

HERBAL OIL

homemade, natural and mild



BARBARA WESTRA - MANDALI KOURNAS

Herbal Oil (Macerate)

Oil for your body, your soul, and for the kitchen

Almost everyone is familiar with herbal tea made from various herbs steeped in hot water. But did you know that you can also steep herbs in oil? This is called an herbal oil or macerate. For such an herbal oil, we use the entire herb or only the leaves, roots, or flowers. Well-known oil macerates include St. John's Wort oil and Calendula oil.

What is a macerate?

The term "macerate" comes from the Latin word "macerāre," which means to soften. Maceration is a process in which herbs are exposed to a liquid such as water, oil, or alcohol for a certain period. This liquid serves as a solvent for certain constituents of the herbs. After a specific time, the herbs are strained out, leaving behind a liquid containing dissolved constituents from the herbs. This solution is called a macerate.

Mandali Herbal Oil

We create macerates based on olive oil, and in our online store Mandali, we currently offer 4 different types: bay leaf oil, rosemary oil, lavender oil, and calendula oil. If you want to learn more about herbal oil and how to use it, please continue reading on the following pages.



Cold and hot methods

During the maceration process, no heat is added. This is called the "cold extraction" method. In the hot method, the herbs are heated together with the base oil using a double boiler. This method is particularly suitable for plants with a high moisture content or for hard, woody plant parts such as bark, resin, or roots. Alternatively, we use this method when we have limited time.

The cold method

The jar is placed in a warm spot at room temperature. Avoid direct sunlight, as it can heat up the oil behind the glass and cause it to spoil quickly. It's important to gently shake the solution a few times each day, allowing the concentration of dissolved substances around the leaves and flowers to mix with the rest of the oil.

After 5-10 days, strain the oil. It's likely that not all constituents have fully dissolved, but the risk of spoilage is too high to leave it any longer.

If you're using dried herbs, you can let the macerate sit for 14 days as there is a lower chance of mold formation. It's best to pour the oil through cheesecloth or a coffee filter, minimizing the amount of fine plant material left in the macerate. Do not press the oil, but let it drip naturally.

When nothing more drips out, take a second jar and squeeze the filter or cloth to collect any remaining oil. The oil collected in the second jar should be used quickly as it may contain more water and suspended plant particles.



Store the oil in a sterilized, dark bottle with a label indicating the date, plant material, and type of oil used. Cold oil extraction is the gentlest method, preserving most of the constituents unchanged and resulting in a healthier oil with less oxidation compared to the hot method.

The cold method is often used for medicinal oils that include flowers such as chamomile, calendula, lime blossom, violet, arnica, lavender, or St. John's Wort. However, you can also create a herbal macerate with garden herbs such as rosemary, thyme, basil, or bay leaf for cosmetic or culinary purposes.

Macerate or Herbal Oil

A macerate should be stored in a cool and dark place and used within six months. A macerate made from dried herbs can last up to 12 months. Even the herbal oil you want to use in cooking has a limited shelf life.

If you used fresh herbs, the oil is only good for about two months. With a macerate made from dried herbs, you can enjoy it for a longer time.

The hot method

In the hot method, the herbs are heated together with the base oil for 2-3 hours using a double boiler at 50-60 degrees Celsius. To do this, finely chop 10 grams of fresh or dried herbs. Place them in a heat-resistant (jam) jar and pour 50-100 grams of oil over the herbs. Let it steep in a double boiler at 50-60 degrees Celsius for 2-3 hours. Afterward, filter the oil, fill it into containers, and label them.



Herbs

When we steep herbs in oil, the fat-soluble constituents from the plant's cells transfer into the oil. Fat-soluble compounds found in plants include vitamins E, D, K, and A, as well as carotenoids, essential oils, fats, oils, coumarins, furanocoumarins, flavonoids, and phytosterols.

Fresh herbs

Typically, we use fresh plant parts for an oil macerate. The advantage of fresh herbs is that they are vibrant and contain all their constituents. The disadvantage is that fresh herbs often contain water, which increases the risk of mold formation.

Therefore, we let the fresh herbs rest in the shade for half a day to allow any insects to escape and some of the water to evaporate.

