



*Always wash hands prior to any cooking or harvesting activity.*

# GARDEN TEA

**Overview:** Students harvest fresh herbs to make tea, learn herb names and discover new tastes and smells, as well as medicinal and culinary uses and how to dry herbs for later use.

**Big Idea:** Herbs are an easy way to make food/drink taste new and different and are simple to dry and keep.

**Guiding Question:** How do herbs help people?

**Grade Level:** K-8

**Lesson Time:** 30 minutes

**Season:** Late Summer, Fall, Winter

**Type of Activity:** Recipe, Garden Activity

**Materials Needed:** Cups, hot water, scissors/tools for harvesting, markers/tape for labeling cups, containers for harvesting. *Optional:* Flash cards or illustrations of herbs and/or coloring pages and coloring supplies, plastic plant trays lined with paper towels for drying herbs.

**Preparation:** Have water heated and held at temperature before students arrive. *Optional:* harvest herbs in advance.

## What to do:

- At the Opening Circle, ask students if they have a favorite herb or spice. Why do they like it so much? Does it bring to mind a particular memory?
- Hand out cups and label each with student's name.
- Harvest garden herbs - **mint, rosemary, thyme, basil, lemon balm, chamomile, lemon verbena, lavender, fennel, cilantro or dill** are all relatively easy to grow in the garden. Have students smell each one before harvesting so they decide what would be best to use in their tea.
- Have students **fill cups about 1/3 full with the herbs** they would like to use (combos are OK!), tearing into small pieces to release as much flavor as possible.
- Help students fill their cups with hot water. Encourage them to use their sense of smell as the hot water hits the fresh herbs. *How does it smell?* Allow tea to steep for 10 minutes or so, during which you could discuss teaching points (below). Other activities for this short window can include making a drawing of an herb, looking at herb flash cards, or setting trays of herbs out to dry (though this is typically done during a longer version of this lesson).
- After 10 minutes, return to steeped tea and have students use their sense of smell again before drinking, testing tea temperature with a finger to make sure it is cool enough to drink. Drink tea together and enjoy!

**Teaching Points:** *What are herbs?* Herbs are plants we use to flavor food as well as things that we drink. *Do any of you recognize these herbs? Have any of you seen or helped your parents use them in food or drinks at home? Are there other herbs or spices you've heard of? (If students mention things like cinnamon and ginger, you can explain that those plants only grow in hot/tropical climates but the herbs we're harvesting and using today grow in our Pacific NW climate).* Many of the herbs we use in the kitchen not only add interesting flavors to our food and drink but can also be good for our bodies in different ways. Some herbs - like peppermint and fennel - can help make our stomach feel better if it's upset or hurting. Other herbs, like chamomile, lemon balm and lavender are good herbs to keep in mind when we have a hard time going to sleep or if we are getting too excited. And some herbs just taste or smell really good! Herbs have been harvested, dried and used as flavoring and medicine for as long as they've been growing on the earth. *What would be a reason to dry herbs?* Drying herbs is a way to preserve them so that we can have them available to us even when they aren't growing - like during the winter. *Are there other foods or plants that we "preserve"?*