot water in something like a slow cooker for up to four hours to extract as many nutrients as possible.
- Although 4 hours might seem like a long time, this method is actually the most economical in the long term because once the chunks are steeped they can be saved and used later on. For example they can be burned along with incense or ground up and turned into powder.
- This powdered form can be added to juices, soups, smoothies and even coffee, and you'll be pleased to know your favorite coffee taste won't be compromised in any way.

Reishi

The reishi mushroom, also known as the Ganoderma Tsugae, is another phenomenal fungus that is known to skyrocket our immune system. In fact, in some cultures, it is known as the mushroom of immortality. Although I can't promise this mushroom can help you live forever, I can promise that it has many life prolonging properties.

Mostly found in humid conditions in China, it has a long history of being used throughout Chinese medicine. In ancient times many people revered and respected the mushroom thinking it was a divine fungus as it was believed it could be used to aid your path to enlightenment.

Today, it might not be known as the holy and revered mushroom it once was, but it is still thought to be one of the greatest herbal tonics to protect our bodies both physically and mentally. This is because it has many benefits such as being antiviral, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant. It has also been known to work in harmony with the body to alleviate the symptoms of anxiety and depression.

One of its principle benefits however, is that it can boost the strength and health of our immune system. It is thought this is because the mushroom contains three specific molecules that have been discovered to have health giving properties. These are triterpenoids, peptidoglycans and polysaccharides. It also contains a large amount of essential minerals that our bodies need to fight infection such as iron, iodine, copper, zinc and selenium.



In recent years, there have been many scientific studies conducted into its benefits with the main area of interest being how it can affect our immune system.

Although there needs to be more research done, early trials have concluded that one of the reasons the reishi mushroom is so effective at strengthening our immune systems is that it has a direct influence on our white blood cells, adapting them to fight germs and disease. That's quite a superpower for such a little mushroom.

Findings in other studies have shown that it can reduce inflammation, specifically in the networks our white blood cells follow.

Furthermore, research on the reishi mushroom has been conducted to see how it can help cancer patients boost their immune system. It was revealed that the reishi can boost the activity and power of white blood cells meaning they have a greater ability to fight infection. This also means they are better able to directly kill off cancer cells.

But that's not the only thing this mushroom can do for white blood cells. It can also boost their production meaning it can help the body produce more and more of the disease busting cells to help battle cancer. This was shown in a study done to ascertain how the reishi mushroom affected those with

rectal cancer. It was seen that the participants who took the reishi mushroom experienced a rise in white blood cells meaning they had a greater ability to kill cancer cells.

However, you don't have to be ill to benefit from the positive effects of reishi. It can even be of immense help to those of us who are in relatively good shape. For example, another study was done to see how the mushroom affected participants on the other end of the spectrum, i.e. athletes with no known long term health conditions. It was found they too experienced a spike in white blood cell activity meaning their already healthy bodies were even more readily able to fight infection.

As mentioned before, the reishi mushroom can also help us combat symptoms of depression. And as we all know, our mental and emotional state has a direct influence on our bodies and immune systems. Although there aren't as many studies done to explore how the reishi mushroom benefits our minds in comparison to how it benefits our immune systems, preliminary trials have shown it can positively affect our mental health and well-being. For example it has been shown to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression while generally giving participants a much needed lift to increase their quality of life.

But the mushroom's ability to fight illness and improve our moods aren't the only reasons this innocuous looking mushroom has been called the mushroom of immortality. It has other benefits as well. For example, it can also increase our heart health. One 12-week study revealed that after the participants took the reishi mushroom, their bodies had produced more of something called HDL cholesterol. This is the "good" cholesterol we all need. Furthermore, it also decreased participants' levels of triglycerides, a type of fat that builds up in our blood that can lead to heart disease.

If you think this magic mushroom may be of benefit to you, you can find it readily available in many health food stores and Asian supermarkets. However, one thing to remember is that the dosage depends on what sort of mushroom you buy. For example, the potency of the mushroom is far higher when eaten fresh compared to the dried version. However, there is a rough rule of thumb you can reference to gauge how much you are taking. The dried version is around 10 times more potent than the fresh version. So, for example, if you were to buy 100 grams of fresh reishi mushrooms, that would be the equivalent of around 10 grams of the dried variety.

The exact dosage you need depends on what you are taking reishi for. More serious ailments may require a dosage of up to 9 grams a day. While less serious illnesses may only need around 1 gram. If you are unsure, always consult a professional herbalist.

But taking the mushroom doesn't have to be complicated, and although you can opt for specific dosages of the mushroom for particular ailments, you can also make sure you get the benefits from ingesting the mushroom in a more relaxed way. You can do this by making it a staple ingredient in your kitchen and adding it to your own remedies and dishes. In fact, there are many ways you can enjoy the mushroom in a fuss free way. Let's have a look at some reishi recipes now.

1. Soup

Add a little healing power to your regular soup dishes by adding either dried or fresh reishi. It is probably the simplest way of making sure an already healthy meal contains some immune boosting power. Some popular soup recipes include the addition of reishi in bone broth, or of course, the already popular cream of mushroom soup. It also makes a delicious addition to miso soup. However, you can also make your very own immune boosting reishi vegetable broth for those cold winter nights when you need all the help you can get to fight the weather.

Reishi Immune Boosting Broth

Ingredients:

- 6 cups of water.
- 2 thick slices of reishi mushroom.
- 2 cups of vegetable scraps. Potatoes, carrots, onions, leeks and celery work especially well.
- 3 crushed cloves of garlic.
- A pinch of chilli powder (optional).

Instructions:

- Add everything to a saucepan and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the temperature and leave to simmer for around 3 hours on a low heat.
- It is best served strained and drunk when steaming hot. The remnants of the mushrooms and vegetables can then be used for other purposes.
- However, you don't always have to strain the broth and can choose to blend it make it a thicker consistency.
- Paired with some crusty bread and a pinch of black pepper, it tastes fantastic and will keep you fighting fit!

2. Oatmeal

You might think the words mushroom and oatmeal don't go together, but you'd be surprised. Of course, you don't have to add the mushrooms directly to your morning bowl of oatmeal. Water that has been simmered in reishi can be used to make that average bowl of oatmeal packed with extra nutrients, vitamins and minerals.

3. Decoctions

If you're feeling under the weather and suffering from the sniffles or a bad case of the flu, sometimes, a simple soup or bowl of oatmeal might not be what you're craving. If that's the case and you're looking for something stronger, then a reishi decoction might be more suited to your needs.

Decoctions are far more potent than soups and are best taken when you are coming down with an illness and want to reduce its symptoms and duration immediately.

- To make a reishi decoction, add slices of the mushroom to some hot water and simmer for between 3 and 4 hours.
- Once finished, strain the mixture and drink while hot. It will have the consistency and color of a tar-like black coffee but will have an additional bitterness.
- To add some extra flavor, add a teaspoon of miso powder. This will not only make it taste less bitter, but will give you the added

benefits of the miso powder which contains probiotic qualities that are brilliant for gut health.

4. Powder

If you want to make your own reishi powder to do with as you please, it is slightly more complicated and takes more time than the previous recipes, but the results are 100% worth it.

- Firstly, take 4oz of dried reishi and place in a crock pot.
- Fill to the brim with water and leave on a low setting for 24 hours.
- After the 24 hours is up, drain the mixture, keeping the leftover reishi for other uses such as composting or adding to soups and broths.
- Next, place the mixture back into the crock pot and turn the temperature up to high. Simmer the mixture until it has reduced by half.
- Now comes the fun bit. Take some flour of your choice and add to the mixture until it becomes quite solid. Mix continuously or knead with your hands until you can make something that resembles cookie dough.
- Once this is done, separate the mixture into little “cookies” and place on the lower rack of your oven on a low heat.
- Leave until the “cookies” are fully dehydrated. This is visible when they can crumble easily in your fingers without any moisture.
- Add the “cookies” to a blender and mix until it becomes a fine powder.

