

Potent Protection

INGRID NAIMAN

Inspired by skillful use of essential oils by Nostradamus during the time of the Black Death and formulated using the most potent immune enhancing herbs of our times.



Surviving an Historic Pandemic

During the dreadful years of the Black Death, a few people found the way to survive the plague that was decimating the population. Among the more colorful of these were four thieves from Marseilles who while plundering for treasures protected themselves with garlic and a concoction of herbs extracted in vinegar. The tale is a fascinating exploration of herbal lore, but there are so many versions of the story that it is up to you to choose which to believe.



Nostradamus, 1503-1566, was a famous doctor and prophet who not only survived the plague but cured many others with what came to be known as the famous “rose petal pills.” In fact, we do not know very much about the lozenges. They might have included rose hips, a rich source of natural vitamin C, as well as sawdust from green cypress, iris of Florence, cloves, odorated calamus, and perhaps some lign-aloes. Nostradamus owned a perfume manufacturing enterprise, which in his time meant distillation of plants to make essential oils. People who worked in these facilities did not succumb to the plague . . . and we are just now emerging from our skepticism in such a way as to enable us to understand what is so effective about these highly concentrated aromatic oils.

The formula is so popular in herbal circles that some people have organized “Four Thieves” parties where groups of people produce big batches of the formula for use during times of epidemics. There are, as one might imagine, many versions of the formula, all, of course, claimed to be authentic.

The famous French aromatherapy doctor, Jean Valnet, has two recipes in his book. He claims the original recipe was revealed by corpse robbers who were caught red-handed in the area around Toulouse in 1628-1631. His story is the more credible of the many one can find. Given the virulence and deadliness of the plague, the judges were astonished by the indifference of the thieves to contagion. Valnet quotes the archives of the Parliament of Toulouse:

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During the Great Plague, four robbers were convicted of going to the houses of plague victims, strangling them in their beds and then looting their dwellings. For this, they were condemned to be burned at the stake, and in order to have their sentence mitigated, they revealed their secret preservative, after which they were hanged.

Given the source, I choose to believe the Valnet account, but there have obviously been many spins of the tale. Here is the recipe stated to be the original:

ORIGINAL RECIPE FOR FOUR THIEVES FORMULA

3 pints	white wine vinegar
handful	wormwood
handful	meadowsweet
handful	juniper berries
handful	wild marjoram
handful	sage
50	cloves
2 oz.	elecampane root
2 oz.	angelica
2 oz.	rosemary
2 oz.	horehound
3 g	camphor



Dr. Schnabel, the Plague Doctor

The image depicts the attire worn by doctors treating the Plague in times past. The beak contained the herbs to protect the doctor from infection.



Jean Valnet, MD

Dr. Valnet has a variation of his own described as an antiseptic vinegar:

MARSEILLES VINEGAR OR FOUR THIEVES VINEGAR

40 g	greater wormwood, <i>Artemisia absinthum</i>
40 g	lesser wormwood, <i>Artemisia pontica</i>
40 g	rosemary
40 g	sage
40 g	mint
40 g	rue
40 g	lavender
5 g	calamus
5 g	cinnamon
5 g	clove
5 g	nutmeg
5 g	garlic
10 g	camphor (do not use synthetic camphor)
40 g	crystallized acetic acid
2500 g	white vinegar



INSTRUCTIONS: steep the plants in the vinegar for 10 days. Force through a sieve. Add the camphor dissolved in the acetic acid, filter.

Valnet says this remedy, i.e., his formula is useful in the prevention of infectious diseases. He says to rub it on the face and hands and burn it in the room. It can also be kept in small bottles that are carried on the person so that the vapors can be inhaled.

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MAP OF THE PLAGUE:

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ESSENTIAL OIL TESTS:

SHABAZ BASED ON KURT SCHNAUBELT
ADVANCED AROMATHERAPY

Dr. John Christopher

The famous herb doctor, John Christopher, had a slightly different story and a variation of the formula that is clearly American, not French. His “Four Thieves” story is that there was a man named Richard Forthave who developed a remedy for the plague that was marketed under his name, a name which was corrupted to “Four Thieves.” This story does not preclude the possibility that Forthave based his formula on the French grave robbers who divested corpses of treasures they would no longer need; however, it ends a little differently since the King of France had the thieves arrested but they bought their freedom with the remedy they had been using. In any event, the remedy did not fall into obscurity and has been used for centuries since to protect against contagion.



DR. JOHN CHRISTOPHER PLAGUE FORMULA

8 parts	apple cider vinegar
5 parts	glycerine U.S.P.
5 parts	honey
2 parts	garlic juice, fresh
2 parts	comfrey root concentrate*
1 part	wormwood concentrate
1 part	lobelia leaf and/or seed concentrate
1 part	marshmallow root concentrate
1 part	oak bark concentrate
1 part	black walnut bark concentrate
1 part	mullein leaf concentrate
1 part	skullcap leaf concentrate
1 part	uva ursi, hydrangea, or gravel root concentrate

MIX THE INGREDIENTS WELL!

