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## Nourishing Your Body with Herbs: The Nutritives

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**PLEASE READ:** *The information handout has not been approved by the FDA and does not in any way intend to diagnose or prescribe. Always consult with your health practitioner before taking any remedy.*

**Above this, I also recommend that you...**

1. Research an herb in at least three good sources before ingesting it (see website for sources),
2. Listen to your body/intuition to determine if an herb resonates or doesn't resonate with you.
3. Take proper steps to ensure that any wildcrafted or cultivated plant is what you think it is, AND
4. Check with your pharmacist for herb-drug interactions if you take prescriptions.

### Your Herbal Multivitamin

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If popping a multivitamin doesn't make sense to you, consider nourishing herbal teas. Several of our best herbs are nutritional powerhouses that turn a tasty beverage into good health maintenance. Some of them also make delicious meals. Nettles, alfalfa, dandelion & wild greens, calendula, rosehips, hibiscus, and others. Some herbs are particularly high in calcium, iron, magnesium, silica, vitamin C, and carotenoids. While it might be hard—and in some cases impossible—to get your full RDA of vitamins and minerals from herbs, they do provide a nice, bioavailable “fuzz” to complement a healthy diet. Whole foods and herbs also contain many other healthy phytochemicals that would be missing in your standard multivitamin pill.

Bear in mind a little physics. A typical cup of tea is generally made from only 1-2 grams of dried herb, and any specific vitamin and mineral only represent small percentage (5% or less) of a food plant or herb. Also, not every last speck of mineral or vitamin will release from the plant into your tea. So you can see how impossible it would be to get 1000 mg of calcium from tea. You'll get much greater benefit if you also incorporate these herbs into your food where you might add 30 grams (about 1 ounce) or more of the herb to a dish or use it to make a super-strong quart of infused tea (see “Stinging Nettles”). Think calendula soup broth, steamed nettle mixed into whole grains, and wild greens in salad. The more, the merrier!

### Key Nutritive Herbs

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**Stinging Nettle (*Urtica* spp) ~ Calcium, Magnesium & Chlorophyll**

**LWGS+**

This green herb is one of our most important nutritive herbs, ranking particularly high in calcium. Its flavor is somewhat bland/green/spinach-y. For tea, most people blend it with other nutritives and then lighten the flavor with mints. On the flip side, its “base note” provides balance to mint tea blends. You'll get more minerals out of nettle if you let it simmer for a long time or infuse overnight, rather than the usual 15-minute infusion. A particularly strong infusion could have as much as 500 mg of calcium per cup! (See “Susun Weed's Super Infusion.”) This also makes it ideal for soup broth base, where it will give a green, spinach-y flavor. You can leave it in or strain it out before adding the rest of the soup ingredients. Nettle really shines as wild vegetable green. Cooked or steamed (to remove the sting) spring nettles can be used interchangeably with spinach. It is in fact more nutritious than spinach because its nutrients are more bioavailable, and I think it tastes better. Medicinally, folks use nettle leaves for their nutrient content, diuretic properties, to improve elimination of uric acid, and for their slight anti-histamine effect (freeze dried capsules are most supported for reducing allergies, but some people use the tea with success). Spring-harvested nettle leaves can be dried for tea, steamed, cooked, or juiced. **Cautions:** Be cautious handling the fresh plant because it is called “stinging nettles” for a reason! The sting is lost once dried, heated, or juiced. Harvest with thick gloves and long sleeves. Nettle is well-tolerated by most people and is even used during pregnancy in modest doses. It is generally not recommended to pick nettles once they have flowered and produce seeds (possible kidney/urinary irritation). They also taste much better in the early, spring, non-flowering state.

