

## Best Uses of Lavender

### One pound lavender = 14 cups

**-Lavender Dryer Bag** make muslim bag and fill with 1/4 cup buds, pop in dryer with load of clothes

**-Drop a sprig of fresh lavender** into a glass of champagne

**-One of the key benefits of lavender** is its relaxing, soothing properties. **Lavender** essential oil makes a terrific treatment for relaxing sore muscles, encouraging a **good** night's sleep or relieving tension headaches.

### **-Lavender for Better Sleep**

There's a reason lavender is used in so many of my DIY creations. It is well known for its ability to relax the mind and improve quality of sleep. In one 2006 study, sleep-deprived college students inhaled either lavender or a placebo. Those who used lavender slept more soundly and felt more refreshed upon waking up.

### **-Lavender for Anxiety and Depression**

Many studies show applications for lavender for memory, mood, and cognitive function. The odor of lavender seemed to help test groups stay relaxed and focused when & improved their ability to recover feelings of wellbeing after exposure to stress.

Researchers continue to examine the possibilities for lavender in the treatment of dementia, anxiety, depression, and various neurological disorders.

### **-Lavender for Skin Care**

Due to its anti-inflammatory effects and ability to scavenge free radicals, lavender has a place in skin care. As is so common in the health world, controversy surrounds the subject of whether it is a skin irritant or a skin protectant, but this article by Robert Tisserand explains the reasons why its benefits outweigh any risks. (Risks are slight, in his informed opinion).

Give lavender a try in your DIY beauty routine. Use a quality oil (I like Plant Therapy) and the proper dilution for skin. If there's any concern about sensitive skin, try a test run on a small spot in the inner elbow.

### **-Lavender for First Aid and Wound Healing**

Lavender reduces pain and itching from bug bites, bee stings, and even burns.

### **-Lavender for Hair Growth**

A study showed lavender is an effective proponent of hair growth and significantly increased the number and health of hair follicles when applied in proper dilution daily for a period of 4 weeks. The properties make it great for healthy, shiny hair in general.

### **-Dried Herb Uses:**

- **In a relaxing herbal tea** – Lavender is too strong to be used by itself as a tea, but mixed with mint leaves it makes a **soothing herbal tea**. I often add chamomile too. Steep all in hot (not boiling water) for a few minutes and add honey if desired. Ahhh...
- **As a dandruff remedy** – Make an extra strong batch of tea, let it cool, and use as a scalp rinse to remedy dandruff. This cooled tea recipe also doubles as **an after-sun spray**.
- **In a tincture** – Used for medicinal purposes since ancient times, **a lavender tincture** can promote relaxation and sleep.
- **Inside a pillow or mask** – Add the dried flowers to homemade **buckwheat pillows** or sleep masks to help promote relaxing sleep.
- **As a laundry or drawer freshener** – I sew the dried flowers **into small satchels** and use them in place of dryer sheets in the dryer. (Great project for kids!)

- **For infused vinegar** – **Infuse vinegar** with the dried flowers for use in cooking or as a skin toner (diluted).
- **As an air freshener** – Simmer the dried herb in a pot of water with some citrus peels for a natural air freshener!
- **As a face scrub** – The dried flowers and oatmeal makes for a **gentle, fragrant face scrub**.
- **In cooking!** – It's not so strange! Lavender flowers actually feature in this classic

### **Lavender Oil Sugar Scrub**

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup organic raw sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable glycerin
- 1/4 cup coconut oil
- 1/4 tsp vitamin E oil
- 2 drops organic lavender oil

#### Instructions

1. In a large stainless steel bowl combine sugar, vegetable glycerin, coconut oil, vitamin E oil, and lavender essential oil.
2. Mix well together and store in covered glass jars. Use on wet skin in a calming nighttime bath.

### **Culinary use**

Culinary lavender is usually English lavender, the most commonly used species in cooking (*L. angustifolia* 'Munstead'). As an aromatic, it has a sweet fragrance with a taste of lemon or citrus notes. It is used as a spice or condiment in pastas, salads and dressings, and desserts. Their buds and greens are used in teas, and their buds, processed by bees, are the essential ingredient of monofloral honey.

### **Use of buds**

For most cooking applications the dried buds, which are also referred to as flowers, are used. Lavender greens have a more subtle flavor when compared to rosemary.

The potency of the lavender flowers increases with drying which necessitates more sparing use to avoid a heavy, soapy aftertaste. Lavender buds can amplify both sweet and savory flavors in dishes, and are sometimes paired with sheep's-milk and goat's-milk cheeses. Lavender flowers are occasionally blended with black, green, or herbal teas. Lavender flavors baked goods and desserts, pairing especially well with chocolate. In the United States, both lavender syrup and dried lavender buds are used to make lavender scones and marshmallows. Lavender buds are put into sugar for two weeks to allow the essential oils and fragrance to transfer; then the sugar itself is used in baking. Lavender can be used in breads where recipes call for rosemary. Lavender can be used decoratively in dishes or spirits, or as a decorative and aromatic in a glass of champagne. Lavender is used in savory dishes, giving stews and reduced sauces aromatic flair. It is also used to scent flans, custards, and sorbets.

## **Use of greens**

The greens are used similarly to rosemary or combined with rosemary to flavor meat and vegetables in savory dishes. They can also be used to make a tea that is milder than teas made with the flowers.

## **How to make Lavender Oil:**

Tap into the power of the essential oils lavender possesses. This beautiful herb packs a punch when it's distilled to make essential oil. When making lavender oil, **a true essential oil**, the process involves distilling the flower buds, capturing the steam and condensing it into a liquid. It's a procedure best left to professionals, unless you're experienced with steam distillation. In your own kitchen, you can practice making lavender oil or a tincture.

Because both are made with lavender flowers and buds, you'll still have the properties and benefits of the essential oils in lavender. With the lavender oil, you can apply it directly to skin, something that's not always recommended with pure lavender essential oil. The tincture is alcohol-based, and it can last up to 5 years.

Making lavender oil requires simple ingredients: 1.5 cups olive oil, 7 Vitamin E oil capsules and 1.5 to 2 cups lavender buds or flowers. Heat the olive until it bubbles at pot edges. Add lavender and simmer for 30 minutes. Cool to room temperature, and strain twice—once through a metal strainer and the second time through a coffee filter. Pierce the Vitamin E capsules, squeeze the oil into the lavender oil and stir.

Refrigerate in a sterilized, airtight glass jar. The oil becomes cloudy when cold, but clears upon warming to room temperature. Store in the fridge for up to six weeks and/or freeze a portion. Frozen lavender oil remains strongly fragrant for four to six months. Use this lavender oil in your bath, as a skin moisturizer, cologne or dry hair oil treatment.

**To make an oil tincture**, cover slightly crushed (don't crush until mushy) lavender flowers and buds with grain alcohol or vodka in a glass jar with a tight fitting lid. Store the jar in a dark place (like a cupboard) for two weeks, shaking daily. The longer the lavender sits in the oil, the more essential oils you'll extract into the alcohol. After a week, strain the lavender from the alcohol using a coffee filter. You might need to strain twice.

Store your tincture in a dark glass jar in a cupboard to prevent sunlight from breaking it down. Use this lavender tincture like lavender essential oil.

### **Substitutes for Lavender**

**Rosemary** is used as a **lavender substitute** in savory dishes. Add about half as much rosemary as your recipe requires for **lavender**.