



EPISODE #1

# WILD BURDOCK ROOT CHAI

Foraging Burdock Root



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## Foraging Burdock Root

*Now is the time of year when warming herbal infusions, such as this Wild Burdock Root Chai, make everything better. Tasty, heating, and nourishing with immune supportive herbs, this brew is perfect for these cold, damp days of fall and winter, or whenever it suits your fancy.*

### INGREDIENTS

Made with the following dried herbs:

- Burdock root:  
½ oz (by weight)  
or 1 large handful of cut root
- Cinnamon bark: 1-2" piece
- Ginger: large pinch
- Cardamom seeds: large pinch
- Fennel seeds: palmful
- Black peppercorns: 3-6
- Whole cloves: 3
- Bay leaf: 1



### INSTRUCTIONS

*For strongest flavor crush or coarsely grind the herbs right before use, then place into a quart mason jar. Pour boiling water over the herbs and fill the jar to the top. Cap tightly and let steep for 1-4 hours. Strain, gently reheat in a covered pot, and add warm cream or milk and honey if desired. Enjoy!*

*Makes about a quart (32 oz)*

**Herbal Chai Variations:** All the herbs except for the burdock are part of a master chai template. So by keeping them, and then substituting other herbs for the burdock root, you can invent endless variations. Try nettle, sacred basil or dandelion. For example to make Nettle Chai: Use ½ oz dried nettle leaf in place of the burdock root. Let your creative chai making juices flow and see what combinations you can invent. (BTW, I like adding coriander seed to the chai template too.)

**Optional:** If wanting to add black tea, place steeped and strained chai back into pot, add 4 black tea bags (or 4 teaspoons of loose tea) bring to a simmer. Turn off heat. Steep for 3-4 mins, strain & serve.



# Episode #1: Takeaway Points

- The primary tool for digging burdock root is a spade fork (not a pitch fork).
- Burdock likes to grow in disturbed soil. Look for it where land is tilled, or soil has been disrupted.
- Burdock is a very common prolific plant, even considered invasive by some.
- Burdock is a biennial, living for two years.
- Ideal times for digging burdock root are 1st year late fall, or 2nd year early spring.
- Best to harvest 1st year burdock root in the fall after a few hard frosts have hit.



- In the summer and fall of burdock's 2nd year, it flowers and then seeds. At this stage the root is spent, and no longer useful!
- Burdock seed's flavor is very bitter to be used as potent medicine, not food.
- Burdock root has a long taproot.
- Color of freshly cut burdock root is whitish.
- Flavor of burdock root is earthy, sweet and mildly bitter.
- It has a unique mild, mineral-like smell that is hard to describe, but should not smell highly aromatic or pungent.
- The crown is where the root meets the aerial part of the plant. Often these crowns can be planted and new plants will grow.
- When cleaning burdock roots, no need to peel, but check and remove any soft / rotten spots.
- These two species of burdock, *Arctium minus*, and *A. lappa*, can be used interchangeably.

- Burdock root is a nourishing tonic, high in magnesium, iron, thiamine and zinc.
- Burdock root is an alterative, which gently alters the body into a healthier state. It supports liver and lymph health.
- Burdock root is a good example of where food and medicine meet.
- Use burdock root in pickles, soups, sautés, shepherd's pie, beverages, and desserts.
- To dry roots, chop them into pieces; the smaller the pieces the more quickly they will dry.
- However, when storing dried roots, the smaller the cut the more oxidation occurs as well, making the roots lose their potency more quickly.







- Dehydrating roots will shrink by  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in weight. In this episode we dig 8 oz of fresh root that dehydrates to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz (so  $\frac{1}{6}$  its original wt.).
- You can create an herb drying rack for a woodstove with a metal wok base/ring (or similar object) and 2 metal roasting sheets.
- Dry roots gently at 110-115 degrees F.
- Master chai template allows you to create endless herbal chai variations.
- Herbal Infusions are long steeped teas. Use  $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 oz herb to 32 oz boiling water. Steep tightly lidded to keep the volatile compounds from escaping.
- Suggested steeping periods for varying plant parts:  
Flowers: 10–30 minutes. Leaves: 20 minutes–4 hours. Roots, barks, berries, seeds: 1–8 hours.

*Wild Burdock Herbal Chai is a therapeutic tonic beverage that is warming and offers circulatory, immune, and digestive support.*