**L** ~ Locally Available, **W** ~ Wild Herb, **G** ~ Garden Herb, **S** ~ Store Herb, + easy to find, - harder

## **Dandelion Greens & Root (*Taraxacum officinalis*) ~ Calcium, Magnesium & Potassium L+W+GS+**

This happy, persistent weed is one of our first edible greens to poke through post-winter dirt. Spring and early summer leaves are bitter but delicious (more so than in fall) and make a nice addition to spring salads, stir fries, sautés, soups, and vegetable juices. They'll taste slightly better if harvested from non-flowering plants. Strong flavors like garlic, toasted sesame oil, lemon juice, and fresh orange juice stand up to the bitterness of the greens to create great-tasting dishes. In salad, combine it with milder tasting cultivated or wild greens like lettuce, miner's lettuce, sorrel. Dandelion leaf is one of our best natural volume diuretics, meaning it makes you pee more. It is also high in potassium, important when on any diuretic because increased urination leaches potassium from the body. It is used in formula for high blood pressure, edema, and to stimulate detoxification. Dandelion leaf is rich in other minerals, like calcium and magnesium, which makes it a nutrient-rich choice for food and tea. It combines well with nettles, alfalfa, peppermint, spearmint, and red clover in tea. However, its bitter flavor can be a turn-off to those who like good-tasting teas. In this case, it's easier to eat it as a food. Dandelion root is often used to make tea (roasted or raw) and can also be simmered in soups. It's used as a sodium-leaching diuretic, liver and bile-mover, and digestive stimulant. You can harvest dandelion root first thing in the spring, but it will be more potent in the fall after it's been hit by a few frosts. Cautions: Dandelion encourages bile production and, indirectly, healthy elimination. This is good for most folks, but also makes it contraindicated in gallbladder disease, bile duct inflammation, acute GI inflammation, and intestinal blockage. People who already pee a lot may find the diuretic effect annoying. If you're wildcrafting dandelion greens, make sure that you have positively identified the plant (there are a few dandelion look-alikes) and be sure that the area has not been sprayed with chemicals.

## **Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) ~ Calcium, Minerals & Chlorophyll**

LW=GS

Alfalfa, particularly if grown in good soil (rather than used to repair poor soil), contains some calcium, trace minerals, protein, and a variety of vitamins. It's also the prime plant used to make chlorophyll supplements, an antioxidant and cleansing green supplement that may also increase oxygen utilization and build the blood (controversial). Because alfalfa is a legume, it contains weak phytoestrogens. It is popular in nutritive tea and herbal capsule blends as well as a supportive for bone health, women's health and estrogen support (often combined with other sources of plant estrogens like red clover flowers, soy, licorice and flax). Cautions: Plant sources of estrogen—including alfalfa—are often not recommended if you have a history of estrogen-dependent cancer (controversial). Alfalfa—like most green plants—contains vitamin K, which could theoretically reduce the effectiveness of blood-thinning drugs like warfarin. It may stimulate the uterus; therefore, alfalfa is not recommended during pregnancy. Use with caution if you want to get pregnant—alfalfa-grazing animals exhibit infertility due to the isoflavones (phytoestrogens) and coumestans in the plant. Alfalfa may worsen Lupus symptoms.

## **Wild Greens ~ Packed with All Sorts of Good Stuff!**

L+W+GS-

Chickweed, miner's lettuce, amaranth, lamb's quarters/pigweed, purslane, sorrel, sheep sorrel, wood sorrel, watercress, aforementioned dandelion greens and nettle... many of the plants that pop up unwanted in our yards are actually nutritional and antioxidant powerhouses. Most of them are rich in minerals like calcium, potassium, and magnesium as well as that green antioxidant chlorophyll. Watercress, a peppery green that tastes much like arugula, is high in calcium and found along water. (Be sure that the water is not overly polluted.) Purslane excels as one of our better vegetable sources of omega-3 essential fatty acids. Sorrels are high in vitamin C. Unfortunately they're also high in oxalic acid, which gives them their delicious sour taste but also makes their mineral content less easily absorbed. Use any of these young greens in fresh salad blends and experiment with them for soup, sautés, and steamed greens, wild vegetable lasagna. Also consider juicing or blending them in smoothies. Cautions: Always be 100% sure of your identification and make sure you're harvesting from an area free of chemical sprays or other pollutants if you're wildcrafting. (Not from the roadside, please!) The sorrels, as well as lamb's quarters and purslane, contain oxalic acid/oxalates, which are problematic for people with a history of kidney stones. Oxalates also bind to many minerals, preventing the minerals from being absorbed by the body. They still have many other benefits, so for most people an occasional dose of these plants is healthy, but avoid using them excessively (ie: juicing and drinking them daily for weeks or months on end). Lest you get too concerned about this, keep in mind that common foods like spinach and rhubarb also are high in oxalic acid. Diversity is the key to life!

