

Thyme, Calendula & Catnip

A complete usage guide with preparation methods, dosage, safety notes and pairing tips
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How to use this guide

Each herb below is laid out the same way: a fact sheet (part used, energy, dose, who should avoid it), four preparation methods with exact quantities and timing, pairing tips for stronger or gentler effects, and safety notes. Start with the smallest dose listed, use one new herb at a time for at least three days, and keep medicinal courses short.

Rules that apply to all three

- Cover the cup while steeping aromatic herbs; the volatile oils are the medicine.
 - Add honey only once the brew is warm, never boiling hot.
 - One new herb at a time, smallest dose first, for at least three days before adding another.
 - Medicinal courses run 7-14 days, then pause for a week.
 - Tell your doctor or pharmacist about every herb you take, especially with prescription medication.
 - Skip medicinal doses in pregnancy and breastfeeding unless a qualified practitioner is guiding you.
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Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

Also known as: Common thyme, garden thyme

Part used	Leaf and flowering top (fresh or dried)
Energy / taste	Heating; pungent, bitter, aromatic
Dosha	Reduces Kapha and Vata; can aggravate Pitta in excess
Best for	Chest congestion, dry irritated cough, sore throat, sluggish digestion of heavy or oily food
Dose	Culinary use freely. Medicinal tea: 1-2 tsp dried leaf per cup, 1-3 cups daily for up to 10 days
Do not use if	Pregnant (medicinal doses), on blood thinners, thyroid-stimulating conditions, allergic to mint-family plants

Preparations

- **Chest tea (infusion)** — Steep 1-2 tsp dried thyme in 1 cup just-boiled water, covered, 10 minutes. Strain, add 1 tsp honey once warm (not hot). Morning and mid-afternoon while a cold lasts.
- **Throat gargle** — Steep 1 tbsp thyme in 1 cup boiled water 15 minutes, cool to body temperature, strain. Gargle 2-3 times daily; do not swallow large amounts.

- **Steam inhalation** — Add a small handful of thyme to a bowl of hot water, tent a towel over your head and breathe for 5 minutes with eyes closed.
- **Culinary oxymel** — Pack a jar with thyme, cover with equal parts raw honey and apple cider vinegar, infuse 2 weeks, strain. 1 tsp up to 3 times daily.

Pairing tips

- **Honey + ginger** — Softens thyme's dryness and adds warmth for a wet, rattling cough.
- **Tulsi (holy basil)** — Deepens the respiratory action; good for lingering post-viral cough.
- **Licorice or mulethi** — Coats a raw throat and balances thyme's astringency (skip if you have high blood pressure).
- **Lemon + black pepper** — Thins mucus and improves absorption; keep pepper to a pinch.
- **Avoid pairing** — Do not stack with other strong heating herbs (cinnamon, dry ginger, clove) if you run hot or have acid reflux.

Safety notes

- Keep medicinal doses to short courses (7-10 days), then pause for a week.
- Thyme essential oil is not interchangeable with the herb: never take it internally undiluted.
- Stop before surgery and avoid alongside warfarin or aspirin-type medication.
- Not for medicinal use in pregnancy, breastfeeding, or for children under 4.

Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)

Also known as: Pot marigold, genda (do not substitute ornamental marigolds)

Part used	Flower petals and whole flower heads, dried
Energy / taste	Cooling; bitter, pungent, aromatic
Dosha	Reduces Pitta and Kapha
Best for	Minor cuts, scrapes, burns, rashes, eczema, diaper rash; lymphatic and post-meal digestive comfort
Dose	Tea: 1-2 tsp dried flowers per cup, 2-3 times daily. Tincture: 1-2 ml, 2-3 times daily. External wash as needed
Do not use if	Pregnant or breastfeeding, allergic to ragweed, daisies, chamomile or other Asteraceae plants

Preparations

- **Skin wash (external)** — Steep 1 tbsp dried flowers in 1 cup boiling water 15 minutes, cool, strain through fine cloth. Dab on clean skin with cotton 2-3 times daily; make fresh daily.

