

Women's Wellness Herbal Cuisine

Four Substances

& The Eyebright Tea

“Food is medicine”. It is always true. Whatever you intake will affect your body. To prevent your body from further damage, from chi depletion in various organs, your daily food intake could be supplemented with preventative tonics. Generally, people do not like to be told they are sick and need to take pills, liquid medicine or basically accept the image that they are sick. However, if we incorporate herbs into our daily diet, as long as the beneficial constituents get into our tissues, the ending result is much more important physically and psychologically.

Traditionally, Guangdong (Kwangtung) Pearl River area is famous for herbal soups and stews, both savory and sweet. Herbs cooked with mushrooms, eggs, chicken, fish, red meat and wild game like seahorse are used to address certain deficiencies in our organs. Soup are easy to take in. While they might not be strong enough like tea and tincture, but its ease to consume makes it more acceptable to patients who are sick.

Four Substances

Angelica sinensis (Dong qwài), Rehmannia (suhk dein), peony root, and Ligusticum (chuan xiong, chyùn gùng). The Four Substances Decoction is the most famous women's tonic in Traditional Chinese Medicine. The formula regulates the menstrual cycle and tonification of blood.

Name	Dong Quai	Rehmannia	Peony Root	Cnidium(Lovage root)
Botanical	Angelica sinensis	Rehmannia glutinosa	Paeonia lactiflora	Ligusticum chuanxiong
functions	blood and yin tonic	blood and yin tonic	blood and yin tonic	chi and blood tonic
Organs affected	Heart, Liver, Spleen	Liver, Kidney, Heart	Liver, Spleen	Heart, Liver, Kidney
Temperature	warm	warm	cold	acrid in flavor, warm
Contraindications	heat sign, diarrhea, pregnancy	weak digestion, abdominal bloating, excess phlegm, pain from stuck chi	diarrhea with cold signs	yin deficiency, fire with a red tongue, dry mouth, vomiting and dizziness

Name	Dong Quai	Rehmannia	Peony Root	Cnidium(Lovage root)
usages	Gynecological disorders	for insomnia, paleness, dizziness, menstrual dysfunction, lower blood pressure cooling agent for hot flashes of menopause	tonic for menstrual disorder and cramps	Promote blood circulation Invigorates the blood, abdominal masses due to blood stagnation disperse cold: for temporal headaches or joint due to Cold.

1. Four Substances Multi-fractional Extraction

Water is a simple extraction technique - the beneficial constituents from the herb dissolve into the water. But, many healthful constituents are left behind, as they may not extract well in water. So, herbalists have devised other extraction techniques - wine or alcohol being the most common. Even in western herbalism, alcohol extracts are known to create high potency for wooden rhizomes and roots.

Glycerin, honey, and vinegar are also used to extract healthful constituents from herbs. The multi-fractional method combines these techniques, to extract even more constituents out of the herb, to maximize the quantity and potency extracted from the herb. Leave nothing behind! Today, we will learn the multi-fractional approach to processing these Four Substances.

Ingredients:

- 0.5 oz Dong quai
- 0.5 oz Rehmannia
- 0.5 oz Ligusticum
- 0.5 oz Peony root
- 300ml Japanese Plum Wine Choya, 14.6 % alcohol
- 145 ml vegetable glycerine
- 100ml ethanol 95%

Utensils:

- 16 oz mason jar
- utility cloth (two pieces)
- measuring cup
- hand blender
- strainer
- Chopsticks to stir
- hand gloves to squeeze herbs
- a crock pot for double boiling process
- towels to hold up mason jar

Procedures:

herbs: 57 g

ratio : 1:5

solvent : 300ml +100 ml



strained marc

Wine Extraction

1. Combine all herbs , cut and break all herbs into small pieces, and stuff them into a mason jar.
2. Measure 50ml of distilled water to wet the herbs ahead. After 5 minutes, strain out the excess water in the jar.
3. Pour in 300 ml of plum wine and let it macerate overnight.
4. Set up a double boiler system. A crock pot with towels inlay with 2 cups of water.
5. Set the jar in a hot bath and make sure towels circle the jar to prevent tip off.
6. Cover the top of the jar with a piece of small utility cloth.
7. Set the temperature to high setting and maintain to 160F .
8. Before bed time, add another 100 ml of wine and turn down the setting to low .
9. Leave it in the hot bath for over 8 hours. totally, the duration of plum wine extraction is over 20 hours.



wine maceration



hot bath

Glycerine Extraction

1. After 20 hours of hot wine extraction, add 145 ml of glycerine.
2. Add water to the hot bath and continue to be heated at the temperature of 160 degree.
3. 2 hours heating is enough, but the longer the better. Never heat the herbs up to a boiling temperature. Constituents will be damaged.
4. Take the jar off heat after 6 hours.
5. Prepare straining process, set up a measuring jar, a strainer and a piece of medium size utility cloth, a pair of gloves
6. *Hint** Wet the utility cloth with a little drop of distilled water to make sure liquid not to be absorbed by the utility cloth.
7. Strain, squeeze as much as possible
8. It yields 315 ml. chill in fridge.



glycerine

Ethanol Extraction 95% alcohol

1. Grind the wet herbs with a hand blender, small pieces would expose more open surfaces to the solvent, alcohol.
2. Pour back the marc into a jar
3. Pour in 160 ml 95% Ethanol and let in macerated overnight
4. Set up a hot bath again in a crock pot. Cover the jar with a new ring and lid tightly. Set in High heat for two hours and turn down to low for another 2 hours. Totally it will be heated for 4 to 5 hours .
5. Take the jar out from the crockpot. Shake a little and rest on the counter top for ten minutes. Don't open. Move the jar in freezer to cool down the temperature. This procedure is to prevent alcohol evaporate when hot to open air.



wine and glycerine



6. Set up squeezing process. place a utility cloth in the strainer. pour all content in the utility cloth. Start squeezing as hard as possible. The final marc (herb remains) will be discarded to your compost.
7. Combine plum wine and glycerine extraction together with alcohol extraction. Result : wine & Glycerine 315ml + alcohol 160ml technically. However, when two solutions were mixed together , it yielded 465ml. 10 ml was lost from being absorbed by cloth or being split.