### **Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) ~ Carotenoids**

LGS

This plant is one of the first that I turn to for topical skin care—in the form of an herbal oil, wash, or juice extract—because it is soothing to irritated skin and slightly antimicrobial. It has similar uses internally, as well as a mild lymph mover. However, I also use some of it for teas and soup broth. A few flowers speckled into a nutritive tea adds color and a slight amount of carotenoids (a family of compounds including beta-carotene, some of which can be turned into vitamin A in the body and also are antioxidant). Ounce for ounce, calendula has about 100 TIMES the carotenoids of sweet potatoes! (But it's easier to eat large amounts of sweet potatoes than flowers.) These yellow and orange flowers really shine in soup broth, hence its common name “pot marigold.” (Calendula is not in the same genus as our other garden marigolds, though.) The long simmering and added fat from olive oil, butter, or animal fat (if it's also a bone broth) pulls out more of the carotenoids and makes these fat-soluble nutrients more bioavailable than they'd be in plain tea. Calendula also lends a beautiful orange glow to soups and slight carrot-y flavor or sprinkled into salads and used as a garnish when freshly picked. Cautions: Calendula may have emmenagogue effects and is contraindicated in pregnancy. If you tend to be allergic to flowers, you may also be allergic to calendula.

### **Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) ~ Silica & Calcium**

L+W+GS

This ancient plant is harvested in the spring when it looks much like a green horse tail. You'll find it along waterways and in soggy yards, where it can be a bane to gardeners. It is among our best sources of silica, a mineral that helps keep hair, skin, and nails strong and healthy. In fact, most silica supplements on the market are just dried, powdered horsetail. (This high silica content also gives its relative the name “scouring rush” because it was used by pioneers to scour pots and pans.) It contains a good amount of other minerals like potassium, manganese, and calcium, as well as flavanoids. It is a diuretic herb, meaning it will make you pee more. It is often used to support elastin and collagen, connective tissue repair, capillary health, and possibly bone strength—mostly because of the silica content. Horsetail is most commonly used in tea or capsule form. It is difficult to get the silica out of the herb and into tea. Every herbalist has a different tactic. Michael Moore says, “There's no perfect way to make horsetail tea.” Sharol Tilgner recommends a 10-hour cold water infusion of 1 tablespoon of horsetail per cup of water or a 5 minute decoction followed by a 15 minute infusion. You can even use the tea as a hair rinse for healthy hair. Some natural bodycare producers make horsetail-infused oil, water or alcohol for hair and skin products. If you're wildcrafting (perhaps as you weed it from your garden?), harvest it in spring through about June. Cautions: Horsetail grows near water and can concentrate nitrate-like compounds that may be found in the water. If you're wildcrafting, try to ensure a relatively clean source that is not downstream from farms (esp agrobusiness) or chemical plants. Fresh horsetail contains thiaminase, which blocks the absorption of vitamin B1 and can cause a deficiency. This is more of a problem from a fresh plant tincture (which isn't really the best way to take horsetail anyway) and is less of a concern with caps and teas. Nonetheless, don't use large amounts for long periods of time. As with most diuretics, regular use of horsetail can lead to potassium loss and deficiency and can be hard on the kidneys.

