

Main Entry: ¹salve definition from merriamwebster.com

Pronunciation: 'sav, 'säv, 's[a']v, 'salv, 'sälv

Function: *noun*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *sealf*; akin to Old High German *salba* salve, Greek *olpE* oil flask

Date: before 12th century

1 : an unctuous adhesive substance for application to wounds or sores

2 : a remedial or soothing influence or agency <a *salve* to their hurt feelings>

Salves are easy to make vehicles for products that you want to remain on the skin for some time. They are semi-solid fatty mixtures. Most salves soften when they come into contact with the skin, but absorb slowly. This slow absorption makes salves a perfect vehicle for delivering fat soluble nutrients and phytochemicals to the skin.

A balm is similar to a salve but has more volatile oils.

A basic salve is made by a combination of oil and wax. Typically, for every 8 oz of oil, 1 oz of beeswax is used.

Salves should be stored in dark-colored containers to protect the ingredients from light. Salves last best in cool environments.

The oil may be infused with herbs. Freshly dried herbs work best in my experience. Herbs that are still damp may promote fungal growth in the oil.

For a basic herb infused oil, start by washing and drying your hands thoroughly. Cover your lightly chopped or bruised herbs with oil leaving very little air space at the top of the jar. Vitamin E may be added to help preserve the oil. Shake the jar once every two days. If you see any moisture under the lid, wipe it off. The oil may be filtered through a coffee filter or cheesecloth. I like most of mine unfiltered.

If you don't want to wait weeks for your oil to finish infusing, many of the benefits are available by heating your oil on low heat. Most oils should not be heated above 140°F. Add your plant material and stir frequently. Allow to heat for at least 2 hours. Don't exceed about 5 hours of heating. When cool, your quick infusion is finished.

Infused oils will have primarily fat soluble constituents. For arnica, goldenseal, gumweed, chaparral or calendula, which have primarily alcohol soluble constituents that you may want to take advantage of...Extract with Ethyl alcohol. Weigh out 1 oz (28gm) of your powdered herb. Mix in 1 oz of 190 proof ethyl alcohol. Stir vigorously Allow it to sit for a day. Put 6 oz (180mL) of a fixed oil in the blender. Add your moist alcohol soaked herb. Blend thoroughly at medium speed. Strain by pouring into a muslin cloth lined strainer. Press the plant material to get out all of the liquid. The plant matter may be used in your compost. The liquid should be gently heated on a double boiler for a few hours. Check for any unevaporated alcohol by testing the oil with a lit match. If there is a flame on the oil, keep heating and stirring until all alcohol is evaporated. This recipe was adapted from the herbal medicine maker's handbook A home manual by James Green.

Other ingredients may also be included in your salve:

Essential Oils —add a small amount of warm salve mixture to the container, then drop in your essential oils. Use no more than 10 drops per ounce of salve. Cover with more salve base and mix lightly.

Fat soluble vitamins: Vitamins A, D, E and K may be used. Stir them in at the last minute

For your basic salve, measure 1 cup of an herb infused oil (or combination of oils). Slowly warm your oil. Add 1 oz of beeswax that you have shaved (or buy beeswax beads). Stir gently as the beeswax melts. You can cool some quickly by having one of your containers prechilled. Use that container to determine if you need more oil or wax.

If you add additional ingredients, give the salve a final stir when it has just started to thicken. This is also a good time to add a drop per ounce of tincture of benzoin, a safe preservative. You may want to re-melt the top of the salve so that it will look nice when finished. To do so, use a blow dryer, propane torch, or even your oven.

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