Now you have your own reishi mixture to do whatever you like with! Add it to smoothies, soups or other dishes, or add to coffee and tea. The possibilities are endless.

5. Lemonade

If you're feeling adventurous, then perhaps you'd like to have a go at making your own reishi mushroom lemonade. It may sound a little odd, but some of

the best things in life are the strangest. You might even be surprised to discover this medicinal lemonade is far more delicious than you might think.

Ingredients:

- 1oz dried reishi.
- 4 tablespoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice.
- 6 cups of water.
- A sweetener of your choice. Stevia, honey and maple syrup make wonderful natural options but you can also use granulated sugar if that's what you'd prefer.
- As an optional touch, you can also add some sticks of cinnamon for some extra medicinal properties or a sprig of peppermint. Ginger also makes a zingy addition that will help soothe a sore throat and alleviate the symptoms of allergies on a hot summer day.

Instructions:

- Place your ingredients, minus the lemon juice and sweetener, in a pan and boil.
- Once it reaches boiling point, lower the temperature and simmer for around 3-4 hours. This will fully infuse the mixture with the healing properties of the reishi.
- Once simmered, add your lemon juice and sweetener of choice before refrigerating until fully chilled.
- Serve over ice and enjoy.

Elderberry



Some of you might already be familiar with elderberry as it is a common addition to many cold and flu remedies and cough syrups. As one of the most popular and powerful immune tonic ingredients around, this book wouldn't be any sort of herbal guide at all without giving it lengthy discussion.

Elderberry is a very versatile and easy to prepare remedy that can be taken in tincture form as well as in a sweet syrup or a decoction. It can even be infused into honey, giving the already soothing sweet treat some extra healing properties.

The uses of the elderberry plant are split into two parts. On one hand, the berries can be used on their own and hold a long list of benefits. Not only do they work as a terrific decongestant, hence their ability to knock colds on the head, but they are also antiviral, antimicrobial, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. They are also known to stimulate the activity of white blood cells making our bodies better equipped to fight infections.

On the other hand, the flowers can also be used separately. They hold many of the properties the berries do, but they also have the added value of being an astringent. This means they can be used topically to clean and disinfect the skin while being a natural remedy with which to treat conditions such as acne and inflamed pores.

However, despite elderberry having a wide range of health-giving properties, it is mostly used for the treatment of the common cold and flu. One reason it is so popular is that in contrast to many herbal remedies, the sweet, purple syrup of the elderberry is incredibly delicious. It is one of the most powerful remedies there is when trying to boost our immune system

while lessening the painful and uncomfortable symptoms of colds and flu. Furthermore, elderberries have also been the subject of many rigorous scientific studies giving it more credence than many other remedies.

For example, Krawitz et al. conducted research in 2011 to measure how efficient elderberries were at fighting flu. The result was that elderberry syrup was shown to inhibit the growth and symptoms of the influenza virus. Meanwhile, a more recent study in 2019 revealed how elderberry stopped the flu virus developing during the earliest phases of the illness. It does this by blocking the proteins within the virus that latch onto our bodies. So we know what the science behind elderberries is, but how does it effect those horrible cold and flu symptoms?

One research team aimed to find out, using 64 participants to study how elderberry affected their symptoms. When one group of unfortunate flu sufferers were given 175mg of elderberry extract they noticed a reduction in symptoms within just 24 hours. These symptoms included a high temperature, headaches, muscle pain and a blocked nose.

In a similar study, 60 participants were given 15ml of elderberry syrup and felt their symptoms subside in 2-4 days. This is in stark contrast to the control group who were not given elderberry and had their symptoms last up to 8 days.

Over the years, there have been many more studies which show the powerful effects of elderberries, far too many to mention. But one thing for certain is that when you first feel that stuffy nose and wake up with the sniffles, having a remedy containing elderberries can work wonders to stop the flu virus getting the better of us.

But just why are elderberries so powerful in comparison to other plants? The answer lies in the many nutrients packed into each tiny berry. In just 100grams of berries, there is up to 35mg of vitamin C. To put that in perspective, that amounts to about 60% of your daily recommended intake of the vitamin.

It also contains five types of antioxidant; phenolic acid, quercetin, kaempferol, isorhamnetin and antocyanins. Furthermore, it is incredibly high in fiber with 100grams of the berry holding around a quarter of your daily requirement.

Although elderberry has proved itself to be an effective cold and flu killer, it

has also been seen to help other ailments and conditions. For example it has also been discovered in numerous studies that it is able to benefit the health of our heart. It does this by decreasing cholesterol and therefore decreasing the risk of developing heart disease. Other lab studies have discovered elderberry is effective at decreasing blood pressure. Research into elderberry and heart health is still in its infancy, and more research needs to be conducted. However, we can agree the results so far are promising.

As well as studies into heart health, there have also been other pioneering studies into how elderberry can boost our health in other areas. And some preliminary pieces of research have discovered some interesting facts. In laboratory test tube studies, it was seen that elderberry was able to inhibit the growth and development in some cancer cells. And in a study using rats, elderberry was able to increase their urine output while simultaneously increasing the amount of salt eliminated from the body. Also, when topically applied to the skin, it was discovered to have a natural form of SPF with a factor of 10. Additionally, it is shown to create a slight increase in mood during lab studies providing an early insight into possible anti-depressant qualities.

Although there is so much more we can learn about elderberry, we are in an exciting time when science has so much to discover about this wonderful plant. And from what is currently known, the outlook for what else this plant can do for us is hopeful.

If you think elderberry could be a remedy that works for you, you'll be pleased to know that because it tastes far superior to many other herbs, it can be prepared in numerous, delicious ways from gins and jellies to syrups and sauces. Let's have a look now at some of its best recipes.

Elderberry Gin

Ingredients:

- 300g of elderberries.
- 600ml of gin.
- 120g of granulated sugar.
- Lemon zest to taste.

Instructions:

- Make sure all your berries are ripe. Should you notice any green ones, simply toss them to the side to ripen later or add them to a compost heap.
- Now you can remove any stalks from the remaining berries. Don't worry, you don't have to go through them all one by one. A simple method of removing the stalks is to just sift your fork through the berries and they will easily separate. Just pay careful attention to not accidentally squish any particularly ripe berries.
- Next, rinse the berries in some cold water to ensure any debris, stalks or leaves are discarded. An easy way to do this is to submerge the berries in a bowl of very cold water and you'll find any matter attached to the berries will float to the top.
- Once drained, shake off the excess water. My favorite way of doing this is to just jiggle the berries from side to side while they're in the strainer.
- Now you can place the berries in a large jar. Some recipes suggest a 1L jar, but you can choose any that you like as long as it is clean. This might even be the perfect time to recycle those jam and sauce jars you've been saving up. Anybody else have an entire cupboard of them, or is that just me?
- With the berries now in a jar, you can pour over your gin, adding as much lemon zest as you like.
- Making sure the jar is firmly closed, place in a cool dark place and leave for around 4 weeks. If you'd like to hasten the process, feel free to give the jar a gentle shake every few days.
- After 4 weeks, strain your berries from the gin mixture. Be sure to keep the berries, just imagine how great they'll taste after being soaked in all that gin for a month. Yum! There are so many ways you can choose to use them, but heated and mashed up over a Sunday roast is fantastic. Or you can add to puddings. The choice is yours!
- With your gin mixture now strained, you can put that sugar to use. In a pan, add 100ml of water and your sugar. Although the recipe

calls for 120g, you can add as little or as much as you like depending on your taste. 120g, however, for most people, seems to be the perfect amount.

- Heat your sugar and water together until it becomes a rich syrup.
- Remove from the heat and let cool. Once it is completely cool, add to your gin and enjoy!

Flu Fighting Elderberry Syrup

If you want to get the medicinal properties of the elderberries, but you're not keen on drinking alcohol, then you may prefer a soothing syrup to alleviate your symptoms.

