



CULIVATING MENOPAUSE

*Using Herbal Remedies to Address
Inequalities Affecting Women's
Reproductive Health*

*A series of workshops created by
Goldsmiths Department of
Anthropology. Conducted in
collaboration with Together Better
Hackney and Hackney School of Food*

CONTENTS

<i>A Note from the Team</i>	1
<i>Herbs ... And their Benefits</i>	3
<i>Around the Garden</i>	6
<i>Recipes: Simple and Adaptable</i>	8



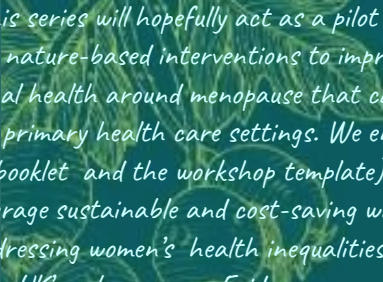
A NOTE from the Team

Hello there,

We created this booklet with the participants of the Cultivating Menopause project that we ran at the Hackney School of Food in May and June 2025. The aim of this project was to identify ways to co-create and incorporate accessible knowledge about the use of herbal remedies helping with common negative symptoms of menopause. The activities can be used part of 'Green Social Prescribing' (GSP) in everyday context by GP practices and community groups.

We started by exploring different traditional ideas about which herbs would help with symptoms in multiple contexts. This was followed by a walk through the garden to identify the local herbs growing there. These herbs were used in a facial spray using different essential oils from many of the herbs growing in the garden, as well as in and around the UK.

We then had some taught cooking sessions using the herbs that have beneficial effects, harvested by participants from the garden. We cooked together and shared delicious food, which added to a wonderful social experience...



... This series will hopefully act as a pilot to develop simple and low-key nature-based interventions to improve women's mental and physical health around menopause that can be implemented at home or in primary health care settings. We envisage that the resources (the booklet and the workshop template) can be shared widely and encourage sustainable and cost-saving ways to engage communities in addressing women's health inequalities by reflecting the diversity of the UK's urban areas. Evidence suggests that culturally specific interventions in reproductive health including menopause can be created by focusing on the principle of 'what matters to you' conversations that form part of any participatory ethnographically informed research. We are extremely grateful to our amazing participants and those who taught us about herbs and their benefits as well as cooking the delicious recipes we are sharing here.

Special thanks go to Goldsmiths' for providing ECRK funding and the Hackney School of Food, Tom Fearon from Together Better Hackney, as well as Sarah Ramadhita, Goldsmiths.

Henrike Donner, June 2025.



HERBS

... And their Benefits



SAGE

BENEFITS

Helps with hot flashes and night sweats

It is energizing and helps with alertness

As an aromatic herb, it helps with digestion and release of gas



LEMONBALM

BENEFITS

A natural insect repellent.

It has calming effects and helps with sleep.

Uplifting and soothing, helps to relieve headaches and migraines.



PEPPERMINT

BENEFITS

Peppermint has cooling properties, which can alleviate hot flashes.

It potentially relieves digestive issues and tension headaches.

It is often taken as a tea or aromatherapy.



CHAMOMILE

BENEFITS

Promotes relaxation and restful sleep

Helps to calm irritability, nervousness and tension headaches



AROUND the Garden





The background is a solid teal color. In the upper right, there is a dark silhouette of an olive branch with several olives. In the lower left, there is a close-up photograph of a bundle of fresh green herbs, likely sage, with small white flowers.

RECIPES

Simple and Adaptable

** All recipes are for a serving of 1*

SAGE TEA



BENEFITS

Helps with hot flashes and night sweats

It is energizing and helps with alertness

As an aromatic herb, it helps with digestion and release of gas

INGREDIENTS

3-4 sage leaves

Hot water

Optional: sugar, honey, agave

Tips:

You can replicate this with similar herbs (rosemary, peppermint) for the same effects.

Cool it down and add ice for hot weather.



HERBAL COOLING SPRAY



PROCESS

1. Add 20ml distilled water
2. Add 8 drops of your chosen essential oils to water
3. Add aloe vera gel to fill the bottle
4. Shake to combine

*Tips: No more than 2 different oils.
Use a dark container/bottle to
protect essential oils*

INGREDIENTS

50ml bottle
20ml Distilled water
[water that has been purified to
remove all impurities, leaving
behind pure H₂O.]

Aloe vera gel

Essential oils of your choice

*Tips: Use a dark container/bottle
to protect essential oils*





FOCCACCIA



INGREDIENTS

- 100g Bread Flour
- 1.25g Yeast
- ½ tsp Salt
- 1/tbsp Oil
- 70-80 ml Warm Water
- SPRIG of your Herb of Choice
(Sage, Rosemary etc.)