### **Oatstraw (*Avena sativa*) ~ Magnesium, Calcium, Iron & some Silica**

LGS

Oatstraw is a gracious by-product of milky oat seed and oat groats/meal production. The “waste” part of the plant can be chopped up and dried for us as a mineral-rich herb. The dried straw should be light green, not brown. It also gives a pleasant, mild, grassy flavor to teas and can also be powdered up and taken in capsule form. Jean's Greens makes a popular herbal calcium/magnesium/silica supplement for strong bones, hair, skin, and nails called “NOAH Caps” that contain nettle, oatstraw, alfalfa, and horsetail. Dried milky oat seeds have similar nutritive use. (Fresh milky oats that squirt milky-looking fluid when crushed are a source of relaxing alkaloids often used to rebuild the nervous system and help treat addictions and withdrawal. They are most often used as fresh herb tinctures or glycerites. Unfortunately, once dried, these properties are essentially lost.) Oats—a tall, somewhat ornamental grass—are easy to grow for milky oat seeds and oatstraw. It's a popular cover crop for farms and home gardens. Cautions: Oatstraw is well-tolerated and very safe for most people. If you have a gluten sensitivity, use caution with oats. While the oat plant and grain do not actually contain gluten, but it is possible for there to be some gluten-residue from grains harvested and processed alongside oats. Even with gluten-free oats, a small group of people will still have a reaction, perhaps because it is still part of the grass family.

## Rosehips (*Rosa* spp) ~ Vitamin C & Bioflavonoids

L+W+G+S+

Rosehips are among the more universally-known herbal nutritives. Many vitamin C supplements include them as a source of extra vitamin C and bioflavonoids (and to look good to passers by—generally the amount of rosehips added to these supplements is minimal). The red fruits of many types of roses are harvested in autumn, generally just after the first frost. Personally I find the *Rosa rugosa* and similar “wild” roses along the seacoast to be prolific hip-producers. Crushed and/or whole rosehips are also widely available in commerce by almost any store or supplier that sells loose tea herbs. Generally taken as tea, rosehips blend nicely with hibiscus and other red herbs for a fruity flavor. It’ll give you a modest dose of vitamin C along with many other complementary flavanoids and antioxidants. These compounds are readily water-soluble in tea but will gradually fade if the herb is stored improperly or for a long time. When harvesting, you can use them whole or cut them in half and scoop out the seeds and irritating hairs. (Or you can leave the hairs and just strain very well, like with a coffee filter.) **Cautions:** Generally very safe. Strain well, as some hips can be a little hairy and irritate the throat. If you’re wildcrafting or cultivating, make sure the roses have not been sprayed with chemicals.

## Hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) ~ Anthocyanin Antioxidants (Red/Blue Pigments)

S

The deep red petals of this “Rosa de Jamaica” are used to flavor many of the Celestial Seasoning tea blends. In small amounts it adds a fruity taste to the tea and complements other berries nicely. In large amounts, or if allowed to steep a long time, hibiscus tea produces a vibrant red tea with a tart cranberry-like flavor, which is well suited for sugar or honey. Widely drunk in Mexico as well as parts of Central America and the Caribbean, “Jamaica” (pronounced there as “hah-mica”) is drunk cold as a refreshing tea for hot days. I also like it hot with lots of honey for a sore throat. Hibiscus is rich in polyphenols, especially those red/blue pigments (anthocyanins) known to act as antioxidants and protect the cardiovascular system (hibiscus may lower cholesterol and blood pressure). I enjoy making a delicious, beautiful, and antioxidant-rich red tea from hibiscus flowers, rosehips, dried blueberries/bilberries/elderberries, lychii/gogi berries, and rooibos. It’s also great as a simple tea. Use it in recipes to infuse a fruity tart flavor and vivid red color to food. **Cautions:** Drinking hibiscus tea (like lemons in water) is somewhat acidic and can be harsh on the tooth enamel if drunk daily. Also, the flowers may have anti-fertility properties by preventing implantation.

## Nutrient-Rich Herb Data

Calculated from Jim Duke’s Phytochemical Database

[www.ars-grin.gov/duke/](http://www.ars-grin.gov/duke/) Note: This site will not tell you if the plant is poisonous or has other side effects.