Ingredients:

- 100g of elderberries.
- Pinch of cinnamon.
- Chopped ginger.

Instructions:

- Place your elderberries and ginger into a pan and cover with water.
- Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the temperature to a gentle simmer.
- After 10 minutes, remove from the heat and allow to cool.
- Once cooled, strain the mixture. Some people choose to do this with a fine muslin or cheesecloth to get the most from their berries, making sure to squeeze the bag to get every drop of juice out.
- Now you'll be left with a mixture that is similar to a warm juice. Measure this mixture, and whatever you have, match the measurement with granulated sugar. For example if you have 250ml of mixture, add 250g of sugar.
- Add the sugar to the mixture and heat until it is melted. A gentle simmer is fine.

- Once the sugar is melted, add cinnamon to taste and allow to cool completely.
- Now you can add it to clean bottles and keep in a cool, dark place until you need it.

It's now perfect to use for coughs, colds and sore throats while helping your body fight infection.

But although it can be used medicinally, it doesn't have to be swallowed like a regular cough syrup. Add it to hot beverages or even a glass of mulled wine. Drizzle it over desserts or add it to sauces. Of course, it will taste just so good that you might want to reach for a spoonful every now and again too.

Elderberry Cordial

Is there anything more refreshing on a summer day (or any day for that matter) than a cold glass of something fruity? Especially if that something fruity is packed full of vitamins, anti-oxidants and infection fighting power.

Elderberry cordial is a great way to get 1 of your 5 a day. But it also helps you stave off infections or lessen the symptoms of any ailments you might be suffering from without reaching into the medicine cabinet for strong medications that often leave you drowsy.

Although cordial is seen as being a little old fashioned (who remembers their grandma's dandelion and burdock root cordial as a kid?) it's been a mainstay in many generations' pantries for a reason. Not only does it taste good while being extremely cost effective, but it's also wonderful at keeping your immune system fighting fit.

Let's take a look now at this super easy, super fun elderberry cordial that'll have you flu free and full of life in no time at all.

Ingredients:

- 400g of elderberries.
- 400ml of water.
- 300g of sugar (caster sugar is preferred but if you have granulated that's absolutely fine too).

- 1 lemon. We'll be using this both for its rind and juice.

Instructions:

- Separate the berries from their stalks using a fork, then drain.
- Once the berries have been washed and any debris removed, add to a pot with as much lemon zest as you'd like.
- Add the water and place on a low heat for approximately 25-30 minutes.
- You may notice a rather unpleasant looking film starts to appear on top of the water, but it's okay. It always happens. Simply remove it with a spoon and discard.
- Now you will see that the berries have gone somewhat mushy, which is a good thing. The next step is to strain the mixture. The best way to do this without wasting any of the precious elderberries is to take your strainer and line with a fine cloth. Many recipes ask for a muslin cloth to be used, but if you don't have one, you can use cheesecloth or a (clean!) tea towel. Hell, you can use whatever you like as long it's hygienic. This is your cordial.
- With the strainer now lined, add your mixture, making sure to catch it below in a container. Squeeze the berries with the cloth to ensure you get as much of the juice and goodness as possible.
- Now you should be left with a deep red delicious looking juice. Return this to your pot and heat on medium. At this point, there's only one final step.
- Add the sugar and a squeeze of lemon and stir until it's dissolved.
- Leave to cool and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. But I can guarantee you that once you've had a glassful of this ruby colored elixir it won't last that long.

Elderberry recipes for kids

We all know that getting your child to take their medicine is a nightmare. More often than not they're not keen on the taste and no amount of choo choo

trains or pretend airplanes will make them swallow it down. I was no different when I was a child and have a very vivid memory of my mom trying to force feed me some acrid tasting medicine when I had the flu. If only she knew about elderberries then!

To make it a little easier on yourself, while ensuring your little ones can fight off their germs, I'm adding a couple of super kid friendly recipes that will most likely have them reaching for their next dose of medicine rather than running away from it.

Elderberry Popsicles

What could soothe a sore throat better than a popsicle? And what tastes better either? These little tasty treats may appear like a sweet snack, but although they'll taste great to your children, they don't have to know they're full of flu busting ingredients. And an added benefit of these popsicles is that they're excellent for when your child is dehydrated but is finding it difficult to drink sufficient amounts of water. You'll also be pleased to know that they're incredibly easy to make! So let's get started.

Ingredients:

- 3 heaped teaspoons of elderberry syrup.
- 1 lemon, juiced.
- 1 teaspoon of grated ginger.
- 1 cup of orange juice.
- 1-2 cups of grape juice. (More grape juice will make it sweeter so add as much or as little as you'd like).
- 2 tablespoons of honey. (Raw is preferred as it is less processed. However, if you only have regular honey to hand, there's no harm in using it).
- Popsicle molds of course!

Instructions:

I think this might have to be the easiest recipe in this book.

- All you have to do is add all of your ingredients into a pan or pitcher and stir well. Then simply pour into your molds and freeze. Usually, it takes around 6 hours for the popsicles to completely freeze over.

Reaching for these when your tiny one next has a sore throat, cough or runny nose, will make sure they're up and causing mischief again in no time.

Elderberry Gummy Bears!

When you think of candies such as gummy bears, you might not immediately think they can be healthy, let alone taken as a medicine. But the very clever and creative author, Chris Dalziel at Attainable Sustainable came up with this incredible recipe. In a similar way to the popsicles above, these gummies will ensure children find taking their medicine enjoyable rather than a chore. And with ingredients such as honey and ginger, they will have a great soothing effect on sore throats and coughs.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of (dried) elderberries.
- 1 teaspoon of grated ginger root.
- 3 cups of water (ideally filtered or bottled).
- 3 tablespoons of honey.
- 1 cup of sugar.
- 4 sachets of gelatin.
- Gummy bear molds (these are easy to obtain for a few dollars online or in cookery stores).

Instructions:

- Heat a pan on medium heat and add in the elderberries and water (leave around half a cup of water to make the gelatin later).
- Simmer for around 40 minutes then take the pan off the stove so

you can strain the elderberry juice from the mixture.

- Once you have the juice, add it to the pan and return to the heat simmering on a low heat until you are left with around half of your original mixture.
- Now you can add the honey and keep warm for a further 20 minutes so the honey is fully melted and mixed through.
- While you are waiting for this, you can start to work on the gelatin. With the half a cup of water you put aside earlier, create a mixture with the gelatin powder. Stir well and let rest for 5 minutes so the gelatin can work its magic in the water.
- At this point, you can start getting the gummy bear molds ready, greasing them with whatever you like. Many people choose coconut oil, but you can use any oil you like, or even butter if you'd prefer. The choice is yours.
- After this, return to the elderberry mixture and add in the gelatin. Stir well until everything is dissolved.
- Now comes the fun part! With all your mixture you should have enough to make around 300 gummy bears which equates to 6 average sized molds.
- As carefully as you can (it can get messy) pour your mixture into the molds and place in the fridge.
- Ideally, you'd want to leave them overnight so they can fully solidify making them easy to pop out of the molds. But if you are in a hurry, 6 hours should do the trick.
- Once solidified, you can pop those little gummy bear gems out and marvel at your handiwork. There's nothing quite as impressive as making these little beauties and your little one will surely love them too!

Just make sure to store them in an airtight container somewhere cool.

For some extra flavor and sweetness, feel free to roll them in a dusting of powdered sugar or even some cinnamon sugar.

These should last for between 2-3 weeks if stored properly. But if eating 300 gummy bears in a few weeks sounds like an impossibility, then you can

freeze them for later.

If you're using them to treat cold and flu symptoms, the recommended dose is 4 gummy bears 3 times a day. A medicine surely any child won't complain about taking.

A little word of warning:

For children under 5 years of age, 4 gummies might be a strong dose. Therefore to be on the safe side, it's better to side with caution and give them 2.

