

# A Spoonful Of Bitters

"No one dies of a spoonful of sugar, but they can die from a lifetime of overconsumption of refined carbohydrates."  
(Matthew Wood 2004; 73-74)



A SPOONFUL OF BITTERS MAKES THE SUGAR GO DOWN\*, THE SUGAR GO DOWN\*,  
OH, THE SUGAR GO DOWN\*...  
A SPOONFUL OF BITTERS MAKES THE SUGAR GO DOWN\*, THE SUGAR GO DOWN\*,  
IN A MOST RESOURCEFUL WAY!

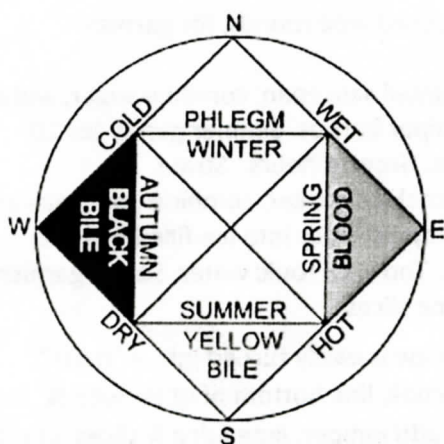


\*meaning: the blood sugar levels...

[subsequent chorus may substitute the phrase:

"makes the colon move down..." or "makes the stressors go down..."]

## Different Characteristics



4 Basic Humors/People Types/Conditions

### 3 Basic Bitters:

Simple  
Aromatic  
Acidic/Acrid

### Other Qualities of Bitters:

Tonic	Cooling or Warming
Digestive	Astringent
Laxitive	Demulcent
Cathartic	Anti-inflammatory
Diuretic	Relaxing

## WHERE TO FIND BITTERS & WHAT'S IN THEM:

### **AVENA BOTANICALS**

([www.avenabotanicals.com](http://www.avenabotanicals.com)) Ingredients: Gentian root, Burdock root, Blessed thistle leaves, Licorice root, Ginger root

### **BITTERCUBE**

(<http://bittercube.com/products>) 1 example of several: ORANGE - double macerated orange peels; aromas of caramelized orange, toasted coriander & cardamom...

This is locally made: Milwaukee, WI

### **HERB PHARM**

([www.herb-pharm.com](http://www.herb-pharm.com)) Ingredients: Angelica root, Hyssop leaf and flower, Juniper berry, Cardamom, Ginger, Gentian, Anise seed, Cinnamon, Myrrh, Peppermint EO

### **GALLEXIER by FLORADIX**

(found many places) non-alcoholic; Ingredients: Artichoke Leaves, Dandelion Herb, Gentian Root, Turmeric Root, Yarrow, Fennel, Chamomile Flowers, Blessed Thistle, Buckbean Leaves & other Aromatic Herbs, plus fructose

### **MARIA TREBEN'S AUTHENTIC SWEDISH BITTERS**

([www.swedishbitters.com](http://www.swedishbitters.com)) Ingredients: Aloe, Myrrh, Saffron, Senna Leaves, Camphor, Rhubarb Roots, Zedvoary Roots, Manna, Theriac Venezian, Carline Thistle Roots and Angelica Roots

### **URBAN MOONSHINE**

([www.urbanmoonshine.com](http://www.urbanmoonshine.com)) Ingredients: Dandelion Root and Leaf, Angelica Root, Burdock Root, Yellow Dock Root, Gentian Root, Orange Peel, Fennel Seed, Ginger Root, Gum Arabic and Organic EO

### **WISE WOMAN HERBALS**

([www.wisewomanherbals.com](http://www.wisewomanherbals.com)) Ingredients: Dandelion root, Gentian, Elecampane, Fennel, Ginger, Turmeric, Slippery elm, Fennel EO

"Bitter to the taste is  
sweet to the tummy"



## DIY: SIMPLE RHUBARB BITTERS\*

3/4 lb. fresh rhubarb  
1 crushed cinnamon stick  
zest from 1 navel orange  
zest from 1/2 ruby grapefruit  
12 oz. high proof alcohol  
6 oz. water  
1 oz. maple syrup or ?  
-Chop rhubarb  
-Carefully peel & chop orange & grapefruit (don't include white pith)  
-Combine all in a glass jar & let it work its magic in a cool, dark place for 2<sup>+</sup> weeks  
-Strain & enjoy; may be used as is, or in a cocktail or mocktail mix

(\*there are many variations of this – some recipes may use lemon & lime or include such herbs as coriander, juniper, fennel, lavender, chamomile &/or angelica)

## DIY: JUNIPER TONIC

(non-alcoholic)