You’ll notice that it would be hard to reach recommended RDAs for vitamins and minerals with tea herbs alone. A typical cup of tea is made with only 1-2 grams of herb. Also, these numbers don’t take into account how much will actually become soluble/available in water. If you actually consume the plant—for example in capsule or, better yet, in larger amounts as food (Nettle Spanakopita, anyone?), you’ll be more apt to access the nutrients. Just one ounce of one of these plants—easy to get in food form—correlates to 28 g. Yet, what DOES come out in a tea or soup base is highly absorbable and provides a nice vita-min “fuzz” to accompany a healthy diet.

### High Calcium Herbs – RDA = 1000 mg

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Mormon tea (plant)	58,100	5.81%	58
Pigweed (leaf)	53,333	5.33%	53
Lambsquarter	33,800	3.38%	34
Nettle (leaf)	33,000	3.30%	33
Pau D'Arco	32,600	3.26%	33
Calendula (leaf)	30,400	3.04%	30
Watercress	24,000	2.40%	24

Horsetail	24,000	2.40%	24
Kelp	24,000	2.40%	24
Thyme	22,534	2.25%	23
Bok Choy	22,440	2.24%	22
Basil	22,112	2.21%	22
Dill (plant)	21,453	2.15%	21
Hibiscus (flower)	17,400	1.74%	17
Alfalfa (plant)	17,200	1.72%	17
Peppermint	16,200	1.62%	16

Oat (straw)	14,300	1.43%	14
Red Clover (flower)	13,100	1.31%	13
Dandelion (leaf)	13,000	1.30%	13
Raspberry (leaf)	12,100	1.21%	12
Spearmint	11,760	1.18%	12

#### High Carotenoid Herbs

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Calendula (flower)	30,000	3.00%	30
Rosehips	500	0.05%	1
Dill (leaf)	465	0.05%	0
Sweet Potato	350	0.04%	0
Mango	165	0.02%	0

#### High Vitamin C Herbs RDA = 75 mg

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Camu-camu	499,000	49.90%	499
Acerola	172,231	17.22%	172
Rosehips	25,000	2.50%	25
Bell Pepper, Paprika	20,982	2.10%	21
Cayenne	19,992	2.00%	20
Watercress	13,690	1.37%	14
Garden Sorrel	12,400	1.24%	12
Sheep Sorrel	12,000	1.20%	12
Alfalfa	9,364	0.94%	9
Horsetail	7,937	0.79%	8
Hibiscus (flower)	1,161	0.12%	1

#### High Magnesium Herbs RDA = RDA 320 mg

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Purslane	18,700	1.87%	19
Beans	18,000	1.80%	18
Oats (straw)	14,800	1.48%	15
Spinach	11,000	1.10%	11
Licorice	9,650	0.97%	10
Lettuce	8,700	0.87%	9
Kelp/Bladderwrack	8,670	0.87%	9
Nettle	8,600	0.86%	9
Red Clover	8,100	0.81%	8
Cilantro	7,488	0.75%	7

Flaxseed	7,002	0.70%	7
Horsetail	4,370	0.44%	4
Yellow Dock (root)	3,200	0.32%	3
Dandelion (leaf)	1,570	0.16%	2

#### High Iron Herbs RDA = 8-18 mg

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Dandelion (leaf)	5,000	0.50%	5
Echinacea (root)	4,800	0.48%	5
Tomatillo (fruit)	2,974	0.30%	3
Chickweed	2,530	0.25%	3
Mullein (leaf)	2,360	0.24%	2
Red Clover (shoot)	1,850	0.19%	2
Pigweed	1,527	0.15%	2
Burdock (root)	1,470	0.15%	1
Barberry (root)	1,410	0.14%	1
Catnip	1,380	0.14%	1
Horsetail	1,230	0.12%	1
Raspberry (leaf)	1,010	0.10%	1
Oat straw	990	0.10%	1
Marjoram	975	0.10%	1
Dandelion (root)	960	0.10%	1
Yellow Dock (root)	760	0.08%	1

#### High Silica Herbs

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Rice	140,000	14.00%	140
Horsetail	97,000	9.70%	97
Kudzu (shoot)	5,200	0.52%	5
Flaxseed	608	0.06%	1

#### High Potassium Herbs

Herb	PPM	%	mg/g herb
Lettuce Leaf	121,900	12.19%	122
Endive Leaf	96,000	9.60%	96
Lambsquarter Leaf	87,100	8.71%	87
Radish Root	85,700	8.57%	86
Chinese Cabbage Leaf	81,900	8.19%	82
Purslane Herb	81,200	8.12%	81
Oat Straw	78,900	7.89%	79

Dill Greens	76,450	7.65%	76
Dandelion Root	75,000	7.50%	75
Pigweed Greens	74,503	7.45%	75
Cucumber	72,500	7.25%	73
Bok Choy	69,143	6.91%	69
Dandelion Root	69,200	6.92%	69
Dill greens	67,750	6.78%	68

Spinach, cauliflower, cilantro, carrots, plum, cantaloupe, basil, cabbage, pumpkin, parsnips...	~40,000-65,000	~4-6%	40-65
Gotu Kola	38,693	3.87%	39
Stinging Nettle	37,128	3.71%	37

## Nutritive Recipes

### Anti-Oxidant Red Tea

*This delicious, fruity tea comes out a deep red color. It is rich in antioxidants including lycopene, bioflavonoids, and vitamin C. Drink hot with honey for colds and a sore throat. Drink cold for a refreshing summer beverage. While it is a bit tart, the other ingredients make it less sour than hibiscus alone.*

- 2 parts hibiscus
- 1 part rose hips
- 1 part rooibos
- 1 part lychii or goji berries
- 1 part dried elderberries, blueberries and/or bilberries

Combine loose herbs. Use 1 teaspoon – 1 tablespoon per cup of hot water. Let steep for 15 minutes, strain, and enjoy. Note: If you sweeten your tea or like it strong, use 2 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon. If you like your tea weaker and/or do not sweeten it, you may prefer to use only 1 teaspoon/cup.

### Green Smoothie

*This tastes better than you'd think! Feel free to experiment with different greens, herbs, and fruits. Raw foodie Victoria Boutenko was the inspiration for this recipe, and her books offer much more info.*

- 1 handful of raw watercress
- 1 handful of raw kale
- 1 handful of wild greens
- 1 Clementine orange, peeled, broken into four pieces
- 1 cup of orange juice
- 1/2 banana
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt (optional)

*Puree in blender, Vita-Mix, or Magic Bullet until smooth.*

### Nutri-Tea

*This pleasant-tasting tea provides a nice "fuzz" of minerals and some vitamins to give your body a boost. Minerals are hard to extract in tea form, but*

*what does come out is then easily absorbed by the body.*

- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 1 part alfalfa leaf
- 1 part red clover flower
- 1 part horsetail
- 1 part spearmint leaf
- 1 part peppermint leaf
- 1/2 part calendula flowers

Use 1 tablespoon per cup of hot water. Let steep, covered, for 5-15 minutes. Sweeten if desired.

### Digestive Nutritive Tea

- 1 part alfalfa
- 1 part peppermint

Use 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon per cup of hot water. Let steep, covered, for 5-15 minutes. Sweeten if desired. A pleasant beverage tea.

### Salt Plus

*This is a nice salt alternative. It still has salt/ sodium, but you get some extra minerals and salty flavor from the seaweeds. You can buy a similar, locally made product called Sea Shakes in natural food stores that is delicious.*

- 1-2 parts sea salt
- 1 part dulse
- 1 part kelp (Ryan Drum's are best)

In a coffee grinder, spice mill, or Magic Bullet, grind seaweed and sea salt until powdered. Use in saltshaker.

