

# Herbal Cookery E-Course



**Week 1:  
Harvesting & Preserving**

## **Contents**

How to Harvest Herbs .....	3
Preserving Herb Basics .....	4
Dehydrate .....	4
Storing Dried Herbs.....	4
Freeze.....	4
Compound Butters .....	5
Ideas for Compound Butters:.....	6
Herb Paste.....	7
Ideas for Herb Paste .....	7
Quick Herb Jelly.....	8
Candied Herb Leaves & Wild Flowers.....	9

## How to Harvest Herbs

Culinary herbs generally have their best flavor before flowering. To harvest, simply cut the herbs 1" above the soil. It's best to do this harvesting after the dew has dried but before the heat of the day sets in. That's ideally – don't stress about it if you can't get to it until later. Harvest when you can.

Give herbs a rinse in cool water to remove any dirt or lingering bugs. Lay these out on a towel to air-dry and/or give them a spin in a salad spinner to get rid of excess water.

To use herbs fresh, pull the leaves from the stems and chop. The stems have a tendency bitter and woody, use the leaves most of the time.

There are herbs in which, we want the flowers – lavender, lilac, and dandelion come immediately to mind. Others like bee balm, anise hyssop, roses, etc. have great flavor. In those cases, of course, harvest after the plants have flowered but before the flowers wilt or brown. Rinse and dry in the same way as mentioned above.



# Preserving Herb Basics

## Dehydrate



**Method 1 (easiest):** Simply tie herbs in bundles and hang until crispy. Let them dry out of direct sunlight otherwise they may turn brown and lose some flavor. Remove leaves from stems and store.

When hanging multiple bundles of herbs, it's helpful to label each bundle by tying a small scrap of paper with the bundle. Once herbs are dried, it can be hard to tell them apart so a little label of 'mint' or 'lovage' can be helpful when it's time to put them away.

**Method 2 (electric dehydrator):** Lay flat on dehydrator trays and dry on the lowest possible temperature until crisp.

## Storing Dried Herbs

Store dried herbs in clearly labeled containers. Glass jars work wonderfully. Store dried herbs out of direct sunlight so that their flavor and color lasts. For maximum flavor, use herbs up within 1 year.

## Freeze

Chop herbs and put loosely into ice cube trays (about 2 teaspoons per cube). Fill with water or oil. Freeze until solid, remove from trays store in labeled containers. Toss into recipes and allow to melt for flavor.

## Compound Butters

Compound butters are simply herbs and butter. It truly is that simple and that delicious.

- ½ Cup Butter, softened
- ¼ to ½ Cup Fresh Herbs, minced (amount based on personal preference)

Cream the butter and herbs together well.

Use a melon baller or cookie scoop and drop bits of the butter onto waxed paper. Freeze until solid then store in labeled bags or jars to use later.



Alternatively, press into silicone molds or ice cube trays to freeze.

Another option is to form into logs and refrigerate until firm, then slice and freeze the slices.

Thaw prior to use or melt for use in cooking.

## Ideas for Compound Butters:

- Rosemary, Lemon Balm, & Chives – spread under the skin of a whole chicken prior to roasting
- Oregano, Garlic, & Parsley – spread on bread and toast in the oven for garlic bread
- Anise Hyssop – use instead of plain butter in apple pie crusts
- Chives & Parsley – mix into mashed potatoes



## **Herb Paste**

This is a slightly more intense version of the freezing method mentioned in the beginning.

- 1 Cup of Herbs (pulled from stems)
- 2-3 Tablespoons Olive Oil

Put the herbs in a blender or food processor and pulse just until fine. Drizzle in a little olive oil at a time until the texture is a paste.

Put the paste into ice cube trays or silicone molds. Freeze until firm.

Store in labeled glass jars or bags.

### **Ideas for Herb Paste**

- Sage – Ideal for bean dishes
- Oregano & Parsley – Sauté onions and garlic in this as a soup base

## Quick Herb Jelly

You may not want to preserve tons of herbs in jelly form but it is a tasty way to use some up and makes for great gifts.

- 2 Cups Water or 2 1/2 Cups Fruit Juice or Wine
- 1 Cup Fresh Herbs, Chopped
- 4 Cups Sugar
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 3 Ounces Liquid Pectin

Bring liquid to a boil, pour over herbs. Let steep until completely cooled, overnight is great.

Strain the infusion. Combine 2 cups of the infused liquid with sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar completely. Add the pectin and stir boiling for one minute.

Fill jars leaving 1/4" headspace. Process in a water bath for 15 minutes (adjusting for elevation).

### **Some Herbs and Combinations to Consider for Jelly:**

- Mint
- Bee Balm
- Lemon Balm
- Dandelion
- Hyssop
- Lavender
- Lilac Flowers
- Mint & Apple Juice
- Lemon Balm & White Wine
- Hyssop & Cherry Juice



## Candied Herb Leaves & Wild Flowers

- 1 Egg White
- 1 teaspoon Water
- Superfine Sugar
- Large Herb Leaves (mint, lemon balm, etc.) or Wild Flower Petals (violets, roses, etc.)

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together the egg white and water.

Using a paintbrush, cover the entire surface of the petals or leaves with the egg wash.

Sprinkle with sugar and lay onto parchment paper so that they don't touch.

Allow to sit overnight, until dry. Store in airtight containers.

Use to decorate cakes, cookies, doughnuts, etc.

**Note:** if you're concerned about raw egg whites, use the pasteurized egg whites found in the grocery store.

