

Basil, beyond being one of my most valued culinary herbs, is also one of my most valued medicinal herbs. Basil is known to be a great source of vitamin K, calcium, and other nutrients, as well as being abundant in antioxidants.

There are many different varieties of basil used for their medicinal and culinary attributes, but two of my favorites are the simple garden basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), and Holy Basil (*Ocimum sanctum*) also known as Tulsi.

Ancient cultures have long used basil to treat various stomach and respiratory problems.

[Basil Leaf \(*Ocimum basilicum*\)](#) is known to impart sedative, diuretic and antiseptic properties. The essential oil content of basil helps in the treatment of gastro-intestinal and renal affections, bronchitis and fever. It is also beneficial to the heart, as it helps reduce cholesterol. The herb is safe for children to take, and can help chicken pox to hurry through its course. Its leaves can be chewed to relieve mouth infections. Powdered dried leaves can be used to brush the teeth, which freshens the breath, cleans the teeth and stimulates the gums. A simple cup of tea can help with headaches. The use of basil leaf tea is also recommended in nervous system fatigue, insomnia and painful menstruation. Fresh basil leaf compresses are useful to aid the unpleasant effects of insect stings.

[Holy Basil \(*Ocimum sanctum*\)](#) contains hundreds of compounds known as phyto-chemicals that work together to create strong anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, and immune-enhancing properties. Often used to treat cough, sore throat, rash, stings, night blindness, hives, ear infections and fever. Leaves contain a tonic for the nerves and can improve memory. It helps to remove phlegm from the bronchial tubes and strengthens the stomach. Leaves can be chewed to aid colds and flu. One with kidney stones would benefit from basil as it is known to help expel stones from the urinary tract.

Consuming the warm brew of basil herbal tea can promote a more balanced metabolism, build stamina, and increase mental clarity. It is recommended to drink a cup after every meal.

As always, email any questions to herbalist@morganbotanicals.com .

Copyright 2009. All rights reserved. Jessica Morgan, M. H., [Morgan Botanicals](#) .

Disclaimer - The information provided in this article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professional. You should not use the information in this article for self-diagnosis or to replace any prescriptive medication. You should consult with a health care professional before starting any diet, exercise or supplementation program, before taking any medication, or if you have or suspect you might have a health problem, suffer from allergies, are pregnant or nursing.

Jessica Morgan, M.H.