### Beyond Broth

*Think beyond the teacup: Broths are really just savory, salty teas. If you make your own chicken broth, add the following and simmer for at least 3 hours before straining for optimal nutrition and herbal support. You can add more herbs, but you may begin to overpower the traditional flavor of chicken broth. The nettles, calendula, and seaweed are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Astragalus, codonopsis, burdock roots, and mushrooms are*

immune and energy tonics. For a vegetarian version, simmer everything but the poultry, and add 1 tablespoon of miso paste per cup of hot water before serving.

- 1 1/2 to 2 gallons of water
- 1-2 poultry carcasses
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- Onions, garlic, vegetables as desired
- 3 tablespoons nettle leaf
- 3 tablespoons seaweed like kelp or wakame
- 2 tablespoons calendula flowers
- 5 astragalus root slices
- 5 long codonopsis root pieces
- 1 medium burdock root, chopped
- 1 large maitake or 20 shiitake mushrooms
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Cayenne to taste, optional

### Susun Weed's Super Infusion

*Get more out of your tea! Susun Weed promotes a much stronger herbal infusion than the standard 1 spoonful of herbs in 1 cup of tea. According to her research, one cup of a strong nettle infusion can have 500 mg of calcium per cup! If you really want to get your nutrients from herbs, this is probably one of the \*most\* effective ways to do it (along with eating the plants straight). Put your herb into a quart mason jar, fill most of the way with boiling water. Stir, then fill to the tippity top. Let infuse for 4 hours, or overnight, straight, and drink. (Refrigerate after straining if you aren't going to drink it all that day.) Learn more at [www.susunweed.com](http://www.susunweed.com).*

- 1 oz herb (ie: nettle)
- ~32 oz boiling water
- quart mason jar

### Rosemary Gladstar's Nettle Spanakopita

*This recipe can be found in Rosemary Gladstar's Family Herbal (Storey Books, 2001) (or the new softcover edition, Rosemary Gladstar's Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health). I HIGHLY recommend this book if you are looking to really integrate herbs into your life. She has several wonderful and diverse recipes in the book that go beyond teas, tinctures, and capsules. For example Zoom Balls for energy, 7-Herb Long Life Soup, Seaweed Salad, and Fire Cider Zest. I've had the joy of eating Nettle Spanakopita made by Nancy Phillips (one of my teachers and Rosemary's students)—it's delicious!*

*Buy ready-made phyllo dough in the frozen section of most grocery stores—it is even available in natural food stores. It must be completely defrosted and at room temperature.*

- 2 cups water
  - 1 cup brown rice
  - 3 quarts fresh nettle tops
  - Extra-virgin olive oil
  - 3 large onions, chopped
  - 1 full head of garlic, chopped
  - Basil, marjoram, oregano, and thyme
  - 1 cup ricotta cheese
  - 1/2 cup grated provolone or cheddar cheese
  - 2 eggs
  - 1/2 cup butter
  - 1 package phyllo dough at room temperature
  - 1/2 pound feta cheese, crumbled
1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Bring the water to a boil, add the rice, cover, and simmer on low for 45 minutes or until done. When the rice is cooking, steam the nettle tops for about 20 minutes or until completely steamed through.
  2. In a skillet, heat just a few drops of olive oil. Sauté the onions and garlic until translucent. Add basil, marjoram, oregano, and thyme to taste.
  3. For the filling, combine the rice, nettles, and onions and garlic in a large bowl. Add the cheeses and eggs, stir well.
  4. Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Place the phyllo under a damp towel to prevent it from drying out, and work quickly. If exposed to the air too long, the phyllo will become dry, brittle, and unworkable.
  5. Butter the bottom and sides of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Lace a layer of phyllo on the bottom of the dish and brush lightly with the butter, using a pastry brush. Add another layer of phyllo and butter lightly. Repeat this process until you have used half the package of phyllo.
  6. Pour the filling over the phyllo and sprinkle the feta on top. Place a layer of phyllo over the filling and butter lightly. Repeat until you have used all the phyllo or until you get tired of layering and buttering. Cut into diamond-shaped pieces before baking.
  7. Bake for about 1 hour, or until lightly browned. Serve with fresh wild herb salad or Greek nettle marinade, French bread, and hearty red wine.

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