1 cup superfine sugar or ?  
1 cup water  
2 ounces juniper berries, crushed lightly in a coffee grinder  
~~~~~  
4 ounces fresh lime juice  
8 ounces tonic water  
Thinly sliced lime rounds, for garnish

*pick when  
blue +  
dry them*

1. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, water and juniper berries. Simmer gently for 20 minutes. Steep 4 hours. Strain.  
2. In a cocktail shaker, combine lime juice and juniper syrup. Pour into ice-filled highball glasses. Top with tonic water. Serve, garnished with lime slices

[this recipe is easily turned into a "fizzie": do not cook, line bottom of qt jar with ¼<sup>+</sup> inch honey, add juniper, lime juice & slices, plus ¼<sup>+</sup> cup starter culture. Fill with UNchlorinated water, cap tightly, set out 24 – 72 hours, only, until bubbly. Use right away! Make more when needed, 2-3 days in advance. May add other bitters before serving, if desired - see above...]

# ***Celebrate the Bitters***

**Bitters make life worth waking up for!**  
(& helpful with stress management...)

## **The Goldilocks Stress Principle:**

**Too Muchness = damages**  
**Not Enough = weakens & stagnates**  
**Just Right = challenge, change & resiliency**



***BITTER ARE THE LESSONS IN LIFE...***

***AND THE PLANTS that teach our body how to go with the flow, adjust, adapt & evolve with the changes in our environment (especially local!)***

## **PLANTS COMMUNICATE CHEMICALLY:**

Clues include 6 or 7 or more Basic Tastes (how do YOU interpret them?)

|       |               |
|-------|---------------|
| Sweet | Pungent/Spicy |
| Sour  | Savory        |
| Salty | Astringent    |

Bitter = the most diverse with 20 subdivisions  
& over 100 unrelated chemicals...

## **WHAT DO BITTERS DO FOR US?**

- general health & well being
- healthy eating habits (less snacking)
- stimulation of normal body processes (through nerve & hormone responses)
- optimal gut function & natural detox
- nutrient absorption (mineral rich!)

## **THEY PROMOTE:**

- metabolic function (incl. blood sugar balance)
- cardiovascular performance
- internal organ tone & skin health
- healthy molecular electrical charges
- grounds us to the present moment (& reconnects the brain & gut)



Information compiled by Carol Jacobs, Herbalus Educatorus, gramherb@hotmail.com



## COMMONLY USED BITTERS

Barberry  
Boneset  
Burdock  
Chamomile  
Dandelion

Gentian  
Goldenseal  
Mugwort  
Wormwood  
Yellowdock  
Yarrow

**Many wild greens** used as food are very mild and need no special treatment, but the strong ones may taste better cooked by the following method:

1. Put greens in a pot and cover with water.
2. Bring to a boil, turn down heat and gently simmer for a few minutes.
3. Strain off liquid and cover with fresh water.
4. Bring to a boil again, simmer a few more minutes.
5. Pour off liquid and taste the greens.
6. If the greens are still too bitter to serve, repeat the steps again until palatable.

### DANDELION COFFEE

Grind fresh, washed roots, rinse again; spread on cookie sheet & bake @250° until roasted, stirring frequently & watching carefully so they don't burn!!! Smells good when close to being done. Cool & store in glass jar with lid to preserve flavor & aroma.

Use 1 heaping TBLS per cup of water; simmer gently for 15-20 minutes; serve plain or with honey, maple syrup, cream or coconut milk



### YELLOWDOCK SYRUP

8 oz minced root  
1 qt water  
raw honey

\*Simmer (low heat) yellowdock rt & water until reduced in volume (1 to 2 pints liquid left); strain & cool somewhat; add an equal amount of honey & mix well. Take 1 to 2 TBLS with meals, 1 or 2 times daily. Store in refrigerator. OK for pregnancy.

# **BITTERS**

## BY THE SEASON



## **Autumn**

### **APPLE BITTERS**

Organic apple peels  
(from up to 6 apples)  
Zest of organic lemon  
1 to 2 cinnamon sticks  
¼ to ½ tsp allspice berries  
⅛ to ¼ tsp coriander seeds  
¼ to ½ tsp cassia chips  
¼ to ½ tsp cinchona bark  
2 to 4 whole cloves  
1 to 2 cups high proof bourbon  
(or whatever is on hand...)

(use small amounts for a small jar,  
Use larger amounts for a larger jar...)

### **PEAR BITTERS**

3 pears, cored & chopped  
Zest of a lemon  
1 cinnamon stick  
¼ tsp allspice berries  
¼ tsp black peppercorns  
½ tsp cinchona bark  
¼ tsp calamus root  
4 whole cloves  
1 vanilla bean, cut & scraped  
3-inches of fresh ginger, chopped  
2 cups or more high proof vodka

**Directions:** similar to Apple Bitters

**Syrup:** see Apple Bitters recipe

**Directions:** place c/s (cut & sifted)  
herbs in jar, pour bourbon over them  
– add more if needed to cover herbs.  
Close up with a tight fitting lid.

Store in dark cupboard for two weeks,  
shaking every day. Strain.

**Syrup:** simmer strained herbs in 1 cup  
water over medium heat for 10 min;  
(optional: some recipes let this mixture  
sit one week in a covered jar)  
Strain again, add 1 to 2 cups sugar or honey  
& mix thoroughly. Use as is or add by the  
spoonful to bitters (above) or to mixed  
drinks.

### **INTERESTING BOOKS:**

#### Wild Medicine Solution

– Guido Mase

#### A Spirited History of a Classic Cure All

– Brad Thomas

#### The Drunken Botanist

– Amy Stewart

# Winter

## A VALENTINE BITTER

2 tbsp dried orange peel  
zest of 1 orange  
1/4 cup sour cherries (or wild from freezer?)  
2 cinnamon sticks  
1 vanilla bean- split & seeds scraped  
1/4 tsp cloves  
1/4 cup quassia chips  
2 juniper berries  
1/8 tsp cocoa nibs (or more)  
pinch of black walnut leaf  
1/2 tsp cinchona (quinine)  
1/4 tsp wild cherry bark  
1/4 tsp orris root  
(Optional: 5 cracked cardomon pods???)

2 cups or so of the rye  
(add more if needed to cover herbs)

Cover the jar and store at room temperature  
for two weeks.

shake the jar 1-3 times a day for two weeks

### Later, a Rich Syrup:

(made with the dregs after straining)

2 cups turbinado sugar  
1 1/2 cups water

Simmer the solids strained from the rye & herb soak  
for 10 minutes, add sugar & water, stir & just bring  
back to a boil, take off heat & let cool, then strain.  
It should be somewhat thick. It should last 1 month  
in the refrigerator. Optional: add 2 or more TBLS to  
the bitters formula...

## Notes:

