

# How to Create Your Own Herbal Remedies & Beauty Products on a Budget



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## 1.0 Introduction

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Welcome to my introductory eBook, How to Create Your Own Natural Health & Beauty Products on a Budget. The purpose of this book is to provide you with information on the minimum equipment and ingredients that you need to get started making your own healthy lotions and potions.

Why make your own lotions and potions?

1. It's fun!
2. You know exactly what is in the products you are putting on your skin and in your body
3. It's a lot cheaper than buying them. For example, you can make a lip balm with ingredients that cost as little as 40p per pot. The recipe is in this book. Not only that, but this recipe is a big hit with my friends and clients, so I know it's a good one!
4. You can choose to be environmentally friendly by buying local ingredients or sourcing them from your garden or window boxes

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## 2.0 The 3 Components to Your Lotions and Potions

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There are just 3 aspects to making your lotions and potions: water, oil and something to bring the two together (for example, beeswax).

An ointment is a greasy preparation and has no water; in its simplest form it is just oil and beeswax melted together. Your basic recipe is 1g of beeswax to 9mls of oil. You will create a different consistency to your ointment by varying the quantity of oil to beeswax or by using a different type of oil. The recipe for your Travel-Friendly Make-up remover on page 9 is essentially an ointment.

A liniment combines an infused oil with a tincture. A tincture is a herb that has been macerated (soaked) in alcohol. Shake before use and rub into the area. These are great when you need to apply warmth to a sore area as in the Liniment for Sore Muscles on page 10.

A cream combines oil, water and an emulsifying agent such as beeswax. Their consistency and texture depends on the ratio of oil to water that you choose to use. The heavier creams are emulsions of water in oil. The lighter creams are emulsions of oil in water (i.e. there's more water than oil in the product). The lip balm on page 9 is an example of a cream.

In summary, your 3 components are:

	Ointment	Liniment	Cream
Liquid		✓	✓
Oil	✓	✓	✓
Emulsifier	✓		✓

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## 3.0 Assembling Your Equipment

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You will need:

- An **Electric Whisk** for whisking oil, water and beeswax together
- **Scales** for weighing your beeswax
- A **Frying Pan** or large saucepan. You heat water in the frying pan and place the Pyrex jug inside it
- **2 Pyrex Jugs**. One will heat your oil and one will heat your water.
- **Jars and Bottles** for pouring your gorgeous creations into
- Optional extra – a **Slow Cooker** if you want to make your infused oil the non-supervised way

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## 4.0 The Emulsifier

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The emulsifying agent is the thing that binds it all together. Your choice of emulsifier depends on the thickness of your cream and the type of cream you are planning on making.

### Emulsifying Agents

Water in Oil Preparations	Oil in Water Preparations
Beeswax	Emulsifying Wax (BP)
Lanolin	Soft Soap
	Egg Yolk (as in mayonnaise)
	Lecithin

James Green provides an excellent outline of the various emulsifiers in his book, *The Herbal Medicine-Maker's Handbook* (page 211):

As an emulsifier, beeswax will thicken and harden a cream or lotion to some extent; lanolin (extracted from sheep wool) is protective and moisturising to the skin and tends slightly to thicken a lotion, but is not as reliable as beeswax for this action; glycerin has been discussed a great deal in this handbook already, so it is sufficient to say that as an emulsifier it is a mild preservative and is also an excellent moisturising agent for the skin; lecithin is a smooth and slippery emulsifier and lends these qualities to a lotion. Avoid using too high a percent of either glycerin, lanolin, or lecithin, for they can make a lotion somewhat sticky; a half to three-quarters of a teaspoon of any one or a combination of these per 8 oz. cup of lotion is sufficient. Lotions and creams tend to thicken a bit as they age.

#### 4.1 Beeswax



A bee visits an *Echinacea purpurea*

Worker bees collect nectar, pollen, volatile oils, plant wax and resins from the flowers. The bees eat honey and the sugar from the honey is converted into wax and exuded from 8 glands that are situated on their abdomens. When exuded, the clear flakes of wax sit on their abdomens. These are then removed by themselves or their neighbours and chewed. The mastication process changes the wax from a clear colourless substance to the warm honey colour that we know as beeswax. By chewing it, the bees make it pliable. This allows the bee to apply it to the honeycomb that it is either building or adding caps to the individual cells in the honeycomb. Beeswax is soft and pliable at a high temperature and solid at a low temperature.



