

Forest Tea



Practical Notes for Facilitators:

- You may choose to bring hot water in a carafe or heat water on site.
- Have a table or flat surface for serving tea and laying out cups.
- Offer sit spot tarps or blankets so participants can sit comfortably on the ground during the tea circle.
- Remind students that the tea is made from plants that were pre-harvested respectfully and safely.
- If possible, demonstrate ethical harvesting practices.

Core Principles of Ethical Harvesting:

- Take only what you need. Harvest with intention, not just because something is there.
- Harvest from abundance. Choose healthy, plentiful plants; never take from rare or struggling ones.
- Ask permission. Speak to the plant and the land. Acknowledge that we're part of a relationship, not in charge of it.
- Use the plant fully and respectfully. Don't waste what you take. Use it with care.
- Give something back. This could be thanks, a quiet word, water, a strand of hair, or tobacco.

According to Anishinaabe teachings, Asemaa (pronounced a-say-ma)—tobacco— is the first and most sacred medicine. Offering Asemaa is a way to begin with respect. It acknowledges the life around us and opens space for learning, gratitude, and relationship with the land.

Language Teachings: Giving Thanks

As you gather at your tea spot, invite students to slow down and reflect on what it means to be in relationship with the land.

You might say:

"Before we sip our forest tea, let's take a moment to think about where it came from. These plants give us something, and in return, we're asked to be respectful and thoughtful in how we use them. This is part of a deeper teaching, passed on through Indigenous knowledge. It's not just about being sustainable, but about showing care, gratitude, and responsibility."

- "Michif: Maarsii
- Ojibwe: Miigwech
- Cree (Nehiyawêwin): Ninanâskomân ("I am thankful")

Invite students to try one of the words aloud or in their head before tasting the tea.

Forest Tea



Making Forest Tea

Optional plants: wild mint, chamomile, goldenrod, red clover, pineapple weed, cedar, rosehips, anise hyssop, raspberry leaf, yarrow. Use one or a blend. All should be pre-harvested with care and dried or fresh.

Note: yarrow, raspberry leaf and cedar should be avoided by pregnant participants.

Instructions:

1. Choose your plants.

Use one plant or create a blend (e.g., wild mint + goldenrod). A small pinch of each is enough for one cup.

2. Add hot water.

Pour just-boiled water over the plants in a cup or teapot. Let it steep for 5–10 minutes, depending on the strength you prefer.

3. Strain if needed.

If loose leaves or flowers were used, you may strain before serving.

4. Optional: add honey.

A small amount of honey can be added to taste.

5. Sip slowly and with intention.

Invite participants to reflect on what the plants have given. Encourage quiet moments or discussion using a prompt like:

“What did the forest offer you today?”

Inviting Reflection:

As you gather at your tea spot, invite students to slow down and reflect on what it means to be in relationship with the land.

You might say:

“Before we sip our forest tea, let’s take a moment to think about where it came from. These plants give us something, and in return, we’re asked to be respectful and thoughtful in how we use them. This is part of a deeper teaching, passed on through Indigenous knowledge. It’s not just about being sustainable, but about showing care, gratitude, and responsibility.”