***Due to restrictions on comfrey for internal use, slippery elm can be substituted for this ingredient.**

HOW TO MAKE THE CONCENTRATES:

Each concentrate should be made individually. Start by soaking the herb for four hours or more in enough distilled water to cover it completely. After soaking, add more distilled water so that the total added equals 16 oz. (.5 liter) water per 4 oz. (113 grams) herb. Use a multiple of these amounts for a larger quantity of formula. Using these amounts approximately one gallon (3.75 liters) of the formula will be produced.

After adding the appropriate amount of distilled water to the soaked herb, simmer the herb on very low heat in a covered pan or double boiler for thirty minutes. Then strain the liquid into a clean pan. Put the liquid into a double boiler or on very low heat (uncovered) and simmer (steam) it down to one fourth of the original volume (4 oz. 1256 ml). Only after all ingredients have been prepared should the liquids be mixed.

Formulas

As you can see, each herbalist has a variation of an idea. This is to be expected. Just as cooks improvise recipes according to seasonal availability of ingredients, culinary inspiration, and whims, herbalists concoct formulas to meet the specific needs of individual patients, local flora, and particular interests and preferences, I have my version, very complex, but here is another variation, much simpler to make. It is offered by one of my colleagues, Karen Vaughn, Licensed Acupuncturist and Herbalist.

1 pint	unpasteurized apple cider vinegar
5 drops	rosemary oil
5 drops	oregano oil
5 drops	lavender oil
5 drops	sage oil
5 drops	peppermint oil
5 drops	clove oil
4 dropst	lemon oil
3 drops	black pepper oil
1 drop	capsicum oil
1 head	garlic finely diced
3 oz	ginger finely sliced
4 oz	echinacea tincture



WARNING:

Be sure to use unadulterated, therapeutic grade essential oils. All essential oils sold by Sacred Medicine Sanctuary are of this superior quality.

Do not use metal cap on bottle.

SOURCING THE INGREDIENTS:

A recipe such as this can be made by purchasing the essential oils and echinacea extract and adding the rest of the ingredients in your own kitchen.

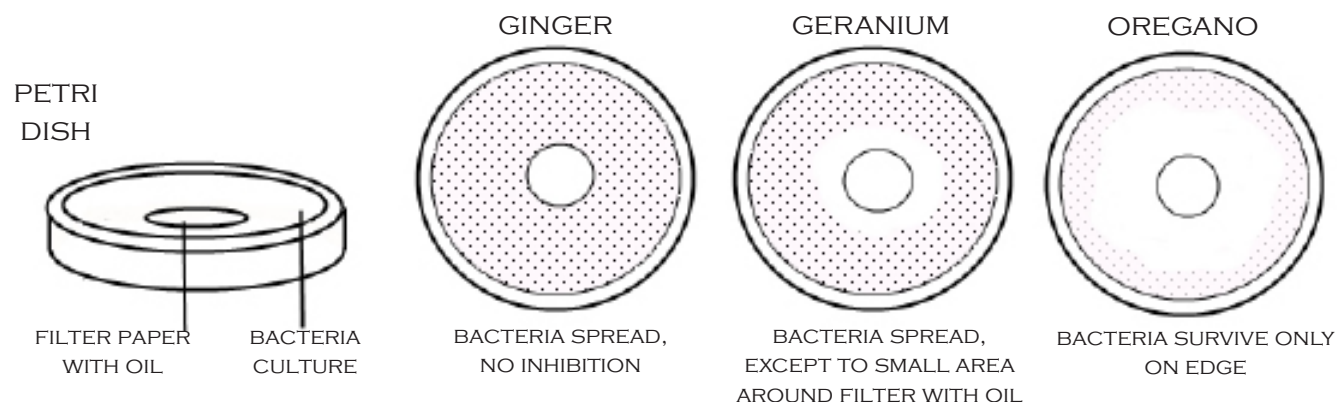


Essential Oils

In *Advanced Aromatherapy*, Kurt Schnaubelt, Ph.D., discusses the studies of Paul Belaiche. The complexity of the studies preclude their use in normal clinical situations, but a great deal can be learned from the research. Belaiche used pathogenic bacteria from the intestinal tracts of patients and determined the “kill” rate of 40 different essential oils on the most common bacteria and fungi, including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus haemolyticus*, *Pneumococcus spec.*, *Candida albicans*, etc. He called his testing method the aromatogram. After thousands of tests, some generalizations became possible, but first, let’s look at the method.

A few drops of essential oil were placed on a filter paper in a petri dish with a bacterial culture. Basically, the diameter of the kill reveals the efficacy of the oil in inhibiting the survival of the pathogen. As can be seen in the diagram below, oregano essential oil has the widest effectiveness since the bacteria were only able to survive on the perimeter of the culture, farthest from the oil.