The wax starts off as white in colour and then becomes golden brown due to the inclusion of propolis and pollen oils. You can purchase bleached beeswax. However, I would recommend using the golden-brown variety so that you can incorporate the beneficial actions of the propolis.

Beeswax is available in blocks or as grated pellets. Either is fine for making creams with. If you buy the blocks, you will need to grate it to speed up the process of melting it together with the oils in your cream.

#### 4.2 Emulsifying Wax (BP)

Emulsifying Wax is a combination of cetearyl alcohol, a surfactant such as sodium lauryl sulphate and water.

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### 5.0 Carrier or Base Oils

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The oil you choose has health-giving properties in its own right. The oil I use most often is olive oil. Other oils you may want to consider include:

- Almond – a light oil with nourishing and hydrating properties due to its high mineral content and concentration of oleic acid. This is one to be avoided if you have a nut allergy.
- Sunflower – a light, soothing and cheerful oil that is considered safe for all skin types.
- Coconut oil – a heavy oil that is often mixed with other lighter oils



Sunflower seeds contain 40% oil

- Jojoba oil is one of my favourites. It's a liquid wax that has a similar composition to sebum so is very easily absorbed and yet sits on the skin nicely (great for lip balms where you want to impart a slight sheen to the skin). It's considered safe for all skin types.
- Soyabean oil contains the most lecithin (an emulsifier)

You will be heating the oils in order to combine them with your emulsifier, so there is no need to choose a cold pressed oil (which is usually a little bit more expensive to buy). Oils do oxidise so it's important to store them in a cool, dark place in an airtight container. You may want to consider adding wheatgerm oil or vitamin E oil to your preparations to enhance their shelf life.

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## 6.0 Infused Oils

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An infused oil is a useful way to utilise the benefits of herbs with the added moisturising properties of oil, they can be used on the skin or form the basis for skincare products, such as creams and scrubs. Infused oils made from kitchen herbs add flavour to salads, meat and pasta recipes. Grilled chicken with rosemary infused oil is a particular favourite of mine.

The easiest way is to use a slow cooker ("crockpot") but you can also make your infused oil over the stove top using a porringer; also known as a double boiler or Bain Marie; or in a glass bowl over a saucepan of water. Or just cover your herb in oil and place in the summer sun!

You can infuse an oil using the hob or just the summer sun!

### On the stove-top:

Put your herb material in a glass bowl and cover with a plain base oil, like sunflower or olive oil. Place the bowl in a saucepan of water and bring to the boil. Make sure the water can't overflow into the herbs and oil! Simmer for 2 hours. Remove the herb material by sieving or straining through muslin, replace with a second batch of fresh herbs and repeat.

Important Note: Never place oils directly over heat. They're highly flammable.

Here's a recipe for **Rosemary Infused Oil** Using the Slow Cooker Method

Fill the slow cooker  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with rosemary leaves (pack them in densely). Add enough olive oil to cover the rosemary (usually 1.5 – 2l). Cook on low for 48 hours.

For lighter herbs, you may want to replace the cooked herbs with new ones after 8-12 hours and repeat. I find you don't need to do that with the rosemary because the volatile oil content is so high.

Allow the oil to cool. When it's cool, pass through a muslin cloth or clean tea towel and bottle.

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## 7.0 The Watery Part of Your Recipe

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The watery part can be water or a tea made from fresh or dried herbs. Teas are classified as tisanes or decoctions depending on how heavy the herb is that you have chosen to use.

A **Tisane** is a brew made by steeping leaves and/or flowers (sometimes referred to as flowering tops). To make a tisane, add a minimum of 2 tablespoons of your chosen herb or herb combination per cup and top with hot water. Cover and leave to steep for 5-10 minutes.

A **Decoction** is the tea-making method used for the heavier parts of your herb – the roots, seeds and berries. To make a decoction, add a minimum of 2 tablespoons of your chosen herb or herb combination to 500ml of water. Bring to the boil and allow to simmer for 15-minutes. This method is too vigorous for the more delicate leaves and flowers.

### Herbs that You May Want to Try in Your Tea



**English Comfrey** was traditionally referred to as Knitbone due to its long standing use as the herb for sprains, strains and broken bones. It's also anti-inflammatory and a good skin herb. The bristles on the stems and leaves are quite prickly though!

