

Rosemary Oil: The Scent of Wellness

One of the most popular essential oils around is extracted from *Rosmarinus officinalis*, which is widely known in the Mediterranean region for its culinary and herbal benefits and has been extensively used for a wealth of health and wellness purposes. Find out more about rosemary oil and what sets it apart from other widely celebrated herbal oils.

What Is Rosemary Oil?

Related to mint and looking like lavender, [rosemary](#) has leaves like flat pine needles touched with silver. It boasts of a woody, citrus-like fragrance that has become a feature of many kitchens, gardens, and apothecaries worldwide. It derives its name from Latin words *ros* (“dew”) and *marinus* (“sea”), or “dew of the sea.”¹

The Virgin Mary is said to have spread her blue cloak over a rosemary bush as she rested, and the white flowers turned blue. The shrub came to be known as the “Rose of Mary.”² Rosemary was considered sacred by the Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, and was used in the Middle Ages to ward off evil spirits and protect against the plague.³

Rosemary oil has a clear, refreshing herbal smell, is clear in color, and is watery in viscosity. It is extracted from the fresh flowering tops through steam distillation, yielding 1.0 to 2.0 percent.

Its health benefits made it a favorite of Paracelsus,⁴ a German-Swiss physician and botanist who contributed greatly to the understanding of herbal medicine in the 16th century. He valued rosemary oil because of its entire body-strengthening ability, such as the healing of sensitive organs like the liver, heart, and brain.

Uses of Rosemary Oil

I recommend using fresh rosemary-infused oil on your salads as a delicious dressing. The herb itself has a thousand uses, and it is extremely hardy and therefore easy to grow and maintain whether inside or out. You can add an entire sprig to your soups for a unique flavor.

According to *Modern Essentials*,⁵ a guide to the therapeutic uses of essential oils, high-quality rosemary oil has analgesic, antibacterial, anticancer, anticatarrhal, antifungal, anti-infection, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and expectorant properties. The book’s A-Z list of rosemary oil uses covers many health concerns, including for the following:⁶

- **Clarity** – Add a drop to your hands, rub together, and cup over your mouth and nose for up to a minute
- **Cough** – Massage one to two drops over your chest and throat every few hours

- **Headaches** – Add a drop to your hands, and cup over your mouth and nose for up to a minute. You may also apply a drop topically to the aching parts of your head.
- **Learning and memory** – Diffuse the oil throughout the room, inhale directly from the bottle, rub over your temples, or apply to your toes regularly.
- **Vaginal infection** – Massage one to two drops in or around the vagina, making sure to test for sensitivity before attempting internal use.

Both rosemary oil and teas are added to shampoos and lotions. Regularly using the oil helps stimulate follicles, aiding in long, strong hair growth. You can also massage your scalp with the oil to nourish it and remove dandruff. **Rosemary oil can also be used on your pets as a hair growth stimulant and for helping produce shiny coats.**

This essential oil is a disinfectant and is often used as a mouthwash, helping remove bad breath. By removing oral bacteria, rosemary oil can prevent cavities, plaque buildup, and other dental issues. The mesmerizing aroma of rosemary is worth nothing, too, making it an excellent inhalant. Rosemary oil is used in candles, perfumes, bath oils, fresheners, and cosmetics, boosting mental energy when inhaled.

Used with 50:50 dilution, rosemary oil can be applied on ankles and wrists (two to four drops), applied to chakras or vitaflex points, directly inhaled, diffused, or as an dietary supplement.[z](#)

Composition of Rosemary Oil

The main chemical components of rosemary oil include a-pinene, borneol, b-pinene, camphor, bornyl acetate, camphene, 1,8-cineole, and limonene.

A study published in *Chemistry of Natural Compounds*[8](#) looked at the volatile compounds obtained from the essential oil of rosemary cultivated at the Algerian Sahara. Its analysis found that 30 compounds represented 98.2 percent of the essential oil, with 1,8-cineole (29.5 percent), 2-ethyl-4,5-dimethylphenol (12 percent) and camphor (11.5 percent) as the major components.