Herbs that naturally have less moisture include bay leaf, rosemary, and thyme.



Dried herbs

When using dried herbs for a herbal oil, there is less risk of mold, and you have a wider range of options to choose from. The downside of dried herbs is that some of the constituents, especially the essential oils, may have been lost during the drying process.

Types of Herbal Oils orten von Kräuteröl

You can use medicinal herbal oils, such as marigold (calendula) or St. John's Wort oil, for wounds, skin inflammations, or burns. Fragrant oils can be made from herbs like immortelle, chamomile, lavender, roses, or vanilla, which can be added to facial or body creams. Herbs like arnica, juniper, pine needles, or rosemary are good for massage oils as they promote good blood circulation in the skin.

Rosemary, bay leaf, thyme, basil, and other kitchen herbs are delightful in a culinary herb oil, possibly combined with chili peppers or garlic.



Base Oil

You can use various types of oil as a base for herbal oils. For **kitchen herb oil**, we prefer using olive oil or coconut oil. Alternatively, you can use sunflower oil, peanut oil, sesame oil, rapeseed oil, or rice bran oil, but these have a slightly shorter shelf life.

High-quality, natural, unrefined, and stable oils such as olive oil, sesame oil, and jojoba oil are suitable for **medicinal herbal oils**. However, jojoba oil is actually a wax and not suitable for internal use. For a nourishing **body care herbal oil**, you can choose stable oils such as jojoba oil, apricot kernel oil, avocado oil, or macadamia nut oil.

Expensive oils like wheat germ oil, hemp oil, wild rose oil, sea buckthorn oil, or grape seed oil are particularly suitable for extra nourishing herbal oils. These oils already contain many valuable nurturing substances and can be customized according to your skin type. However, these oils contain a lot of unsaturated fatty acids, which are good for our skin but have a shorter shelf life.



Quality

The quality of herbal oil depends on several factors:

- * The plant material should be finely crushed to allow the active ingredients to dissolve more easily in the oil from the damaged plant cells.
- * The duration of extraction is important to allow the herbs enough time to release their active ingredients into the oil. We shake the extract a few times a day to ensure fresh oil comes into contact with the plant cells, facilitating the dissolution of the active ingredients. Once an equilibrium is reached between the concentration of substances in the plant and the surrounding oil, no more substances will transfer from the plant to the oil, and there is no need to leave the oil for a longer period.
- * The temperature of the extraction is also crucial. The duration of extraction depends on the temperature. Higher temperatures result in shorter extraction times. However, excessively high temperatures over a long period are not good for herbal oil as they can lead to oxidative processes, causing the oil to become rancid.
- * The best time to harvest herbs or medicinal plants is around noon on a sunny day when the dew has evaporated, and the concentration of active ingredients is highest.
- * We pick clean, fresh herbs, which are not washed after harvesting (except for roots).



Applications

Medicinal Oil

Olive oil is a warming oil and especially suitable for oily creams or ointments. It can be used as a base for medicinal oils and is suitable for the warm method. Oil macerates of plants such as St. John's Wort or marigold (calendula) are used directly on the skin or further processed into ointments.

Examples of medicinal oils:

- * Aloe vera oil: cools, cares for, and soothes the skin in case of inflammation, sunburn, eczema, and dermatitis. It also helps speed up the healing of small wounds, inflammations, and minor burns and provides moisture to the skin, which is nourishing and cooling after a day in the sun.
- * Chamomile oil is used for wounds.
- * Calendula oil is used for minor injuries such as abrasions. This oil can also be incorporated into nurturing creams or ointments suitable for young children or baby bottoms, as well as rough hands. Arnica oil is used for bruises, swelling, bruises, and rheumatic joint problems.
- * St. John's Wort oil is mainly used for sunburn or other minor burns. Usually, this oil is made using the cold method. In old recipes, St. John's Wort oil was placed in the sun because it was claimed that macerates with the beautiful yellow flowers turned deep red after three months in the sun. However, we wonder if the olive oil used for this purpose does not deteriorate in quality. Oil that is exposed to the sun, especially behind glass, can become very hot, causing it to oxidize and become rancid more quickly.
- * Narrow-leaved plantain oil is used for skin problems and insect bites.
- * Daisy oil is helpful for bruising and bruises.
- * Violet oil helps reduce scars.
- * Yarrow oil is used for cramps and migraines.
- * Red clover oil can help with wrinkles and skin firmness.
- * Ivy oil is used against cellulite.
- * Thyme oil helps with colds.
- * Comfrey oil is used for sports injuries.
- * Bay laurel oil is particularly effective when rubbed on painful joints and in the treatment of cold symptoms. It also helps cleanse impure skin.
- * Rosemary oil symbolizes everything that stagnates in the body and mind and strengthens what needs energy. Rosemary stimulates and warms (psyche, body tissues, and blood circulation), is invigorating, and promotes blood circulation.