THE AROMATOGRAM: SHOWS ZONES OF INHIBITION OF ESSENTIAL OILS BASED ON PAUL BELAICHE AND KURT SCHNAUBELT



Based on years of testing, both clinical and in the laboratory, Belaiche developed an index of the oils. There are tables showing the effectiveness against very specific organisms as well as a sort of master number. These are cited in nearly every professional aromatherapy text, but the bottom line is what most people seek and this puts oregano at the top.

It should be noted that essential oils can be used topically, internally, as well as in diffusers. Regardless of the mechanism of delivery, a certain amount is absorbed and utilized systemically. If you have any doubt about this, put a drop of oil on the bottom of your foot and count the seconds until you can taste the oil on your tongue.

Ingrid's Formula

POTENT PROTECTION

[formerly called Four Thieves]

When first formulating my “Thieves” recipe, I was influenced by Nostradamus and the accounts of his successful treatments of the Plague using rose petals and essential oils. However, I wanted to create something uniquely potent that also tastes good. Having studied essential oils and their antimicrobial properties, I was fairly convinced that many oils are stronger than any other form of medicine but a few oils stand out as “phenomenal” rather than acceptable. Wild oregano oil is one of these. The best quality usually comes from Turkey and a single drop of therapeutic grade oil is often enough, certainly all that is required, for one to three days.

Another fascinating herb is black cumin, usually sourced from Egypt or grown to specifications in another region but using Egyptian standards to obtain the highest possible medicinal value. Black cumin was found in the tomb of King Tutankamen and was touted by Dioscorides as well as the Prophet Mohammed. It's a very good stomachic and carminative, but when combined with garlic, it is believed to have a significant immune action that restores harmony.



So, while the journey started in France and the northern shores of the Mediterranean, it quickly took me around the entire Sea. Moreover, having recently returned from Europe where I had seen blood parasites in nearly every patient as well as the staff of the clinics, I felt compelled to use some antiparasitic herbs, not the two artemisias in Dr. Valnet's formula but rather two more common herbs that have their own stories: black walnut and *Artemisia annua* or Sweet Annie. In Germany and France, I had found a number of artisan-type herbal beverages made with black walnut and was pleased with the taste and usefulness. Where *Artemisia annua* is concerned, there are traditional uses in China as well as some recent studies pointing to its value in relieving certain types of cancer. Basically, *Artemisia annua* is the most famous antimalarial herb in the world, but malaria is probably only one of many diseases spread by insect bites. There is certainly nothing to suggest that the herb might not be helpful with other conditions having a similar mode of infection.

POTENT PROTECTOR CONTAINS:

Alpinia officinarum (galangal), *Allium sativum* (garlic), *Zingiber officinalis* (ginger), *Juglans nigra* (black walnut), *Artemisia annua* (sweet Annie), *Lomatium dissectum*, *Verbascum thapsus* (mullein leaf), *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (bearberry), *Ulmus rubra* (slippery elm), *Ligusticum porteri* (osha), *Capsicum minimum* (cayenne), Black cumin, Nutmeg, Coriander, Cinnamon, Cloves, and Camphor in distilled water, organic alcohol, organic honey, vegetable glycerin, and organic cider vinegar with essential oils of wild oregano and rosemary. Alcohol: 20-22%.

At that stage of development, I was inclined to name my formula “Mediterranean Thieves” or “Black Cumin Tonic” or “Prophet’s Potion” as an allusion to both Nostradamus and Mohammed, but I kept adding ingredients to my formula so these names eventually lost significance.

The war in Afghanistan, one of my favorite countries in the world, was generating horror stories of hemorrhagic fevers and while I cannot claim any experience treating these conditions, I believe the body can wage a good fight if supported with the right herbs. I had just created a little offering for a Winter Solstice Festival. It was a thick paste with honey and propolis and Osha. I named it Artikos, a play on the Great Bear, the importance of the return of light after darkness at the North Pole, and the fact that bears coming out of hibernation face an urgent and critical need to detoxify since they have not eliminated during their rest. In North America, bears dig up osha root and use this to avert kidney and other crises when they start moving about in spring. I decided to add some osha to my formula. It pairs well with another exotic and little appreciated high mountain herb from this continent, lomatium, probably the most powerful immune herb in our hemisphere.

Over the three years that I was pulling together this formula, I collected over 300 pages of documentation on the herbs used, but I still wanted to make the formula go to work quickly and for people to be able to hold it down well. For this reason, spices were added. The process used is proprietary and believe me, it’s a bit more complicated than the recipes I have included in this little pdf, but my lab has sourced the ingredients and made it to my specifications so you don’t have to join a camel caravan to find your own herbs.



Comes in 4 oz. amber glass dropper bottle.
Suggested retail price: \$37.50



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