Foragers will be familiar with two types of Comfrey, English Comfrey which has the winged stem, and Russian Comfrey which does not. It is thought that the Russian Comfrey has a higher concentration of pyrrolizidine alkaloids. The FDA has recommended that comfrey is not taken internally because pyrrolizidine alkaloids may damage the liver. So this is one to use on the skin.



To make sure you have English Comfrey, check for the winged bits on the stem under where the leaves start.

## Rosemary

A common cooking herb with loads of uses – try using the stem as a barbeque skewer or scatter on the coals to deter insects. The leaves increase circulation and relieve painful joints when added to the bath or rubbed on as an infused oil. In a facial steam they're good for oily or dull skin and as a hair rinse add shine to dark hair. A tea perks you up and helps concentration.

## Thyme

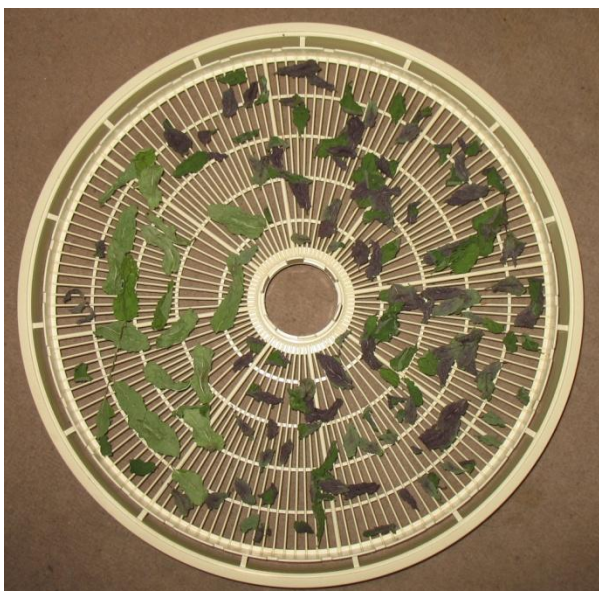
Strongly anti-viral, thyme is excellent for treating colds and flu. Gather it in spring / summer for use in tea for the winter cold season. Makes a good sore throat tea or syrup in combination with licorice root (available from health food shops)

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## 8.0 Drying Your Herbs

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The trick to successfully drying your herbs is to keep them dry (avoid damp areas) and out of the sun when drying. If you're drying herbs with a high volatile oil content (Rosemary, for example), make sure they are completely dry before putting them away in the cupboard, otherwise they may reward your hard work by going mouldy.



*Drying Garden Mint and Black Peppermint*

I like to dry my herbs using a dehydrator tray as it makes it easy to lay them out without touching each other and there's plenty of opportunity for ample ventilation.

You can just as easily dry them in a brown paper bag in the hot water cupboard or by tying them together and hanging from the ceiling or any area above the ground (you may want to put a paper bag around the end to stop the leaves dropping to the floor when they dry).

It usually takes 2-3 weeks to dry your herbs, depending on the weather and what it is you're drying. Light flowers and leaves dry much more quickly than heavier stems, roots, berries and herbs with a high volatile oil content.

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## 9.0 Your 3 Must-Have Essential Oils

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If I could only have 3 essential oils, what would they be?

**Lavender** is an all-round herbal helper – anti-inflammatory, healing, relaxing and antiseptic. Use as a skin toner for delicate skin or for treating spots. The essential oil can be used neat and is invaluable for burns and cuts. In the bath it's relaxing and eases away headaches and muscle aches

**Tea Tree** is an Australian native that is antifungal and antimicrobial. Mix with lavender and aloe vera for burns.

**Wintergreen** owes its pain relieving action to high concentrations of methyl salicylate, a precursor to common aspirin. It's also antispasmodic and antimicrobial. One to avoid if you have an aspirin allergy.