PROCESS

1. Mix flour, salt and yeast into mixing bowl, make a well and pour in the oil and warm water gradually until you have a slightly sticky dough
2. Lightly flour the work surface and knead the dough lightly until it is soft and less sticky
3. Add 1tsp of oil into the tin, then add the focaccia dough
4. Add the herbs, a pinch of salt and 1tsp of oil
5. Leave to prove for 30-45 mins
6. Bake in the oven for 13-15 mins at 200C



CREAMY SPINACH BEANS



INGREDIENTS

- ½ White Onion*
- ½ Carrot*
- ½ Celery Stick*
- 400g – 1 tin White Beans*
- 250ml Vegetable Stock*
- 1-2 Garlic Clove(s)*
- ½ Lemon Zest*
- Lemon Juice*
- 70g Spinach/Kale*
- Sprig of Organo and Thyme*
- Salt and Pepper (to taste)*

PROCESS

- 1. Dice the onion, carrots and celery and finely crush the Garlic*
- 2. Heat oil in a pan, then add the onions, celery and carrots and sautee for 5-8 minutes, until they start softening*
- 3. Add the crushed garlic, oregano & thyme and fry until fragrant*
- 4. Pour the beans to the pan, stirring them into the veg.*
- 5. Use the back of a spoon to crush a quarter of the beans into a paste, thickening the creamy beans*
- 6. Add the vegetable stock and leave to simmer for 10 minutes while you make the pesto.*



SAGE PESTO



INGREDIENTS

- 8-10 Sage Leaves
- 2-3 Sprigs of Chives
- 1-2 Garlic Clove(s)
- 15g Parmesan Cheese
- 10g Sunflower Seeds
- Squeeze of Lemon
- 3 tbsp Olive Oil
- ¼ tsp Salt

PROCESS

1. Place the sage, chives, garlic and salt into the pestle and mortar and smash into a paste.
2. Next add the sunflower seeds and continue to grind.
3. Mix in the olive oil and the lemon juice then season to taste.
4. Serve the cream spinach beans with the pesto swirled through and the focaccia bread.



AUBERGINE and MINT SALAD



PROCESS

1. Slice the aubergines lengthways, roughly 5mm thick, brush each side with olive oil and season with salt and pepper
2. Finely crush the garlic and roughly tear or chop the mint.



INGREDIENTS

1 Aubergine
1 tbsp Olive Oil
Pinch of Salt
Pinch of Pepper

Dressing

1-2 Garlic Clove(s)
½ tsp White Wine Vinegar
½ tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
¼ tsp Sugar
2 tbsp Olive Oil
Handful of Mint

AUBERGINE and MINT SALAD

PROCESS Cont ...

3. Whisk all the dressing ingredients together and set aside.
4. Heat the frying or griddle pan until very hot.



5. Fry the aubergines until they get a good deep golden brown on each side, then turn the heat down until they are cooked through.
6. Place the aubergines on a plate and drizzle over the dressing whilst still hot.

TABBOULEH



INGREDIENTS

- 20g Bulgar Wheat
- 50ml Vegetable Stock
- 1 Tomato
- 1/4 Cucumber
- 1 Spring Onion

- Mint
- Parsley
- Coriander
- 1/6 Pomegranate
- 1/2 Lemon
- 1-2 Garlic Clove(s)
- 3 tbs Olive Oil



TABBOULEH

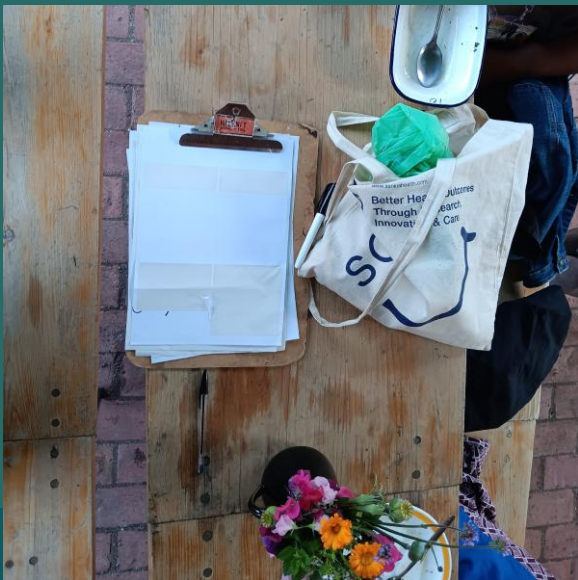


PROCESS

1. Soak the bulgar with the hot vegetable stock
2. Dice the cucumber and tomatoes, finely slice the spring onion.
3. Deseed the pomegranate and place all the salad into the bowl.
4. Finely chop all the herbs.

5. Zest the lemon into the salad.
6. Finely chop the garlic then whisk in the lemon juice and olive oil
7. Fluff up the bulgar wheat and mix it into your chopped salad.
8. Drizzle over the dressing, mix well
9. and serve with the aubergine salad.





*Please share the information
and the booklet and check with
your GP before using herbal
remedies.*