



Wild Conifer Teas

Step 1: Venture outside and locate a pine, cedar, spruce, fir, or hemlock tree who looks healthy and whose needles you can easily reach. Easy-to-ID eastern white pine and northern white cedar are good bets for novices. See below for safety and identification tips.

Step 2: Gather a handful or two of needles from the tree. Be careful – some of them can be pokey!

Step 3: Boil a quart or so of water.

Step 4: Pour the water over the needles, cover, and let steep for 10-20 minutes.

Optional steps: Strain out the needles; sweeten with a bit of maple syrup or honey.

Experiment with different conifer species and concentrations or make your own conifer tea blend with several species!

Safety Tips:

- Be careful to only take as many needles as you need to make your tea.
- As with all foraging, never consume something unless you are 100% sure what it is! All native conifers are completely safe to consume in tea (and in fact boast more vitamin C than oranges), but yew, a nonnative, low-growing conifer that is sometimes planted as an ornamental in yard and gardens, is toxic.
- Some may be alarmed at the idea of consuming hemlock tea, but the eastern hemlock tree (*Tsuga canadensis*) is entirely unrelated to poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), which superficially resembles Queen Anne's lace. Eastern hemlock tea is delicious!

Tea Trees for Beginners:



Eastern white pine: 5 long, flexible needles per bundle; common; grows in a variety of habitats



Northern white cedar: needles grow in flattened scales that resemble braids; common; grows in wet habitats, like near streams