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## 10.0 5 Easy Recipes to Get You started

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### Lemon & Thyme Lip Balm (fills 5, 7g jars)

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#### Ingredients

6g beeswax (grated or pellets)  
30mls Thyme tea  
(tastes strong when you drink it)  
8ml Jojoba oil  
14ml lemon infused oil \*  
Water for heating the mixtures  
1 drop thyme essential oil

#### Equipment

2 Pyrex jugs  
Frying pan  
Teapot  
Electric Whisk  
Jars for storing your balm



\* use the rosemary Infused oil recipe on page 6 and replace rosemary for sliced lemon

#### Method (Bain Marie method)

1. Make thyme tea by combining 3 heaped tablespoons of thyme (preferably fresh) with 1 cup of boiling water. Leave covered in a teapot for 15 minutes.
2. Whilst the tea is brewing, sterilise your jars by immersing in boiling water for 5-minutes. Allow to air dry.
3. Combine the jojoba and lemon infused oils in a Pyrex jug, then add the beeswax.
4. Pour 30mls of the thyme tea in the second Pyrex jug.
5. Heat water in the frying pan and add the two Pyrex jugs to the pan. The jugs should be sitting in the boiling water
6. Continue to heat until the beeswax has melted into the oil.
7. Remove from the heat.
8. Beat the oil, beeswax and water together using the electric whisk. Do this by slowly adding the thyme tea to the oil whilst whisking. Add the thyme essential oil to the mixture and continue whisking. Continue whisking the mixture until it combines and starts to form peaks (like really thick cream).
9. Add to sterilised jars making sure there are no air bubbles in the bottom of the jars (do this by tapping the bottom vigorously), and label.

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### Travel-Friendly Make-up remover

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#### Ingredients

2g beeswax (grated or pellets)  
18mls Calendula Infused oil  
10mls Rosehip oil  
4 drops Essential oil (choose from lavender, chamomile, rose or for a luxurious cleanser go for jasmine)

#### Equipment

Pyrex jug  
Frying pan  
Spoon or chopstick (for stirring)  
Jars for storing your make-up remover

#### Method (Bain Marie method)

1. Sterilise your jars by immersing in boiling water for 5-minutes. Allow to air dry.

2. Combine the Calendula infused oil in a Pyrex jug with the beeswax.
3. Heat water in the frying pan and add the Pyrex jug to the pan. The jug should be sitting in the boiling water.
4. Continue to heat until the beeswax has melted into the oil.
5. Remove from the heat.
6. Beat the calendula oil and beeswax mixture with the rosehip oil using the electric whisk. Add the essential oils to the mixture and stir.
7. Pour the oil mixture into your sterilised jars making sure there are no air bubbles in the bottom of the jars (do this by tapping the bottom vigorously), and label.

To use, warm a small amount of the cleanser in the palms of your hands and apply to your face. Massage in well. Wipe off with a face cloth dipped in warm water.

### Liniment for Sore Muscles (external use only)

#### Ingredients

- 2mls Comfrey Infused Oil
- 1ml St Johns Wort Infused Oil
- 2 mls Horsechestnut tincture
- 3 drops Wintergreen Essential Oil

#### Equipment

- Bottle

#### Method

Combine all ingredients in a glass bottle. Shake well before applying to the affected area.

### St Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) Infused Oil



1. Add the flowering tops of St Johns Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) to a clear jar and cover with sunflower oil. I use a chopstick to squish the flowers under the oil.
2. Leave in a sunny spot for a minimum of 3 weeks (longer in less sunny climates).
3. You can top up your jar with flowering tops, just make sure they are covered with the oil.



The flowering tops are immersed in the oil. I use a chopstick to ensure the flowers are completely saturated with oil



+ 6 weeks in the sun



The hypericine is moving out of the perforated leaves and juicy buds turning the sunflower oil red

This is a great oil to rub into areas where there is pain, particularly if it's nerve pain and, of course, it's a lovely skin herb. Some people have reported sensitivity when out in the sun so as a precaution, don't apply this oil to your skin before spending an afternoon in hot sunshine. I know of a herbalist who uses this as a massage oil on the chest area for people who are grieving. He has found it really helpful.

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## Rose Petal Brandy

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### Ingredients

240g fresh rose petals  
700mls brandy  
3 tablespoons honey

### Equipment

Large jar (sealable)  
1 chopstick

### Method

1. Combine the brandy and the honey.
2. Place the rose petals in a large sealable jar
3. Cover the rose petals with the honey and brandy mixture.
4. Vigorously stir the rose petals with the chop stick to break them up and ensure they are saturated with the brandy. When you have finished this step they should be completely submerged.
5. Store in a dark cupboard for a minimum of 3-weeks.
6. Strain and bottle.

This (plus Bruce's Ally Pally Hawthorn Jelly - I'll email you the recipe) is the secret ingredient that makes a spectacular Trifle.

