



Basics of Tincturing

ALA CARTE SERIES

- Part 1 - Making and pressing a tincture (48 minutes)
- Part 2 - Cooking/heating the Isatis and Astragalus tinctures (44 minutes)
- Part 3 - We tincture together with your selected herbs (1 hour, 5 minutes)

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Main Reference

- *Making Plant Medicine*, by Richo Chech

Recommended References (but not required)

- *The Herbal Home Remedy Book*, by Joyce A. Wardwell
- *Herbal Antibiotics 2012*, 2nd Edition, by Stephen H. Buhner
- *Herbal Antivirals 2021*, 2nd Edition, by Stephen H. Buhner

Materials/Ingredients

- Pick an herb for the first class. For suggestions, please see CORAC's *Herbs for Medicinal Purposes* article/download at: <https://corac.co/2023/04/14/herbs-for-medicinal-purposes/>

You'll also need the following to make six basic tinctures:

- Twelve 1/2 gallon glass jars, or six 1 gallon glass jars
 - Sources: Uline, Fillmore Container, Amazon, Walmart.
 - Note: some jars are sold separately from the lids. You will need good fitting lids.
 - Short term storage (2-4 weeks): dark, cool location. Shake them every day.
- Twenty-four glass jars for longer storage (amber is better). Or substitute old, clean wine bottles, or liquor bottles with tight fitting lids as long as they are dark colored glass.
 - Long term storage: dark, cool location.
- 4 bottles of 95% Everclear/grain alcohol, or 6 bottles of 75.5% Everclear/grain alcohol.
- 10-12 bottles of 40% or 50% vodka.
- Canning funnel.
- Long handled spoon.
- Postal or dietary scale that weighs in ounces.
- Small bottle of vinegar (white or ACV).
- Large clear measuring cup that measures in cups and fluid ounces (can be plastic or glass, or you could even use your blender pitcher).
- Labeling material such as painter's tape, printed labels, taped sign or whatever works for you.
- Might need some distilled water depending upon your water source.

Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

Optional Materials

- A wine/cider press with a pressing bag. A press is used to filter (strain) by squeezing the menstruum from the marc. If you don't want to purchase a press outright, you may consider borrowing one or sharing the cost with a friend.

Alternative to a press:

- You can separate the marc from the menstruum by squeezing thru cheesecloth or pouring through a fine sieve, however, results depend upon the texture and consistency of the herb. You might get less tincture back or not filter out enough of the herb using these methods. A press will give you the most return on the herb/alcohol combo.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Herbs: A fresh, dry or wet plant or plant part valued for its medicinal quality.

Menstruum: Solvent for extracting herbs.

- **Water** is the universal solvent and main element of tissue fluids.
- **Alcohol** is relatively non-polar, dissolves what water will not, and acts as a preservative when over 25% of fluid is alcohol.
- **Vinegar** acidifies the solution, increasing solubility of minerals and alkyls.
- **Glycerine** is weaker than alcohol, tastes sweet, and has a short shelf life. It's good for children and recove

Marc: The dry component after extraction.

Vessel: Glass or ceramic of a volume greater than Marc + Menstruum. For making and receiving.

Dispensing Vessel: Where the final medicine is kept. Labeled with product name, batch date, and dispensing instructions. Examples:

- Boneset/Eupatorium powder, 1:5, 60%A, 09-03-23
Take 30-50 drops in hot water, 3x a day
- Herb C/S, 1:4, 50A:40W:10Gly, Date
Dosage Directions

Pressing & Filtering: Squeezing out menstruum from marc and removing sediment.

*Some recommend keeping a record book of tinctures made, herbal purchases, successes, and failures for future purchases & tincturing.



Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

ALCOHOL/WATER RATIO CHART

Please note

- The following tables are based upon a ratio of 1:5; (16 oz multiplied by 5 = 80 ounces of liquid), and formula assumes herb is 16 ounces (1 lb) and menstruum liquid amount is 80 ounces.
- The Vodka does NOT replace the water in the formulas. 80 proof Vodka is 40% alcohol and 60% water, therefore these calculations incorporate the water from the vodka into non-cooked recipes while maintaining the alcohol percentage of the formula exactly at the correct percentage and does not increase the alcohol percentage.

