

FREE STARTER GUIDE

5 Kitchen Herbs *to Start With*

A safety-first introduction to five everyday herbs, with one simple preparation you can make today for each.

Inside

1. Ginger
2. Peppermint
3. Thyme
4. Rosemary
5. Chamomile

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Welcome

You don't need a garden, a special shop or years of study to begin working with herbs. Some of the most useful ones are already in your kitchen cupboard.

This guide introduces five of them. For each herb you'll find what it has traditionally been used for, how to use it in everyday cooking, one simple preparation to try today, and clear safety notes. Because in herbalism, knowing when *not* to use a herb matters just as much as knowing how to use it.

1. The safety checklist

Read this first, before trying any herb.

2. Five herb profiles

Ginger, peppermint, thyme, rosemary and chamomile.

3. Your herb journal

A simple page to note what you try and how it feels.

4. Where to go next

How to keep learning, step by step.

How to use this guide

1. Go through the safety checklist on the next page.
2. Choose **one** herb that appeals to you and make its preparation.
3. Enjoy it once a day for a few days and note how you feel in your journal.
4. Then move on to the next herb.

This guide is for educational purposes only. It is not medical advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional before using herbs, especially if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, taking medication or managing a health condition.

Happy brewing, Liz

The herb safety checklist

Go through each point before trying any herb in this guide. If you answer yes to any of the first five questions, speak to a qualified professional first.

☐ **Are you pregnant, breastfeeding or trying to conceive?**

Herbs in food amounts are one thing; regular cups and larger amounts are another. Check with your midwife, doctor or a qualified herbalist first.

☐ **Do you take any medication?**

Some herbs can interact with medicines such as blood thinners, diabetes, blood-pressure and sedative medication. Ask your doctor or pharmacist before you start.

☐ **Are you managing a health condition, or having surgery soon?**

Check with your healthcare provider first. Some herbs are best stopped about two weeks before surgery.

☐ **Do you have any plant allergies?**

If you react to plants in the daisy family (such as ragweed) or the mint family, take extra care with the herbs from those families in this guide.

☐ **Is this for a child?**

Children need different amounts, and some herbs are not suitable for babies and young children. Ask a qualified practitioner first.

☐ **Start with one herb at a time**

Begin with one gentle cup a day for a few days, so you know how your body responds before adding another herb.

☐ **Choose good-quality herbs**

Buy food-grade herbs from a reputable supplier, labelled with the botanical name. Store them airtight, away from light and heat, and replace them once the colour and scent fade.

☐ **Essential oils are not the same**

Essential oils are highly concentrated. This guide uses whole herbs only. Never swallow essential oils.

☐ **Know when to stop**

Stop straight away if you notice a rash, itching or any reaction. Seek urgent help for swelling of the lips, face or throat, or difficulty breathing. See a professional if symptoms continue or get worse.

01 Ginger

Zingiber officinale

PART USED

Root (rhizome), fresh or dried

FAMILY

Ginger family (Zingiberaceae)

TASTE

Warming, spicy, a little sweet

Ginger is the herb many people already have in the kitchen without thinking of it as an herb. Its warming, spicy character makes it one of the most versatile starting points.

Traditionally used for

- ◆ Settling the stomach and easing occasional nausea, including travel sickness
- ◆ Supporting digestion, especially after heavy meals
- ◆ Bringing warmth on cold or damp days

In the kitchen

Grate fresh ginger into stir-fries, soups, lentils, dressings and smoothies.

TRY IT TODAY

Fresh ginger tea

- A 2–3 cm (1 inch) piece of fresh ginger, thinly sliced
- 250 ml (1 cup) water
- Optional: a squeeze of lemon and a little honey

Place the ginger and water in a small pan, cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Strain into a cup, then add lemon and honey to taste once slightly cooled.

Safety notes

- Ginger in food amounts is well tolerated by most people. Larger amounts can cause heartburn in some.
- If you take blood-thinning, diabetes or blood-pressure medication, check with your doctor or pharmacist before using larger, regular amounts.
- Pregnant? Ginger is often used for morning sickness, but agree amounts with your midwife or doctor first.
- Stop larger amounts about two weeks before planned surgery, and check first if you have gallstones.

02 Peppermint

Mentha × piperita

PART USED

Leaf, fresh or dried

FAMILY

Mint family (Lamiaceae)

TASTE

Cooling, fresh, aromatic

Peppermint is bright, cooling and instantly recognisable. It is one of the easiest herbs to grow in a pot, so you can always have fresh leaves to hand.

Traditionally used for

- ◆ Easing occasional bloating and wind after meals
- ◆ Refreshing and cooling on hot days
- ◆ A clean, uplifting cup when you feel sluggish

In the kitchen

Add fresh leaves to water jugs, fruit salads, grain salads, peas and yoghurt dips.

TRY IT TODAY

After-meal peppermint infusion

- 1–2 teaspoons dried peppermint, or 6–10 fresh leaves
- 250 ml (1 cup) freshly boiled water

Put the leaves in a cup or teapot and pour over water just off the boil. Cover straight away to keep the aromatic oils in, and steep for 5–10 minutes. Strain and sip.

