



Herbalism

80% of the World's population still rely on plants as their main source of medicine. People in different countries use different herbs (according to what grows locally) - they also have different traditions and beliefs around healing. Here are some of the main systems of herbal medicine....

Ayurveda

An East Indian System over 5000 years old. Means 'the science of life' and is an all-encompassing approach to living.

Includes consideration of how environment, diet, lifestyle etc affect health.

Every individual has a dominant constitution or 'dosha' (Vata, Pitta or Kapha) - herbs & treatment are chosen not just for their **specific actions** (eg a cough relieving herb) but for their **'energetic properties'** (eg hot, cold, dry) and how these will affect a person's dosha.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Has the same roots as Ayurveda. Also considers lifestyle and diet an integral part of healing, and prescribes herbs which have the right 'energy' for the person.

Herbs are almost never prescribed singularly but instead are given in combinations (formulas). There are hundreds of these, with hundreds more variations of each!

Western Herbal Medicine

Eastern healers also influenced the medicine system of ancient Greece, and the **four humours** (Earth, Air, Water, Fire) formed the basis for assessing constitution and treating disease in western (herbal) medicine for many years.

Today western herbal medicine has moved away from this approach. Herbs are used to treat a condition or a disease but they are not necessarily varied according to the patients' constitution. More emphasis is also placed on the chemicals in the herb.

Others include....

Native American, Tibetan and Japanese Traditional Medicine systems.

AND FINALLY... None of these systems have grown in isolation. There are many crossovers with shared herbs and beliefs. There are also many different schools of thought in each system; some people say there are as many types of herbalism as there are herbalists.