Meanwhile, although it may seem like common sense, these aren't recommended for children who are not used to chewing solid food yet.

If you'd like to know more about how elderberries can be used as a natural treatment for your children, you can have a read at some peer reviewed research that is widely available. These will explain just what those wee magic berries can do in an unbiased, critical and scientific manner.

There are many studies available to read, but 3 that I find remarkably interesting are the following:

- Barak, V., Halperin, T., & Kalickman, I. (2001) The effect of Sambucol, a black elderberry-based, natural product, on the production of human cytokines: I. Inflammatory cytokines. *European Cytokine Network*. 12(2):290-296.
- Kinoshita, E., Hayashi, K., Katayama, H., Hayashi, T., & Obata, A. (2012) Anti-influenza virus effects of elderberry juice and its fractions. *Bioscience, Biotechnology, and Biochemistry*. 76(9):1633-1638.
- Hearst C, McCollum G, Nelson D, Ballard LM, Millar BC, Goldsmith CE, Rooney PJ, Moore JE, Rao JR: Antibacterial activity of elder (*Sambucus nigra* L.) flower or berry against hospital pathogens. *Journal of Medicinal Plants Research*. 2010, 4: 1805-1809.

Again, a big thank you to Chris Dalziel for her highly helpful and creative recipe. If you'd like to see more of her work and recipes, you can visit her site here:

www.attainable-sustainable.net

<https://www.attainable-sustainable.net/elderberry-benefits/> - Gummy bear recipe.

CHAPTER 6



FROM CUISINE TO CLINIC

Since the start of this book we've talked about many wonderful herbal antibiotics from mystical mushrooms to fantastical flowers. But what about the humble garden herbs? Those little sprigs of goodness that you sprinkle on your pasta or garnish your roast with might be more powerful than we often give them credit for. From your humble parsley to thyme and rosemary, we're now going to take a look at some of our kitchen staples to see what they can do for our health. You'll be pleased to see that many of the herbs we often use on a daily basis are filled with powerful and often surprising health benefits.

Thyme



For hundreds of years, thyme has been revered as a herb that can make you courageous. The Romans believed deeply in its powers and this belief was carried down through generations reaching the knights of the Middle Ages. They believed that if the shape of the thyme leaf was embroidered on their tunics they would be made courageous in battle. Yet more whimsically, in France, people believed that thyme could attract fairies and cooked with it frequently in order to make contact with the little magical creatures.

I, meanwhile, have a really strong memory attached to thyme because my mother always used to add a teaspoon to her pot of home-made Trinidadian chicken (my absolute favorite dish growing up). One day, when I tried to recreate her signature recipe for my dad, and my mom wasn't in town, I reached for the thyme in a desperate bid to mimic the taste I was so used to. What I didn't get quite right were the measurements, resulting in what should have been an incredible dinner ruined by what tasted like a ton of thyme. My dad was less than impressed and I haven't cooked Trinidadian chicken since (sorry Mom).

But putting my culinary mistakes aside, thyme is an incredible herb that has a whole host of health giving benefits. For example, did you know that it can cure acne? Researchers in the UK discovered that an acne tincture, when applied to pimples, worked as a powerful zit busting solution. In fact, it appeared to work even better than many drug store and over the counter acne treatments.

Also, thyme essential oil has been found to significantly reduce a bad cough, and has even been shown to alleviate some symptoms of bronchitis. The next time you're suffering from a cough, you could try opting for some products including the herb such as thyme tea or with some of the ingredients discussed above, such as elderberry, you can create your own syrup.

But it's not just coughs and pimples it can heal, thyme is also full of vitamins A and C meaning it can fight off germs and infections easily while boosting your immune system. It also has a tremendous supply of iron, manganese and copper.

If only my dad had known that the ruined chicken dish I'd served was so good for him!

A little added note worth mentioning is that for those of you who love to keep a clean house, but don't enjoy using strong, harsh chemicals, you can opt for thyme. Surprisingly, thyme works as a great disinfectant especially in areas that have mold. This is because thyme contains something called thymol which is a naturally occurring yet incredibly strong fungicide. So if you're not fond of bleach, reach for some thyme oil instead. Not only will it be less harmful to breathe in, but it will smell better too!

For some extra cleaning power, let the disinfecting properties of fresh thyme leaves sit in some vinegar and use to cleanse surfaces for a streak free,

cleaner than clean shine.

Rosemary

You can't mention thyme without talking about rosemary. Unlike with thyme, I don't have a horror story about rosemary. I do, however, grow some in my kitchen year round to add to dishes like baked sausages (delicious!) and pesto. Like many herbs, rosemary was used as a medicine long before it was cooked with and was seen as a plant that could bring back your energy and youthfulness.

Many years ago, scholars and academics would wear wreathes of rosemary around their heads as they read, in order to retain more knowledge. Whether that would work or not, it has long been a herb associated with increased memory. This has mainly been with respect to students wanting to remember all the things they learn, but it also has more symbolic connotations with the concept of memory. For example, during the Tudor era, many Europeans believed that rosemary could be used as a way to remember lost loved ones. With the herb being sprinkled across graves to signify remembrance.

In more recent years, the notion that rosemary can aid our memories has been officially studied. And it has been discovered that it's not just an old wives tale, but that rosemary can actually improve our cognitive function making us smarter, clearer thinkers with an improved memory. This is because rosemary, specifically in its essential oil form, prevents the destruction of the highly valuable brain chemical acetylcholine that is responsible for concentration.

This is even the case when the oil is merely sniffed. A study using nursing students as participants concluded that the students who smelled the rosemary oil had greater information recall compared to those who sniffed lavender oil. This has led to many researchers considering the possibilities of rosemary essential oil in the realm of dementia where cognitive function is drastically impaired.

Yet as well as boosting our brains, it can also boost our hair growth, especially with patients who suffer from male pattern baldness. It does this by doing something very specific and surprising. It is unknown why, but rosemary oil stops a by-product of testosterone from damaging hair making it impossible for male pattern baldness, officially named androgenetic

alopecia, to take hold. More surprisingly, participants have reported that rosemary oil works just as effectively as expensive hair regrowth treatments such as Minoxidil.



Furthermore, rosemary has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety. When we are stressed and are experiencing heightened states of arousal such as panic attacks or intense nervousness, our body produces a hormone called cortisol. This hormone can then be traced through saliva tests to discover how much is in the body. In one recent study, when anxious participants were exposed to the smell of rosemary oil for around 5 minutes, their saliva contained around 23% less cortisol than the participants in the control group who were not exposed to rosemary. I know what I'll be reaching for the next time I get the jitters.

Finally, rosemary is known to get rid of some species of insects such as mites, ticks and mosquitoes. And it does this with minimal harm to the user in comparison to harsh chemicals such as commercially used pesticides.

Sage

There's an old English rhyme from medieval times - "He that would live for aye, must eat sage in May." In essence, this means if you want to live forever then make sure you get some sage into your diet.

Like many other herbs, sage has been used for centuries to cure many ailments and its name comes from the Latin phrase "to save". It was even used as one of the main ingredients to ward off the plague! And if it could do that, it can certainly get rid of my sniffles.

Just like with rosemary and thyme, it can also work as a powerful cleaning

agent and pesticide, but interestingly, it is also used for spiritual cleansing. If you've ever seen smudge sticks being used to cleanse energy within a room and keep away evil spirits, then you've seen sage at work.

But keeping away bugs, grime and ghosts isn't all it can do. Let's have a look now into some of its health benefits. Firstly, sage contains 160 polyphenols, i.e. antioxidants. That's a lot of antioxidant power! Secondly, as a strong antimicrobial, sage works wonders in the field of oral health, with mouthwash containing sage shown to kill off infections such as streptococcus and candida. Because of this, it works great to treat toothache, sore throats, gum disease, ulcers and abscesses.