Use this table with 95% Alcohol (Everclear, aka "EC") and 40% Vodka (aka 40%)

Desired amount of alcohol in tincture

40%	0 oz of EC	80 oz of 40%
45%	7 oz of EC +	73 oz of 40%
50%	13 oz of EC +	67 oz of 40%
55%	20 oz of EC +	60 oz of 40%
60%	27 oz of EC +	53 oz of 40%
65%	33 oz of EC +	47 oz of 40%
70%	40 oz of EC +	40 oz of 40%
75%	47 oz of EC +	33 oz of 40%
80%	53oz of EC +	27 oz of 40%
85%	60 oz of EC +	20 oz of 40%
90%	67 oz of EC +	13 oz of 40%
95%	80 oz of EC +	0 oz of 40%

Use this table with 95% Alcohol (Everclear, aka "EC") and 50% Vodka* (aka 50%)

Desired amount of alcohol in tincture

50%	0 oz of EC +	80 oz of 50%
55%	8.0 oz of EC +	72 oz of 50%
60%	16 oz of EC +	64 oz of 50%
65%	24 oz of EC +	56 oz of 50%
70%	32 oz of EC +	48 oz of 50%
75%	40 oz of EC +	40 oz of 50%
80%	48 oz of EC +	32 oz of 50%
85%	56oz of EC +	24 oz of 50%
90%	64 oz of EC +	16 oz of 50%
95%	80 oz of EC +	0 oz of 50%

*100 proof Vodka is 50% Alcohol and 50% water.



Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

Use this table with 75% Alcohol (Everclear, aka "EC") and 40% Vodka (aka 40%)

Desired amount of alcohol in tincture

	0 oz of EC	80 oz of 40%
	11 oz of EC +	69 oz of 40%
	23 oz of EC +	57 oz of 40%
	34 oz of EC +	46 oz of 40%
	33 oz of EC +	34 oz of 40%
	46 oz of EC +	47 oz of 40%
	57 oz of EC +	23 oz of 40%
	69 oz of EC +	11 oz of 40%
	80 oz of EC +	0 oz of 40%

Use this table with 75% Alcohol (Everclear, aka "EC") and 50% Vodka (aka 50%)

Desired amount of alcohol in tincture

	0 oz of EC +	80 oz of 50%
	16 oz of EC +	64 oz of 50%
	32 oz of EC +	48 oz of 50%
	48 oz of EC +	32 oz of 50%
	64 oz of EC +	16 oz of 50%
	80 oz of EC +	0 oz of 50%



Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

TINCTURE METHODS

There are 2 general methods to mix herb with menstruum. One is called the “Folk Method” used by Rosemary Gladstar and others on the internet.

Basically, stuff a jar with herb and fill it up to the rim with highest proof of alcohol that you have. It must be at least 40 proof (20% pure alcohol) or it will not be adequately preserved. Cech calls this “Easy Tinctures”. *(See p. 19-20.)* We do not typically recommend this method as the resultant “Tincture strength” will be vague. *(Green)*

Using a “Specific formula” as in Cech’s and Buhner’s books is the method that we practice and recommend. One of the most common formulas is written like this 1:5, (50A:50W).

This formula is read as 1 part herb to 5 parts liquid / menstruum. This can be called ...the “weight to volume (w/v) method.” In this method the weight of the herb and the volume of the menstruum are measured and noted in order to produce a specific tincture strength. *(Green)*

The metric system of measure is most convenient...a working 1 to 1 relationship between a weight of a solid material with a volume of a liquid. *(Green)*

Simply put, one cubic centimeter of water weighs one gram. For our practical purposes, we can allow that this holds true for all liquids (water, alcohol, wine, vinegar, glycerin) we use to formulate our menstua. The relationship of plant material to menstruum is known as the weight (of herb) to volume (of menstruum) ratio of the tincture, or the tincture strength. The most commonly found tincture strengths used in commerce and mainstream medicine are 1:5 and 1:10 for dry plant preparations and 1:2 for fresh plant preparations. *(Green)*

When making a tincture, it’s typical to use a pound of herb (weight - 16 oz.) which is represented by (1) in the highlighted 1:5 formula referenced above. You multiply 16 (ounces) by the “5” which equals 80 ounces (liquid.) 16 ounces weight of herb x 5 = 80 ounces volume of liquid.

