

How to make Queen of Hungary Water

by Karen Cottingham

Basic herbs:

- 6 parts dried organic lemon balm
- 6 parts dried organic lavender
- 4 parts dried organic chamomile
- 4 parts dried organic rose petals
- 3 parts dried organic calendula petals. Include the sticky sepals, stems and leaves if you are harvesting your own (This is why it's better to do it yourself - the most potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds are located in the green parts - not in the petals!)
- 3 parts dried organic comfrey leaf

Optional herbs:

- 1 part dried organic lemon peel
- 1 part dried organic rosemary
- 1 part dried organic sage
- 1 part dried organic peppermint
- 1 part dried organic helichrysum flowers
- 1 part organic rose hips
- 1 part dried organic elderberry flowers

Liquids:

- Organic Apple cider vinegar (the one with the “mother”)
- Rose hydrosol (Calendula, Lavender, or Yarrow hydrosols can also be used)
- Witch Hazel

Essential oils:

- Essential oil of lavender, rose, geranium, or helichrysum

Instructions:

1. First, select your herbs from the list above - all of these herbs are beneficial for your skin. The first six herbs are in almost every recipe for Hungary Water; the next seven are drawn from several interesting variations I found on the internet. Use the herbs that you have - you don't have to use all of them. Try a few this time, and some of the others in your next batch. See what works best for you. And feel free to adjust the ratios to your own preferences. Use whatever you like for your measure - but try to find something sweet like an antique teacup.
2. Prepare the dried herbs by gently bruising - a mortar and pestle works best for this, but rubbing the dried herbs with your fingers works as well. Remember our program on *Metates and Molcajetes* - mechanical disruption of the cells and organelles of the plants make the essential oils and phytonutrients more available. Gentle is the key word here - you don't need to pulverize.
3. Place the prepared herbs into a widemouthed glass jar. Don't fill more than three-quarters to allow for expansion. It is better to use dried rather than fresh herbs to minimize the possibility of introducing bacteria into your product.
4. Add vinegar until the liquid rises above the herbs at least one or two inches. You are making an herbal extract called a tincture. Apple cider vinegar is the solvent used to extract the beneficial compounds from the herbs.
5. Close the jar tight and let it sit in a warm spot for 2-6 weeks. Shake gently once or twice a day. As the herbs swell you may need to add additional vinegar to keep them fully submerged.
6. Strain out the herbs with a fine mesh strainer or a piece of muslin or cheesecloth – it is important to remove all the little bits.
7. Measure your herbal vinegar and add an equal amount of hydrosol alone (see above for hydrosol suggestions) or a 1:1 blend of witch hazel and hydrosol. If you don't have a hydrosol, add an equal amount of witch hazel to the infused vinegar.
8. Add a drop or two of the essential oils if you wish. Helichrysum is especially beneficial for skin, but is pricy.
9. Transfer to a spritzer bottle. For an excellent skin toner use your Queen of Hungary Water daily after cleansing. You can also lightly spritz your face throughout the day for a pleasant energized feeling along with smooth and glowing skin. I think a spritz or two of this herbal water would also feel great on a hot summer day! Be sure to avoid spraying near your eyes though.
10. This product does not need to be refrigerated and will keep indefinitely.