- **Healing balm** — Infuse 1 part dried flowers in 5 parts warm sesame or olive oil at low heat for 2-3 hours, strain, melt in beeswax (1 part to 8 parts oil). Apply thinly to intact skin.
- **Digestive tea** — Steep 1 tsp flowers 10 minutes; sip after meals.
- **Sitz or compress** — Add 2 cups of strong strained infusion to warm water for irritated skin folds or after minor procedures.

Pairing tips

- **Neem** — Antimicrobial partner for weepy, angry rashes; keep both external.
- **Chamomile** — Doubles the soothing effect for eczema and baby skin - but only if no Asteraceae allergy.
- **Aloe vera gel** — Adds cooling moisture for burns and sunburn once heat has left the skin.
- **Manjistha or hibiscus** — Internally supports lymph and complexion alongside calendula tea.
- **Avoid pairing** — Do not apply over deep, puncture or infected wounds, and do not combine with alcohol-heavy tinctures on broken skin.

Safety notes

- Use only *Calendula officinalis*; ornamental *Tagetes marigolds* are not medicinal.
- Patch test on the inner forearm for 24 hours before wider skin use.
- External use is the safest route; internal use is short-term and not for pregnancy.
- Seek care instead of self-treating for spreading redness, pus, fever, or a wound that will not close.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)

Also known as: Catmint, catnep

Part used	Leaf and flowering top, dried (dry gently - heat destroys the aromatics)
Energy / taste	Cooling; bitter, pungent, aromatic
Dosha	Reduces Vata and Pitta; may increase Kapha if overused
Best for	Restless sleep, nervous tension, digestive colic, bloating and wind, tension headache, feverish restlessness
Dose	Tea: 1-2 tsp dried leaf per cup, 1-3 cups daily, ideally one 30 minutes before bed
Do not use if	Pregnant or breastfeeding, taking sedatives or sleep medication, before driving

Preparations

- **Bedtime tea** — Steep 1-2 tsp dried catnip in 1 cup hot (not boiling) water, covered, 10 minutes. Strain, add honey once warm. 30 minutes before bed.
- **Digestive infusion** — Equal parts catnip and fennel seed, 1 tsp of the blend per cup, steep 10 minutes, sip after meals.

- **Cool nervine cooler** — Brew double strength, cool, add lemon and a little raw honey; sip through a hot restless afternoon.
- **Children's dilute tea** — Very weak brew (1/4 tsp per cup), 1-2 tbsp for colic in over-2s, only with practitioner guidance.

Pairing tips

- **Fennel** — Classic pair for colic, wind and post-meal bloating.
- **Lemon balm** — Adds mood-lifting calm; excellent for anxious evenings.
- **Chamomile + lavender** — Rounds out a bedtime blend for broken sleep.
- **Passionflower or valerian** — Stronger sedation for hard insomnia - start low, and never combine with sleep medication.
- **Avoid pairing** — Do not stack with alcohol, prescription sedatives, or strong stimulants such as high-dose caffeine.

Safety notes

- Always cover the cup while steeping - the calming volatile oils escape with the steam.
- Can cause drowsiness: no driving or machinery after a medicinal dose.
- Large doses may cause nausea or headache; stay within 3 cups daily.
- Not for pregnancy, breastfeeding, or unsupervised use in young children.

Quick comparison

Reach for thyme when	The problem is in the chest or throat and you feel cold, damp and congested.
Reach for calendula when	The problem is on the skin, or heat and irritation need cooling and soothing.
Reach for catnip when	The nervous system or gut is wound up, sleep is broken, or there is wind and colic.

Medical disclaimer

This guide is traditional and educational information only. It is not medical advice, not a diagnosis, and not a substitute for care from a qualified health professional. Herbs can interact with medication and are not appropriate for every body or condition. Consult a doctor or a registered Ayurvedic practitioner before starting any herb, especially if you are pregnant, breastfeeding, managing a chronic condition, taking prescription medication, or treating a child. In an emergency, seek urgent medical care. © YourDailyVeda · contact@yourdailyveda.com