Dosage : 30ml each time twice a day.

If you are not good with alcohol. Stop at Wine and glycerin part . 20% glycerin could help to keep product a little longer in fridge and prevent cloudiness.

composition: expected 1:5
 yield : 1:8
 content: 465 ml
 176.82ml alcohol, 153.18 ml water, 145ml glycerine
 38% alcohol, 31% glycerine, 33% water



Final 465 ml

2. Traditional TCM Tea Decoction or Soup with protein

ingredients

1. 0.3 oz dong quai
2. 0.3 oz rehmannia
3. 0.3 oz white peony root
4. 0.3 oz ligusticum
5. 2 cups of water
6. two eggs

Utensils:

1. instant pot for double boiling
2. Steaming urn with double lids
3. towels for surrounding urn from tilting



I adopted the method from Paul Bergner "The Healing Power of Ginseng & the Tonic Herbs"

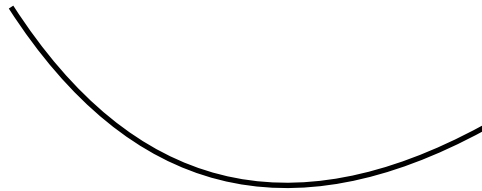
Make sure the four substances are equal parts in weight. Traditionally, according to Guangdong Pearl River area, people tend to combine herbs with regular lean protein like lean pork, chicken, eggs, mock sausage, or shiitake mushrooms (inspired from Teresa M. Chen "A Tradition of Soup Flavors from China's Pearl River Delta").

My grandmother tended to cook Four Substances with boiled eggs. it helps to mild down the strong aroma from dong quai, makes the soup easy to intake. Chicken is another good protein, because of its natural sweetness. Whatever meat is chosen, you need to blanch the meat for 5 minutes and rinse it with cold water.

Serving size : 2

Procedures

1. Weigh each herb and make sure it carries the same weight approximately
2. Wet the herb with cold water for 5 minutes and strain it
3. Measure 2 cups of hot water and pour in the steaming urn
4. Add pre-wet herbs into the urn
5. Cover with inner lid and outer lid .
6. Set up double boiling system, Instant Pot. lay one towel at the bottom of the



inner pot . Insert the urn and surround the urn with two towel to secure it from tilting.



7. Fill water in the bath
8. Cover and start slow cook Hi heat for two hours
9. After two hours , turn to low heat for another 4 hours. periodically, use a thermometer to test the temp inside. It should reach 180F
10. About half time, you could boil eggs in a separate pot. peel shell and add to the urn after 6 hours of steaming . Set in to keep warm and let it soak for another hour.
11. Serve 8 oz in a bowl with one boil egg. two servings .



If you cook with meat, you need to blanch the meat for 5 minutes and rinse it with cold water. Put the meat in the urn after one hour of steaming herbs. Meat in when the liquid is hot to 180F. Continue with the rest of the process.

Regarding cooking with Shiitake, you could put the herbs and mushrooms together at the beginning. Mushroom needs a higher heat and longer steaming to get its chitin of the mushroom will be soften and release constituents.



3. The Eyebright (Liver Heat Reduction) Tea

Composition: Self Heal plants
Mulberry leaves
Chrysanthemum flowers

This traditional blend is known for helping tonify liver and lungs, and reduce excess heat inside the body. This tea is used to counter external attacks by six evils (Wind, Cold, Heat, Dryness, Moisture, and Heat of Summer).

Self Heal (Prunella) : great for calming ascending liver fire and brightening the eyes.

Mulberry leaf and Chrysanthemum flowers: commonly used for “dispersing wind, clearing heat, treating wind-heat patterns with fever and headache, as well as helping liver or symptoms of red, painful, dry eyes or excessive tearing manifesting wind heat, or with such symptoms as spots in front of eyes and blurriness manifesting live yin deficiency.” quoted from A Tradition of Soup by Teresa M. Chen.

Ingredients:

1. Self Heal , 0.25 ounce
2. mulberry leaf, 0.25 ounce
3. Chrysanthemum, 0.125 ounce
4. Honey to taste (optional)
5. 32 ounces of water decocting to 24 ounces

servings : 4 servings

Utensils:

1. glass pot, a stainless steel pot or clay pot for decoction
2. scale
3. strainer

Option for Savory Soup: double the ingredients of herbs. Use a soup pot with 2 quart of water, add herbs and set in a high heat to boil , turn down the heat.

Use another pot, blanch a piece of lean pork chop for 3 minutes and rinse it. Blanching is used to take away all imperfections. Add the pork together with the herbs. Slow cook for few hours . Add salt to taste.