Cosmetic herbal oil

You can also use an oil macerate in your day or night cream or in your body lotion. Organic, natural plant oils already contain many substances that have a positive effect on our skin, and with the help of herbs, this oil becomes even more potent.

For a night cream, you can consider using pomegranate, borage, evening primrose, or sea buckthorn oil. For a day cream, alternatives to consider are wheat germ oil, hemp oil, wild rose oil, or grape seed oil if you want to try something different. It is also good to tailor the oil to your skin type. For sensitive skin, hemp oil, jojoba oil, apricot kernel oil, or poppy seed oil are suitable, for example. For oily skin, you can think of jojoba oil or grape seed oil. Mature skin benefits from oils such as wheat germ oil, sea buckthorn oil, pomegranate oil, or wild rose oil. You can also create delightful combinations.

Massage oil

Who doesn't enjoy being massaged? Whether it's to relax, ease muscle pain, or detoxify, a massage is good for your body and mind. A regular oil massage is already delightful, but adding herbs to it makes it even more special.

Herbs can contribute to deep relaxation, improved blood circulation, or a more beautiful complexion.

Olive oil does not quickly absorb into the skin and can be used as a base for massage oil. Other oils suitable for massage are almond oil and sesame oil.



Herbs in massage oil

Herbs you can use include lavender, hops, valerian, cedarwood, and orange. These have a harmonizing effect and provide calmness and relaxation.

St. John's Wort and comfrey work well against cramps. They warm burdened muscles and are beneficial for the skin and underlying tissue.

Calendula, rose, chamomile, red clover, and narrow-leaved plantain have a nurturing and restorative effect on the skin. Rosemary, ginger, and juniper improve blood circulation and are beneficial for muscle and joint pain.

Massage oil with essential oil

You can also create a deliciously scented massage oil by adding a few drops of essential oils to a base oil such as almond oil, sesame oil, coconut oil, olive oil, jojoba oil, or a mixture thereof.

Essential oils are highly concentrated products and should never be used directly on the skin. As a guideline, you can add 10-20 drops of essential oil to 100 ml of base oil. For young children, use 10 drops.

Essential oils not only smell pleasant but also have various effects on our body and psyche.

A few examples are:

Basil, fir, grapefruit, pine, rosemary, lemon verbena, and lemon are refreshing and promote concentration.

Lemongrass, bergamot, geranium, grapefruit, lavender, mandarin, clary sage, sage, lemon balm, and rose have a harmonizing effect.

Lavender, melissa, orange, rose, sandalwood, and myrrh have a calming effect and reduce feelings of anxiety.

Eucalyptus, lavender, pine, peppermint, sage, and thyme provide relief from colds.

Orange, mandarin, vanilla, and geranium can improve your mood.

Arnica, juniper, pine needles, and rosemary stimulate blood circulation (for muscle pain).

Note: Test the oil on the inside of your forearm first. Some people may have sensitive or allergic reactions to certain herbs.

Culinary oil

As mentioned above, you can also create a delicious herb-infused oil to use in the kitchen.

Choose an oil you enjoy using and make a herb-infused oil with herbs such as thyme, oregano, basil, bay leaf, or rosemary. You can also add garlic or chili peppers if desired.



If you have any questions or want to learn more about Mandali's herb-infused oils after reading this concise information about macerate and herbal oil, feel free to [email](#) me. You can find more information about herbs, oil, and other healthy products from Crete on the [Mandali website](#). You can also find an assortment list on the website.

Best regards,
Barbara

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