Safety notes

- Peppermint can make heartburn or reflux worse. If you have reflux or a hiatus hernia, choose another herb.
- Never apply peppermint oil or menthol products on or near the face of babies and young children.
- If you are allergic to plants in the mint family, avoid it.
- Peppermint essential oil is very concentrated and is not the same as the tea. Never swallow it.

03 Thyme

Thymus vulgaris

PART USED

Leaf and flowering tops, fresh or dried

FAMILY

Mint family (Lamiaceae)

TASTE

Warming, aromatic, slightly earthy

Thyme is a small herb with a big reputation. Its tiny leaves are rich in aromatic oils, which give it its strong scent and its long history in both cooking and home remedies.

Traditionally used for

- ◆ Soothing a scratchy throat
- ◆ Supporting the chest during the cold season
- ◆ Aiding digestion of rich or heavy food

In the kitchen

Add to roasted vegetables, soups, stews, beans, lentils and tomato sauces.

TRY IT TODAY

Thyme and honey throat tea

- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, or 2–3 fresh sprigs
- 250 ml (1 cup) freshly boiled water
- 1 teaspoon honey

Pour the water over the thyme, cover and steep for 10 minutes. Strain, let it cool slightly, then stir in the honey. Sip slowly while warm.

Safety notes

- Never give honey to babies under 12 months old.
- Thyme in cooking is safe for most people. Stick to food amounts if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, unless your practitioner advises otherwise.
- If you take blood-thinning medication or have a hormone-sensitive condition, check before using larger, regular amounts.
- Avoid if you are allergic to plants in the mint family. Thyme essential oil is very strong: never swallow it.

O4 Rosemary

Salvia rosmarinus

PART USED

Leaf, fresh or dried

FAMILY

Mint family (Lamiaceae)

TASTE

Warming, piney, slightly bitter

Rosemary (formerly called *Rosmarinus officinalis*) is a hardy, evergreen herb. Its scent alone is enough to lift a room, and it has long been linked with memory and clear thinking.

Traditionally used for

- ◆ Supporting focus and a clear head ("rosemary for remembrance")
- ◆ Helping the digestion of fatty or rich meals
- ◆ Warming and gently stimulating circulation

In the kitchen

Use with roast potatoes and root vegetables, chickpeas, white beans, focaccia and soups.

TRY IT TODAY

Rosemary and lemon infusion

- 1 small fresh sprig (about 5 cm / 2 inches), or ½–1 teaspoon dried leaves
- 250 ml (1 cup) freshly boiled water
- Optional: a slice of lemon

Pour the water over the rosemary, cover and steep for 5–10 minutes. Strain, add the lemon slice, and enjoy in the morning or early afternoon.

Safety notes

- Rosemary in cooking is safe for most people. Avoid medicinal amounts during pregnancy.
- If you have epilepsy or another seizure disorder, check with your doctor, and avoid rosemary essential oil.
- If you take blood-thinning, blood-pressure or diuretic medication, or lithium, check before using larger, regular amounts.
- If you are allergic to aspirin or to plants in the mint family, check first.

05 Chamomile

Matricaria chamomilla

PART USED

Flower heads, dried

FAMILY

Daisy family (Asteraceae)

TASTE

Soft, sweet, apple-like, slightly bitter

German chamomile is one of the gentlest and best-loved herbs. Its small, daisy-like flowers make a soft, calming cup that many people reach for at the end of the day.

Traditionally used for

- ◆ Winding down in the evening
- ◆ Settling a nervous or unsettled stomach
- ◆ A gentle, comforting cup when you feel tense

In the kitchen

Chill leftover chamomile tea and blend it with fresh fruit for a soft iced drink.

TRY IT TODAY

Chamomile evening cup

- 1–2 teaspoons dried chamomile flowers, or 1 tea bag
- 250 ml (1 cup) freshly boiled water
- Optional: a little honey

Pour the water over the flowers, cover and steep for 5–10 minutes. Strain and sip slowly, ideally away from screens, about an hour before bed.

Safety notes

- Avoid if you are allergic to plants in the daisy family, such as ragweed, chrysanthemums, marigolds or daisies.
- Chamomile can make you drowsy. Take care if you also use sleep aids or sedative medication.
- If you take blood-thinning medication or other regular prescriptions, check with your pharmacist first.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding? Keep to an occasional cup and check with your midwife or doctor.

Your herb journal

Try one herb at a time and jot down how it went. After a week or two, you'll start to see which herbs suit you best.

Date	Herb and amount	How I prepared it	How I felt

Keep it simple

One herb, one cup a day, for a few days before trying the next.

Notice the details

Taste, warmth, digestion, sleep, mood: small changes count.

Listen to your body

If something doesn't feel right, stop and check with a professional.



SIMPLY WELLNESS
ACADEMY

These five are just the beginning

If you enjoyed getting to know these herbs, you're ready for the next step: a structured course that takes you from curious beginner to confident, safe home herbalist.

Herbalism Foundations: Kitchen Herbalism (Safety-First)

A complete, self-paced introduction to working with common kitchen herbs safely and with confidence.

- ◆ 8 sections of self-paced lessons
- ◆ In-depth study of your Core 12 herbs
- ◆ A capstone project to put it all into practice
- ◆ Certificate of completion

Explore the course

www.simplywellnessacademy.com/courses



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