Similarly to rosemary, it also has many properties that can aid brain function and can also stop the destruction of acetylcholine. This means it's effective at improving cognitive function in general but also boosts concentration, memory, problem solving and general reasoning too.

Also, sage has been known to reduce LDL cholesterol. This is the bad cholesterol that leads to heart disease in 1 in 3 Americans. In fact, did you know that in the US alone, one person dies every minute from heart disease? With terrifying numbers like that, it's important to work towards the prevention of heart disease before it becomes a problem. There are many ways you can do this, and you should always consult a physician if you are looking for ways in which to strengthen your heart. But lowering bad cholesterol is a good start, and sage can help you do this. Research has shown that drinking sage tea twice a day for 2 weeks can significantly lower LDL cholesterol.

Just like with rosemary and thyme, sage is an excellent medicinal herb that is not only affordable and easily accessible, but is also very easy to take. You can cook with it in a variety of ways, adding it to dishes such as roasts, soups and stews for a distinctive earthy taste. You can also create your own seasoning mix containing sage for meat rubs or for adding to roasted vegetables.

Mint

We're having a little history lesson again here, but it's too interesting not to share the background of this delicious and popular herb. It was named after the ancient Greek nymph, Minthe who attempted to seduce the god Hades. Of

course, his wife wasn't best pleased about this and in an act of revenge, cursed Minthe to become a plant for the rest of her life. However, these days, you're most likely to find the plant scattered across your table at dinner as it is used for welcoming guests. Around the world it has remained a popular main ingredient in a wide range of products such as chocolate, candies, teas, sauces and as an ingredient in our toiletries.

Surprisingly, it's packed with nutrients such as iron and vitamin A as well as folate and manganese and it's a great source of antioxidants. Mostly, in the world of medicine, it is used to treat digestive problems as it is terrific at relieving stomach pains. This is especially the case with conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome where sufferers get cramps and bloating. There have been many clinical studies conducted to see how effective peppermint is at treating upset stomachs, but a recent one concluded that 75% of participants who ingested peppermint oil for 4 weeks had significantly less unpleasant symptoms.

Because of its ability to neutralize the unpleasant symptoms of IBS, it can also treat indigestion. This is because when peppermint oil is taken before a large meal, it helps food digest more easily.

Similarly to rosemary, peppermint can also give our brains a boost. With some research showing that when peppermint oil was smelled shortly before a test, participants were better able to recall information. At the same time, a similar study shared the conclusion that peppermint increased mental functioning, but also discovered that it decreased feelings of anxiety while boosting energy levels. Although it is assumed that peppermint oil is a great brain booster, the jury is still out on how it works. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted to determine just exactly what it is doing to our brain chemistry.

One interesting finding from research is that the topical application of mint can aid mothers who are breastfeeding. If you have ever breastfed your little one, then you'll be aware of the pain that comes from sore and cracked nipples. This in turn makes breastfeeding a challenge as the skin gets increasingly tender and painful. Ways in which mint can be applied to the nipple area include diluting peppermint oil in gels, lotions or water and covering the skin.

Finally, it's worth mentioning that mint is by far one of the best tasting herbs

in this book, and because of this, it's incredibly easy to add it into your daily life. Dried leaves can be used to make tea, essential oils can be added to just about anything you can think of, and you can apply it onto your skin. If you want you can even take it in pill form with many brands of peppermint oil capsules being available in stores at an affordable price.

Parsley

The last kitchen herb we'll be discussing in this book is parsley. It has to be just about the most widely used herb on the planet and is used in hundreds of dishes because of its subtle taste. Once again, we'll be having a quick history lesson to learn about its background. In a similar manner to mint, its name has ancient roots with the Romans dedicating the herb to the goddess of the underworld, Persephone. After this, Romans would often use parsley in their funeral rites.

Today, however, we can safely assume it has no connections with death and is more likely to be associated with a soup recipe rather than the underworld. However, in comparison to other herbs, there has been little if any scientific research conducted into its health benefits. Yet, what has been researched has shown some promising results.

At this moment in time, what we do know about parsley is that it contains a large amount of vitamin K. With about 5 sprigs of the plant giving you 100% of your recommended daily intake of the vitamin. It is also high in vitamin C, calcium and iron. There has also been some discussion into its high level of antioxidants which are able to protect the body against free radicals.

Parsley has also been shown through research to have some benefits that protect the liver. Especially in patients who suffer from diabetes. And this appears to be down to all the antioxidants. For example, a study done in 2006 using rats discovered that rats with diabetes experienced a reduction in blood sugar levels. They also appeared to be protected from the liver damage that is associated with diabetes.

Similarly, parsley has been seen to protect the liver from fatty liver disease. A more recent study done in 2018 using mice as test subjects found that one specific antioxidant in parsley named pyrroloquinoline quinone (also known as the less tongue-twisting PQQ) could protect against, or even entirely stop the development of fatty liver disease. Interestingly, as a side note, this same

antioxidant is also found in kiwis and papayas.

Furthermore, parsley extract has also been known to treat seasonal allergies. This is because it has a powerful ability to suppress inflammation in the body so it works wonders for inflammatory conditions such as hay fever.

Luckily, parsley is just about one of the easiest herbs to find and is readily available in almost all grocery stores and local markets. As expected, fresh parsley is more potent than dried or powdered versions. And the best way to find the freshest is to make sure the leaves are bright green and haven't gone brown or wilted. You want them to be as healthy as possible to get the most out of each leaf. Once purchased, there are two ways to store your herb. The first way requires you to wrap the fresh sprigs in a paper towel and lay flat in the fridge. Stored this way, it can last for between 7-10 days.

The other way is perhaps the nicest. Placing your sprigs of parsley upright in a small vase or glass, simply add up to an inch of water and leave on a sunny window ledge. Not only is this the most aesthetically pleasing way to store herbs, but seeing it out in the open will make you more likely to use it rather than leaving it abandoned in the fridge. I know I'm guilty of finding mysterious vegetables and herbs at the back of the fridge that I'd forgotten about.

If, however, you'd rather not buy it fresh, or you perhaps would rather consume the plant in an easier way, you can buy it in supplement form from many health food stores. Or you can even buy it in tea bags.

Of course many herbs come with a word of warning, and parsley is no exception. One of the biggest side effects of the plant is that it works as a very powerful diuretic. This is fantastic if you are looking for a way to drop a lot of water weight quickly. In fact, in some places the herb is known as the "Water Pill Plant". But this comes with its own dangers. Losing excess water too rapidly can be extremely harmful and not only make you dizzy, but cause your blood sugar levels to drop dramatically.

Another consequence of its diuretic properties is that it might interact with medications. For example, those who take lithium must definitely shy away from the herb as it can make you drop so much water weight it can induce lithium toxicity. Also, those who take blood-thinning medications should be wary. You don't have to keep away from the herb entirely, but just be mindful not to consume an excessive amount. The normal amount eaten when cooking

shouldn't cause harm.

CHAPTER 7



CURE WHAT AILS YOU

So you've been guided through countless herbs and learned the difference between your cordyceps and your calendula, but you might be thinking –

That's great. I've learned all this stuff, but how does it apply to me? And more importantly, how can I treat my own ailments?

I understand that with all this new information to absorb, you might want to get right into the nitty gritty and find a remedy that works for the ailment that is bothering you right now. I also know that in the future, you're not going to want to sift through countless pages in search of a recipe. That's why, to make this book as beneficial to you as possible, a handy guide has been put together so not only can you see each ailment alphabetically, but you can also see what herbs you need to treat it and what the correct dosage is.

Many of the herbs in the list below have been discussed at length throughout the book, but some do not fall under the umbrella of *herbal antibiotics*. Some are culinary herbs like the few that were mentioned above, while others fall into the bracket of more general herbal remedies. They have, however, been included because they are recommended for a specific ailment and to leave them out would mean you, the reader, would be missing out on valuable information.

This handy A-Z will hopefully give you the ease of access to the information you need in no time at all.