The second part of the formula (50A:50W) reads as 50% Alcohol : 50% Water. So that means that your 80 ounces volume of liquid should be 50% Alcohol and 50% Water.

Simply put, put 16 ounces of herb into a gallon jar and fill with 50% alcohol and 50% water, stir, lid and label.

To save money on the alcohol we use a conversion chart called Mick’s Alcohol / Water Ratio Chart.



Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

VARIOUS WAYS HERBS CAN BE PROCESSED

- A simple tea is a water extract of herbs, sometimes known as an "Infusion." *(See Cech, p.67)*
- Some herbs extract better with cold water called a "Cold infusion." *(See Cech, p.68)*
- Some extract better after being simmered which is called a "DecocFon." *(See Cech, p.69)*
These would include syrups such as Elderberry.

Other herbal products such as topical oils, salves and creams are taught by Cech but we will not cover those.

HERBS THAT NEED TO BE HEATED

See specific preparation formulas for each herb.

- Mushrooms (unless previously heated by seller such as Mushroom Harvest), ex. Cordyceps, Lion's Mane, Reishi
- Astragalus
- Isatis - (is like making gravy) - additional instructions to be given
- Usnea - additional instructions to be given
- Elderberry syrup

When you must use heat for extraction you CANNOT use mixed alcohol / water (Mick's Alcohol / Water Ratio Chart) because the alcohol will burn off during the heating process. You must use water only for the heating part. After the herbal concoction has cooled completely then the alcohol should be added. See formulas for exact percentages.

ADDING VINEGAR TO TINCTURES

Plant alkaloids (alkaline-like) won't extract easily in alkaline waters; they need more acidic waters to do so. The water used to make tinctures and infusions needs to be "soft," or else an acid such as vinegar or lemon juice needs to be added in minimal amounts. *(Buhner)*

List of herbs that need 1-2 tbsp of vinegar:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Alchornea | • Cryptolepis |
| • Ashwagandha | • Goldenseal root |
| • Barberry | • CopFs / Goldthread |
| • Berberine family | • IsaFs |
| • Black Pepper | • Licorice root |
| • Bloodroot | • Lion's Mane mushroom |
| • Cephalandra | • Motherwort |
| • Cinchona | • Mahonia / Oregon Grape root |
| • Corydalis | • Sida Acuta |



Basics of Tincturing *(continued)*

HERBAL SUPPLY RESOURCES

- Mountain Maus – www.mountainmausremedies.com
- Sage Woman Herbs – www.sagewomanherbs.com
- Mountain Rose Herbs – www.mountainroseherbs.com
- Pacific Botanicals – www.pacificbotanicals.com
- 1st Chinese Herbs – www.1stchineseherbs.com
- Herbie Herbs – www.herbies-herb.com
- Monteagle – www.monteagleherbs.com

If you cannot buy pure grain alcohol locally this site is an option –
Culinary Solvent – Pure food grade Ethanol – <https://culinarysolvent.com>

RECOMMENDED ANTIBACTERIAL HERBS

The bolded herbs are considered “must-haves” and the others listed are next tier, important but secondary.

- **Cryptolepis** (#1 antibacterial herb) OR one of these, in this order:
- **Sida** OR
- **Alchornea** OR
- **Bidens** (fresh)
- Oregon Grape root (can buy later if can't afford immediately)

RECOMMENDED ANTIVIRAL HERBS

- **Baikal skullcap / Chinese skullcap**
- **Isatis leaf and root**
- **Licorice root** (synergist)
- Ginger root (synergist) – can buy at your local grocery
- Boneset (has been very useful during Covid)
- Red Sage
- Cleavers (fresh) OR Red root
- Japanese knotweed / (Resveratrol)

