



How to Cook a Chinese Herbal Formula

The Kind of Container

The best container is ceramic although glass is acceptable. It is important that your teapot have a lid. Materials to avoid include cast iron or metals. Chinese herbs can interact with these metals causing chemical reactions that can alter the therapeutic qualities of your herbs, or worse yet, have an unhealthy effect. Stainless steel is better than the other metals. Teflon coatings are not as good as ceramic coatings.

Water

Any drinking water is acceptable. The purity and cleanliness of the water you chose is a personal choice.

Cooking

Soak

Place the herbs into the water. The water should cover the herbs by about an inch and a half. Let them sit for 15 minutes without turning on the heat beneath the teapot.

Boil

Next, turn on your heat and bring the water to a rolling boil (5 min. approximately). Then, turn down the heat to a low simmer.

Cook

There is a great deal of variation in the time necessary to cook herbs. It depends mostly on the kind of herbs you're cooking. The average is 20 minutes. Diaphoretics (herbs used to induce sweating) are cooked for no more than 15 minutes. Aromatics (herbs used to open the orifices) only get steeped for 5 minutes. For tonifying herbs (those used to strengthen or build substances in the body), 40 to 50 minutes is appropriate.

Avoid lifting up the lid, especially with aromatic herbs as the volatile oils can evaporate out of the mixture very easily. Using a timer will help you avoid this temptation.

Strain the tea.

Cook the same herbs a second time.

During the first cooking, the temperature energetic comes out of the herbs. This affects the patient mostly at the Qi level. This is more superficial, more Yang in nature.

During the second cooking, the taste energetics come out of the herb. This affects the patient more on the Blood level. These energetics have more impact internally. The Yin is affected more.

Mix the tea from both batches before drinking.

Drinking

Many of the teas are unpleasant in taste. If the taste is unbearable try diluting the solution with water. Over time the taste can become more acceptable often indicating a "need" for it internally. Honey can be added but may be incompatible with your particular tea so inquire before adding it.

Dosage

Each bag of herbs will produce two days worth of tea. Drink a cup of tea in the morning and a cup in the evening. The tea should be taken about an hour or two after meals unless otherwise indicated.