Allergies

Allergies	Herbal Treatment
Seasonal Allergies and Hay fever	Licorice – For the general treatment of mild allergies, licorice is a great versatile herb that can lower inflammation in the body. As it is filled with anti-histamine properties,

it is efficient at lessening the symptoms of allergies in a mild way. Licorice can be drunk in tea form with one cup being consumed when needed. However, for prolonged allergies that need to be treated over a longer period of time, supplements can be taken with the recommended dose being between 100-300mg a day depending on how serious your symptoms are.

Licorice cannot be taken by those with high blood pressure, sufferers of heart disease and people with low potassium levels.

Stinging Nettles – Similarly to licorice, nettles offer the same anti-histamine properties while lowering inflammation. It is also very mild on the body with minimum side effects. Surprisingly, although we mostly think of nettles as being those dastardly little plants that hurt our legs, their stings are actually eliminated during cooking or processing. So don't worry, a cup of stinging nettle tea won't hurt you. It will however have quite a mild, green and earthy taste that many people enjoy.

If you'd like to try nettles for your allergies, just make sure that you buy freeze dried encapsulated nettles. This is because they have the greatest concentration of anti-histamine

	<p>properties.</p> <p>The recommended dose is 300mg taken 4 times a day. This can be drunk in tea form or even cooked into soups.</p> <p>However, stinging nettles are not suitable for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding or for those who are prescribed blood thinning drugs such as warfarin or those who take lithium.</p> <p>Flaxseed Oil – 1 tablespoon taken 1-3 times a day. This will work to reduce inflammation in the body to tackle the effects of allergies.</p> <p>Walnuts – 7 whole or 14 halves once a day.</p>
<p>Anaphylactic Shock – This sudden allergic reaction can be fatal. Therefore there is no replacement for immediate professional help. Symptoms of anaphylaxis include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itching • Fainting • Stomach cramping • Nausea • Diarrhoea • Increased heart rate • Severe swelling of the throat and airways • Trouble breathing <p>There are many causes of this severe form of allergy, but common ones</p>	<p>People who are most at risk of developing anaphylaxis are those with a history of allergies such as sufferers of asthma, those who have recurrent exposure to a certain substance that may cause allergies and people with low levels of vitamin D in their diet.</p>

<p>are allergies to food, latex, penicillin and insect bites.</p>	
<p>Rhinitis</p>	<p>Ginger tea – Chop 1 inch squared of ginger root and steep in boiling water with a slice of lemon. Inhale the steam and sip slowly.</p>
<p>Food allergies</p>	<p>Many people suffer from food allergies and there are many triggers and causes of inflammation. For example, the biggest allergy triggers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy • Soy • Wheat • Nuts • Eggs • Shellfish/Fish <p>While the biggest causes of gut inflammation come from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaged foods • Sugar • Gluten • Artificial flavorings <p>The first port of call for when you think you might be suffering from food allergies is to begin eliminating the foods that are causing a reaction. These foods might be difficult to identify at first, and it may take some time eliminating foods one by one until you realize what is harming you.</p> <p>Once you have begun addressing your</p>

food allergies, you can begin taking care of your gut by introducing immune boosting foods into your diet.

These include:

- Chia seeds
- Flax seeds
- Bone broth
- Coconut milk
- Almond milk
- Gluten free flours such as spelt
- Leafy green vegetables
- Probiotics such as kefir, kimchi and sauerkraut which will strengthen the micro biomes in your gut and fill you with good bacteria.

However, if you need a more immediate solution to your distress, aim for herbs that will soothe your stomach such as **peppermint** . Peppermint tea is not only tasty and comforting, but it is also wonderful for the health of our stomachs. It decreases gas bloating while relaxing the muscles. Perfect for when you're suffering from stomach cramps.

You can drink it in a tea, having one cup whenever you need some relief. It is easy to find in most grocery stores, coming in the form of tea bags or loose leaf tea. However, if you have your own peppermint plant, you can make your own fresh. Simply add

a generous handful of leaves to a pot, cover with boiling water and steep for 5 minutes before straining and serving. You can adjust the amount of leaves in your tea depending on your taste, but it goes without saying that the more leaves, the stronger and more potent the healing power of the tea.

You can also reach for peppermint essential oil, adding one to two drops to a half liter bottle of water. Not only will it hydrate you, but the fresh, zingy taste of the peppermint will liven up your usual boring bottle of water while giving you the healing properties of the peppermint.

Sinusitis

Menthol – If you suffer from sinusitis, your best friends are going to be products containing menthol as they'll clear up any congestion. Menthol is a derivative of peppermint and is mostly used for its ability to open up airways.

Having recently suffered from my own sinus congestion, I was told the best way to clear out any blockages while removing a headache was to breathe in the steam from a bowl of hot water with either 3-4 drops of peppermint oil or a single salt sized crystal of menthol in it. But if you want to get the effects of the steam at night, you can fill up a large cup with boiling water and add your

peppermint and menthol before placing it beside your bed. For extra healing power, add a few drops of lavender oil to help you sleep and lessen stress and anxiety.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the importance of staying well hydrated while suffering from sinus congestion. This may seem obvious, and it is certainly not a remedy, but many people forget to drink enough water when they're ill or, like me, don't feel like having liquid sloshing around in their stomach. But adequate hydration loosens up and thins out mucus, meaning blocked sinuses can drain more easily. So before you reach for a remedy, make sure to get your eight glasses of the clear stuff.

Alzheimer's

Ashwagandha - Alzheimer's is, of course, difficult to treat and requires serious medical intervention. However, there are herbs available that can boost brain health. It won't eliminate Alzheimer's entirely, but it will improve neurological functioning. The main brain boosting herb that we've discussed in this book is ashwagandha. Generally believed to be safely taken by most people, the general recommended dose for overall brain health is a capsule containing 400-500mg of the ground root twice a day.

Anxiety

Ashwagandha - Similarly to Alzheimer's, ashwagandha is one of the most powerful herbs to treat anxiety and overall brain health. Yet the dosage is dependent upon your needs. If your symptoms of anxiety are severe you might want to take a higher dose with 900mg being recommended for those with acute anxiety disorders. This doesn't have to be taken all at once and can be

split into one 450mg capsule twice a day.

However, you don't always have to take it in capsule form. The ground root is also available to buy as a powder, and it can be added to just about anything. So you can mix your medicine with a tasty treat such as a fruit smoothie or dessert, or even add it to coffee or sprinkle it over a peanut butter sandwich. As long as you're consuming the correct dosage, you can be as creative as you want.

Chamomile – We've all been told to grab a cup of chamomile tea when we're stressed and it's for a good reason. The plant is just about one of the most calming herbs there is and also the most easy to find in stores. A cup of tea can be taken when needed and many people love to sip on a cup right before bed to help them relax and fall asleep. But if supplements are more your style then aim to take between 350 – 500mg a day to keep your mind and body in equilibrium.

Asthma

Reishi - One of the best herbs available that we've discussed previously is the reishi mushroom. Although perfect for boosting our immune systems, it is also great at lessening the symptoms of asthma. For general health-giving benefits, the mushroom can be incorporated into your diet and cooked in soups, stir fries, stews and just about anything you can think of. Just make sure you use whole reishi mushrooms.

However, figuring out the right dosage for the mushroom taken medicinally can be a little tricky. This is mainly due to the mushroom coming in many forms with varying potencies. For example, when the mushroom is dried, it is around 10 times less potent than the fresh variety. Furthermore, the dosage is dependent on what you are taking it for. If you wish to take reishi for general immune system boosting purposes, around 1g a day of its powder can be added to smoothies for example. However, if you have a chronic illness such as asthma that needs concentrated attention, the dose will need to be higher, between 2-5g of the powder. But, you can take up to 9g a day if you really need to. That may sound like a lot, but it was estimated by McKenna et al (2011) that a dose that is potentially dangerous to your body is around the 200g mark. So up to 9 grams and beyond is definitely safe.

