

How to Make Rose Water

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DIY Rose Water

Great for use as a facial toner!

Traditionally, rose water is made by steam-distillation of fresh rose petals. The result is an almost colorless, yet fragrant, liquid.

This process can be somewhat replicated at home with a double-boiler. While it is not extremely difficult, it is somewhat time-consuming (and perhaps a little intimidating). The process is actually the same as making a homemade [hydrosol](#).

Today we'll discuss three methods for creating homemade rose water and rose water substitutes:

1. Homemade Rose Hydrosol
2. Rose "Water" Infusion
3. Rose-Infused Witch Hazel

Only the first method, homemade hydrosol, would be considered a "true" rose water. The others are really substitutes. Although, Rosemary Gladstar does call a witch hazel/water infusion made with roses, "Rose water" in her book, [Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health](#) (more on that below).

Before we get into the details, let's take a moment to consider why we might want to make rose water and how to use it.

How to use Rose Water:

- add fragrance to homemade cosmetics
- use as an astringent for normal to dry skin
- add to the bath to provide a soothing aroma
- include as part of a shampoo or hair rinse
- use in facial scrubs and masks
- spray over bed sheets for a lovely scent

True rose water, that is made with only roses and water (not the version including witch hazel) can be used in food preparations as well. Some foods that may include rose water are cookies, pastries, jams, jellies, and even salad dressings or vinaigrettes.

Note: When making rose water, be sure to use roses that have not been sprayed with insecticides. I order dried roses from [Mountain Rose Herbs](#).

How to Make Rose Water

The first two methods for making rose water won't last as long as the one made with witch hazel (which is really a witch hazel infusion) because water

Method 1 – HOMEMADE ROSE HYDRSOSOL

You can purchase an [Alembic still](#) and make your own hydrosol that way, however, this is a more expensive route and will require some know-how. But it allows you to control the conditions and temperature. Which is a nice perk.

Alternatively, you can make your own hydrosol using tools which likely exist in your kitchen already.

Here are the steps (I will take pictures next time I make some to upload here):

- set brick in the center of a large pot
- place plant material around it
- place cup on the brick (in the middle)

- cover plant material with pure water
- put lid on **upside down**
- bring plant matter to boil (keep a close eye so water doesn't boil out)
- reduce to simmer – simmer for 20 minutes
- place ice in lid
- steam will condense and drip into cup
- the contents of the cup is your hydrosol

Method 2 – Rose Infusion – Two Ways

Rose Infusion – Glass Jar Method

You will need:

- Glass jar (large, wide-mouth canning jar)
- 1/4 cup dried rose petals ([where to buy](#))
- 1-1/4 cups distilled water

Directions

1. Place dried roses in a heatproof jar
2. Heat water until just boiling and pour over the roses.
3. Let sit until cool.
4. Strain out the roses and store in the fridge for 1-3 days or use immediately in homemade lotion.

Rose Infusion Stove-top method

You will need:

- Saucepan or pot
- 1/4 cup dried rose petals ([where to buy](#))
- 1-1/4 cup distilled water

Directions

1. Place dried rose petals into pot and pour water over them.
2. Cover and bring to a boil.
3. Once boiling, reduce heat until water is at a low simmer.
4. Simmer for 5-10 minutes, until color fades from roses.
5. Remove from heat and let cool completely.
6. Strain out the roses and store rose-infused water in the fridge for up to 3 days or use immediately in homemade lotions and creams.

Method 3-Witch Hazel Rose Infusion

This method is **the most shelf-stable of all methods** presented here, but would be considered a **witch-hazel infusion** and not a true rose water.

That said, it makes a great facial toner! The astringent properties in witch hazel are wonderful for toning and tightening the skin. Witch hazel is suitable for most skin types.

Witch hazel generally includes a percentage of alcohol, which is why it

lasts longer than infusions made with water.

You will need:

- Glass jar (wide-mouth, quart size)
- 1/3 cup dried rose petals ([where to buy](#))
If using fresh roses you will need close to one cup – just fill the jar! Be sure they are free of bugs and pesticides
- 2/3-1 cup witch hazel ([where to buy](#))

Note about the amount of witch hazel:

The amount of witch hazel can vary. Be sure the witch hazel covers the roses completely, with a little extra to ensure they stay covered as they absorb some of the liquid.

You can also add more of less witch hazel depending on the strength of the infusion you wish to make. The same holds true for the amount of roses.

1. Place rose petals in a jar clean and sanitized jar.
2. Pour witch hazel over the rose petals.
3. Be sure the flowers are covered by an extra 2 inches of liquid.
4. Cover with lid and place out of direct sunlight.
5. Leave to it for 1 week, shaking jar occasionally (May infuse for longer if desired, up to 2 weeks).
6. Strain out the flowers and pour rose water into a clean jar or bottle. Label. Store in a cool place.

Alternate method, including water:

In Rosemary Gladstar's book, [Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health](#), she using witch hazel *and* water to create a rose water substitute. **The benefit to including water is that it makes the blend a little gentler, however it also introduces more possibility for mold and bacteria to grow.**

This method infuses for a little more time than when using witch hazel alone as the witch hazel is stronger than water and able to pull the properties and color from the roses more quickly.

If including water you will need:

- Glass jar (wide-mouth, quart size)
 - 1/3 cup dried rose petals ([where to buy](#))
 - 2/3 cup witch hazel ([where to buy](#))
 - 1/3 cup distilled water
1. Place rose petals in a jar clean and sanitized jar.
 2. Mix water and witch hazel and pour over the rose petals.
 3. Be sure the flowers are covered by an extra 2 inches of liquid.

4. Cover with lid and place out of direct sunlight.
5. Leave to it for 2 weeks, shaking jar occasionally. (If your infusion reaches a color you like before 2 weeks, feel free to strain earlier.)
6. Strain out the flowers and pour rose water into a clean jar or bottle. Label. Store in a cool place.

What About Preservatives

Since rose water is a water-based product, you may wish to **consider adding a broad spectrum preservative**. If offering for sale, then this is necessary for the protection of yourself and your customers. I am not an expert of offering products for sale, so you should consult the laws of your state as well as a higher level formulation program, such as Formula Botanica.

[Lotion Crafter](#) offers many preservative options, some naturally derived, others are synthetic. See what they have to offer as well as research the various types of preservatives [here](#).

More to make. . .

See my post: [Things to Make with Dried Roses!](#)

You might also enjoy this wonderful book: [Things to Do with Roses](#) by Jan Berry of the Nerdy Farm Wife.

This post was originally published in 2014 and was updated on Dec. 21, 2019 with addition information.