Benefits of Rosemary Oil

Rosemary oil has been extensively used and studied since ancient times for a variety of health benefits. Today, it is included in many medicinal preparations, with many potential offerings. Organic Facts cites some of them:

1. **Indigestion** – Rosemary oil is often used for this relieving flatulence, stomach cramps, constipation, and bloating. The essential oil is also deemed helpful in stimulating appetite. Research shows that rosemary essential oil can help detoxify the liver and help regulate the creation and release of bile, a key part of the digestive process.
2. **Stress relief** – Aside from its aromatherapeutic benefits, rosemary oil is seen to decrease the level of cortisol, one of the hormones released during the body's flight-or-flight response to stress, in the saliva. According to the 2007

study,⁹ inhaling rosemary and lavender oils for five minutes significantly reduced cortisol levels in the subjects' saliva, potentially decreasing the dangers of chronic stress.

3. **Pain relief** – Rosemary essential oil is promoted for its ability to relieve pain, which is why it's widely used in treating headaches, muscle pains, and even arthritis.¹⁰ Massage the affected area with the essential oil, which you can also add to vapor baths for the treatment of rheumatism. Its anti-inflammatory qualities make it a good way to address pain from sprains and joint aches.
4. **Immune system boost** – The same 2007 study that found reduced cortisol levels after simultaneous massage and inhalation of rosemary essential oil found that the free radical-scavenging activity in the subjects' bodies also significantly increased. Antioxidants are a valuable weapon to fight off infection and disease, so this benefit of rosemary oil is welcome news – regularly using or inhaling it can support your immunity and help you fight off diseases linked to free radicals.
5. **Respiratory problems** – The scent of the oil has been shown to provide relief from throat congestion, and in treating respiratory allergies, colds, sore throat, and the flu. Its antiseptic action also makes rosemary oil useful for respiratory infections. Because of its antispasmodic effect, it is also used in certain treatment programs for bronchial asthma.

Rosemary oil also appears to work wonders on anxiety.¹¹ A study published in *Holistic Nursing Practice* in 2009¹² found that the use of sachets containing lavender and rosemary essential oils helped reduce anxiety associated with test-taking.

Using this essential oil seems to benefit brain health, too. A 2003 study published in the *International Journal of Neuroscience*,¹³ which involved 144 volunteers, found that rosemary oil helped improve mood in healthy adults. There is also a positive effect proposed for Alzheimer's patients – a small study in 2009¹⁴ found that one month of aromatherapy involving rosemary, lemon, lavender, and orange essential oils helped enhanced cognitive function, especially in Alzheimer's patients.

How to Make Rosemary Oil

The versatility of rosemary essential oil makes it so widely used in aromatherapy as an aroma in many combinations. It blends well with oils like lavender, frankincense, clary sage, basil, thyme, citronella, lemongrass, chamomile, and peppermint.

You can make your own rosemary-infused oil by placing a sprig or two of completely dry rosemary leaves into a glass jar, topping with olive oil, replacing the lid, and shaking lightly. Store it in a warm, dark place for two weeks. Strain and simply pour back into the glass jar. Use one-fourth for a fragrant bath, or blend with balsamic vinegar to drizzle as a tasty dressing over salads.

How Does Rosemary Oil Work?

For addressing body circulation, mental fatigue, pain relief, decongestion of the respiratory tract, and as a skin and hair care agent, you can use rosemary oil several ways, including in burners and vaporizers, blended massage oils or in the bath,

creams, lotions, and shampoos.¹⁵ As a general guideline, I advise adding two to three drops of rosemary essential oil to your bath water.¹⁶ Honoring rosemary's role in culinary traditions, The Prudent Homemaker has a Rosemary Olive Oil Bread recipe that you can try.¹⁷

Is Rosemary Oil Safe?

Rosemary oil appears to be a safe, effective essential oil for a litany of uses and purposes. Before using it topically, I advise you to dilute it in a carrier oil, as there is a risk of contact sensitivity. Do a skin patch test first.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women should avoid using rosemary essential oil during their pregnancy. Furthermore, consult a doctor first before administering the herbal oil to children. Self-treatment of a chronic disease, such as depression or Alzheimer's, using rosemary oil may also hold serious consequences without professional advice.

Side Effects of Rosemary Oil

At times, rosemary oil may also cause allergic reactions, so consult your doctor for proper use. It is volatile in nature, which means it can cause vomiting and spasms. Therefore, do not ingest it.

Again, it is strongly recommended for pregnant and breastfeeding women to avoid using rosemary essential oil, as it can affect the fetus or lead to miscarriage.