Cholesterol

Astragalus is the herb of choice for lowering cholesterol used by many people due to its powerful healing properties. It can be taken as a tincture, in capsules or tablets or even as an injection (This method is available in many Asian countries that practice clinical Chinese Medicine). However, the dosage can vary from person to person, and it is advised you consult a professional herbalist to find the right dosage for you. If, however, you are looking to boost your overall cholesterol (and general) health, you can opt for the standardised dose that is sold in health food shops as a supplement.

Colds

I could talk for years about what herbal antibiotics are best for curing a cold and in this book we have covered many of them. Therefore, it's hard to choose a favorite or one I would recommend more highly than the others. Many of the herbal antibiotics mentioned in this book will do a terrific job of boosting your immune system while decreasing the nasty symptoms of your cold. However, it is almost impossible to name every herbal antibiotic that can aid the elimination of your cold, so I have compiled a list of the ones I have found through research to be the most effective.

Boneset	2g of leaves and flowers or cup of tea when needed.
Echinacea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 300mg of dried, powdered extract per day• 1-2ml of tincture 3 times a day• 0.5-1g of dried root in tea form up to 3 times a day
Wild Indigo	1 cup of tea up to three times a day
Garlic	Mince 2 cloves of raw garlic and mix with a teaspoon of honey. Leave for 15 minutes to allow the garlic juices to absorb into the honey and swallow

	whole. If you are feeling braver, you can crunch down on the raw cloves on their own.
Spilanthes	20 drops of tincture twice a day
Elderberry	15ml of syrup taken 4 times a day

Digestive difficulties

Ginger is one of the most powerful natural remedies available for the treatment of stomach conditions such as nausea. It is also very gentle on the body with minimal side effects. Therefore, ginger tea can be drunk when needed for the alleviation of nausea. Add in a slice of lemon for some extra healing and immune boosting properties.

Peppermint is also a wonderful herb that can soothe an upset stomach. Oils can be taken in supplement form during mealtimes or peppermint tea can be drunk when needed. Drinking peppermint tea after mealtimes can eliminate unwanted gas and bloating. It can also reduce cramps while being a healthy, caffeine free beverage to stay hydrated when suffering from ailments such as diarrhoea.

Usnea is an effective remedy for indigestion with herbal practitioners advising us to take 100mg per day or 3-4ml of the tincture.

Eyes

Chamomile - If you are suffering from sore, itchy or tired eyes you'll be surprised to know that relaxing back with some teabags is a great way to feel better fast. Chamomile teabags especially work wonders with their anti-inflammatory properties to reduce swelling, itchiness and puffiness. Place two teabags in ice water for ten minutes, squeeze, then lie on your back with the tea bags placed firmly over your eyelids. Relax for as long as you like.

Heart

Garlic – Once again this mainstay in our kitchen cabinets is showing itself to be the wonder drug we can all turn to. Evidence has shown that adding garlic to your diet can really boost your overall heart health. If you're brave

enough, crunch down on some raw cloves, or if you'd prefer, add it to as many dishes throughout your day as you can.

Hepatitis

Astragalus – Research into the efficacy of herbal medication on the symptoms of hepatitis is still in its infancy. However, there is some evidence to show that astragalus root can help alleviate the symptoms of hepatitis B and C while improving liver function. Dosage given in trials which show positive outcomes is 45g of astragalus root a day taken in tea form. Often, it was mixed with other herbs such as peony and turmeric.

High blood pressure

Garlic - Many of the herbs discussed in this book are advised not to be taken by those suffering from high blood pressure. But there is one herb that can be taken which has been shown to help those who suffer from the condition. You won't be surprised to discover that it is garlic. Is there anything it can't cure? Eat raw or freely add to dishes.

Liver health

Caution should be practised when using herbs for your liver health, and currently research on how certain herbs aid liver health is limited. However, there is some evidence to suggest some herbs such as garlic, turmeric, rosemary, peppermint and sage have some benefits. As well as ginseng and astragalus. Yet it has to be mentioned there have been little to no clinical trials conducted on the effects of herbs on liver health so there is no official information on dosage. Therefore, it can be suggested that adding the above herbs to your diet will have benefits for your health in general. But if you are looking for specific guidance on how to treat your liver, it is best to consult your general physician.

Lungs

Ginseng has been shown in clinical trials to reduce bacteria in the lungs, especially in conditions such as bronchitis. Evidence has shown that a dosage of 100mg of ginseng extract taken twice a day is recommended over a

9 day period.

Migraines

Thankfully, migraines and headaches have a wide variety of herbal cures. Some basic ones include the application of a couple drop of **peppermint** essential oil to the forehead or drinking a cup of peppermint or **chamomile** tea. While others include taking some herbal extracts.

One extract that works well is **butterbur** root which has anti-inflammatory properties. It has been shown that if you suffer from frequent headaches, taking between 50-150mg of the extract daily can relieve pain. However, it has also been shown that with prolonged use, it can have an adverse effect on the liver. Therefore, butterbur might not be recommended for everyone.

Another helpful herb is **ginger** which reduces headaches as well as nausea. This can be taken as a tea, with the recommended dose of 250mg of ginger root being found to be just as effective as many prescription strength migraine medications. If you don't have time to make the tea, you can also take this dose in capsule form.

Skin ailments

Acne	<p>The best herbs for acne are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">CalendulaWitch hazelChamomileLavenderRosemary <p>These work great to kill bacteria in the skin while soothing angry pimples and lowering inflammation. An easy way to prepare your own healing skin tonic is to create your own decoction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With decoctions, add 1 tablespoon of the herb per 1 cup of distilled water.
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- Simply add the herbs and water together in a heated pan and bring to the boil. You can choose to use the herbs separately but making your own combinations could be a fun way to experiment while getting more power from your decoction. My personal favorite is lavender and chamomile because they are both so soothing and gentle on the skin.
- Once the mixture is brought to a boil, lower the heat to a simmer and leave for 30 minutes.
- Then remove from the heat and leave overnight to cool.
- Once cool, strain the mixture and keep in an air tight container in a cool, dark place. This decoction can be used as a healing face mist or placed on a cotton pad and swabbed across skin.

Hives

Aloe vera works wonders for hives as it is both cooling and healing. Always look for 100% aloe vera gel or even better, cut the gel free from a living aloe vera plant. All you need to do is slice through the leaf and scoop the gel out with a spoon. Apply to the affected

	area whenever needed.
Dandruff	Tea tree oil is an effective herbal remedy for removing the itching and flaking associated with dandruff. Add ten drops of the oil to your usual bottle of shampoo, or add to a carrier oil such as almond oil and work it into the scalp. Leave for 30 minutes then wash.
Wrinkles	<p>Ginseng is a great supplement that can be taken for wrinkles as it lowers stress and blood pressure thus decreasing the general rate of aging within the body. 1-2g of the root powder can be taken daily.</p> <p>Topically, frankincense oil is phenomenally effective for the removal of wrinkles from the face. It's not called liquid gold for nothing!</p> <p>Add 2 drops of the essential oil to 2 tablespoons of your favorite eye cream and apply before bed. For added oomph, massage the cream in slowly in circular motions around the eye socket to eliminate fine lines, relax the muscles and remove puffiness.</p>
Warts	Drinking a cup of echinacea tea every day can prevent warts from occurring as it strengthens the immune system. However, if you already have warts and are keen to remove them, apple cider vinegar will do the trick of removing them. Soak a cotton ball in vinegar, place over the wart and tape in place. Leave it overnight and after 7

	days the wart should disappear.
Psoriasis	<p>Aloe vera is a good choice to treat psoriasis because of its soothing properties. Apply to skin up to 3 times a day using a lotion with a 0.5% aloe concentration.</p> <p>Turmeric is also great to take internally because it will lower inflammation from the inside. Take one capsule of turmeric extract daily.</p>
Burns	Make your own healing burn spray by adding 15ml of aloe vera gel to 30ml of rosewater . Add ten drops of lavender essential oil and spray on the area of the burn. You can also spread a layer of honey across a mild burn to soothe and lessen pain.
Bruises	Arnica is the most effective herb at treating bruises because of its ability to dilate capillaries so the body can heal naturally. Arnica gel is the best way to apply the herb to your skin and is easy to find in many drug stores. Apply to the skin when needed.
Boils	One of the most effective ways to treat a boil is to add heat to aid the draining process. However, turmeric powder is also effective. Simply mix a teaspoon of turmeric powder to water and mix into a paste. Apply to the boil twice daily.
Eczema	Tea tree oil and lavender are effective essential oils for eczema because they are anti-bacterial and

