



How To Make Four Thieves Vinegar

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As legends go, during the 18th-century plague epidemic in Europe, a band of thieves robbed the homes and graves of those who were sick and dying of the disease but never fell ill themselves. Their secret? An herbal tonic known as Four Thieves Vinegar. When the authorities finally apprehended the individuals, they agreed to grant them their freedom in exchange for the recipe. They wrote it up and posted it on the walls of the city so every man could make it for himself.

After hundreds of years, many versions of this story exist, as do variations of the recipe. The original included several herbs and roots steeped for days in

white wine vinegar. Scientists believe the concoction worked against the plague because it repelled insects, including the fleas, which spread that disease.

French chemist and scholar [René-Maurice Gattefossé](#) published the “original” recipe that hung in the museum of Old Marseille, France in his 1937 book, *Gattefossé’s Aromatherapy*:

Take three pints of strong white wine vinegar, add a handful of each of wormwood, meadowsweet, wild marjoram and sage, fifty cloves, two ounces of campanula roots, two ounces of angelic, rosemary and horehound and three large measures of champhor. Place the mixture in a container for fifteen days, strain and express then bottle. Use by rubbing it on the hands, ears and temples from time to time when approaching a plague victim.

Modern Recipes

Modern versions of the recipe generally include four herbs—one for each thief—and garlic, a strong anti-viral and antibacterial itself, infused in apple cider vinegar. Some herbalists recommend the Four Thieves tonic as a preventative to ward off any communicable sickness like the common cold and influenza.* This makes sense when you look at the health-promoting properties of the individual herbs that you’ll find in most of today’s recipes.

Herbs Used in Four Thieves Vinegar Recipes

Garlic—[Garlic](#) not only smells wonderful in cooking, but it promotes health as well. In addition to its positive effect on cardiovascular disease by lowering cholesterol and blood pressure, garlic has been used for centuries to fight infectious diseases. Scientists now know that its principle compound, allicin, has strong antibacterial and antiviral properties.

Rosemary—*Rosmarinus officinalis* is one of the most popular culinary herbs around the world. And it’s also been widely studied for therapeutic use. A few of the validated medicinal uses of [rosemary](#) include antibacterial, anticancer, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory.

Clove—For centuries, people have used clove as a food preservative because of its antioxidant and antimicrobial properties. Studies have shown clove oil is effective against staph, E. coli, and pseudomonas.

Sage—Sage, or *Salvia officinalis*, has a wide range of traditional uses such as to relieve [digestive](#) disturbances, bronchitis and cough, and sore throat due to

inflammation. The flavonoids and compounds in sage have strong antioxidant and antibacterial properties.

Juniper Berries—Studies show that juniper possesses anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and antibacterial properties, among others.

Thyme—Thanks to the phenols *thymol* and *carvacrol*, thyme has the highest level of antioxidants of any herb. Thymol is a proven antimicrobial and antibacterial which is effective against staph, E. coli, and salmonella infections.

Cinnamon—Not just for cookies, cinnamon possesses antimicrobial, antifungal, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties. Its historical uses include promoting oral health and improving blood coagulation and circulation.

Four Thieves Vinegar Recipe

To make your own Four Thieves Vinegar Health Tonic, you will need:

- 1 bulb of garlic, cloves separated, [skins removed](#), and crushed
- 2 tablespoons each of four or more dried herbs, chopped. Choose herbs with the properties you desire (consider ones from those listed above or from the original recipe).
- 1 32 oz. bottle organic apple cider vinegar

Directions:

Place the herbs in a wide-mouth quart jar and cover with the vinegar. Cap and place in a warm spot such as the back of the stove or a sunny window. Let steep for 2-4 weeks.

Decant and bottle.

Herbalists recommended dosages of around 1 tablespoon diluted in a glass of water per day for an adult and 1 teaspoon in water for a child. Because its flavor is akin to salad dressing, you may want to use it as such, or add it to juice.

Let us know if you give this recipe a try!

**This recipe is not intended to take the place of regular medical care or advice.*



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