	<p>have soothing, wound-healing properties. Dilute up to 3 drops of each oil in two tablespoons of your favorite carrier oil and apply to the affected area when needed. Always do a patch test and don't be afraid to start at a lower concentration of essential oil and work your way up to a stronger solution.</p>
Rosacea	<p>Burdock root works wonders for treating inflamed skin such as rosacea. Helping the body to purify the liver, it can easily clear up red, itchy and angry skin. Burdock is available in supplement form. Buy from reputable, trustworthy stores and follow instructions carefully.</p>

Sleep disorders

Insomnia	<p>Chamomile is suggested for the treatment of insomnia in this book because although there are many other herbs that can help you doze off such as valerian and hops, chamomile does so with no known side effects. It can be mixed with other medications and has no adverse effects. Drink 1-2 cups before bedtime.</p>
Snoring	<p>Make your own throat spray to prevent snoring by taking 30ml of distilled water and adding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 drops of peppermint essential oil 5 drops of lavender essential oil 5 drops of eucalyptus essential oil

	You can also add a couple drops of thyme essential oil to coconut oil and massage into the soles of your feet before going to sleep.
Jet lag	Aim for adaptogenic herbs such as astragalus , ashwagandha and maca to restore your body's natural harmony. These are best taken in tea form and can be purchased from various health food stores or online in pre- prepared tea bags. There is even a prepared jet lag adaptogenic blend available at Anima Mundi Herbals.

Urology

Cystitis	<p>Surprisingly, some of the most effective herbs for the treatment of cystitis are also the cheapest and most easy to find.</p> <p>For example, parsley tea is anti-inflammatory and will reduce the pain of passing urine. Add 2 teaspoons of fresh parsley, (the kind you buy at the grocery store is fine) cover in boiling water and let steep for 5 minutes. Let cool slightly and drink for fast relief.</p> <p>Thyme is also very effective because of its ability to kill off germs. All you need to do is add a few sprigs of thyme to a cup of boiling water and let steep for 5 minutes before drinking. Drink up to 5 times a day for optimum bug fighting power.</p>
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Kidney stones

Dandelion is thought to be effective at eliminating kidney stones because it increases the production of bile. This means it generally increases the output of waste from the body. Drink it as a tea up to 4 times a day to excrete as much urine as possible. However, dandelion must not be consumed by people taking blood thinners, antibiotics, lithium or diuretics.

Urinary incontinence

Cleavers has long been a herbal remedy for the treatment of urinary infections and improving bladder control. Once ingested, it sticks itself to the bladder wall as a thick coating that prevents the bladder from become irritated. Therefore it can stop your bladder becoming overactive. Unlike the above herbs, cleavers is best taken as a tincture, adding 0.25cc to a cup of hot or cold water and drinking 3 times a day.

Corn silk is also very effective at improving bladder control and is also easy to prepare. Take one tablespoon of corn silk and add to one cup of boiling water. Boil for 10 minutes, remove from the heat and let sit for a further 15 then strain and drink 3 times a day.

Urinary tract infections

Marshmallow root treats ghastly urinary tract infections because of its soothing properties which soften and soothe the irritated membranes of the

urinary tract. One teaspoon of the root can be added to a liter of boiling water and steeped for 7 minutes before allowing to cool and then drunk.

Horsetail is also beneficial to the health of urinary tracts and can be prepared in much the same way as marshmallow root. Add 1 teaspoon to 1 liter of boiling water and steep for 7 minutes.

Weight Loss

Herbal remedies for weight loss have been a controversial topic in recent years due to many unscrupulous social media influencers aiming to make money from promoting seemingly magic teas and supplements. Some of these do absolutely nothing to help you lose weight while others are flat out harmful. However, there are some herbs out there that really can help you lose weight. Are they a magic pill, though? Well no. You'll still have to manage your diet and exercise regime. It's not as simple as eating a whole box of donuts then counteracting it with some herbal tea. (If only it was!) But there are herbs that can complement your already existing weight management routine. Let's have a look at them now.

Cayenne pepper

This is one of my favorite spices to add to soups for an extra kick. Ever mixed cayenne and sweet potato? It's a magic combination. However, what I didn't know when I first started cooking with it was that it can help you lose weight. Due to its ability to boost your metabolism, it is said that it can help you burn up to an extra 100 calories a day when added to your food. Although 100 calories might not seem like a great deal, over time that can really add up and giving you an extra helping hand. Add cayenne powder to your favorite dishes by sprinkling as much as you like. It makes a wonderful addition to soups, curries, stews and mixed in with roasted vegetables.

Cumin

This spice has been used for centuries in curry dishes because of its distinctive taste. And it makes a great addition to dishes such as onion bhajis and samosas. Mixed with cardamom and jeera and you get a fantastic explosion of flavors. But it is also hugely effective at helping you lose weight. According to a recent study, consuming it regularly can help you burn up to 3 times more body fat, especially in women. It's a winner!

Ginger

This fiery spice works two-fold to help you tackle your weight. Firstly, it can help regulate blood sugar levels meaning you won't have the dips and highs that can make your eating habits become unregulated. More importantly, if you are prone to eating a high carb diet or you have a sweet tooth and frequently reach for sugary snacks, ginger can stop your blood sugar from spiking.

Secondly, ginger is also known as a thermogenic spice. This means it is able to burn fat. This doesn't mean that if you eat ginger it will literally melt the fat off your body. It does however mean that if consumed regularly while you're already eating healthily and exercising, it will help to burn more fat than usual. Add to your diet by drinking ginger tea, (add a slice of lemon for an extra boost of flavor) slice thinly and add to stir fries or mince along with garlic and add to various dishes such as curries. You can be as creative and brave as you like.

Yeast infections

The first thing to consider when dealing with a yeast infection is that for some people, your diet might be the problem. This is because having a diet rich in sugar and refined carbs can make your body more prone to being overrun by a growth of candida. This sounds more dramatic than it is, and is easily fixed.

Firstly, try to cut back on sweet treats and limit your sugar intake if you can. Ditch things like chips, chocolate, white bread and pasta and opt for more leafy greens and protein. Also aim to add more probiotics to your diets. You can either take a probiotic supplement or eat fermented foods such as kimchi, kefir and sauerkraut. These will work on eliminating candida from your

body and restoring optimum gut flora. In a short while, you should start to see your body reach its equilibrium.

There are, however, a couple of topical options for treating yeast infections on the skin. A diluted solution containing **tea tree oil** will work well to eliminate candida. Add a couple drop to a carrier oil and apply to the area. You can also look for creams that contain a 10% extract of **calendula** which will work to soothe itchy skin.

Thank you

As we come to the end of our herbal journey, I feel it is important to say a big thank you for reading. Herbal remedies and antibiotics have been in existence for centuries, and I hope they will be for many more years. I also hope that as we enter a new era where medical technology grows more sophisticated, and the realm of research grows to encompass both traditional and herbal medicine, that we will continue to learn about what herbs can do for our health.

It is my wish that as readers, you can not only put the things you learned in this book to use, but also pass on the recipes. And even create some of your own!

So thank you again, and may your future be full of good health and vitality (and elderberry gummies.)

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