



TEMPLE VESPERITAS

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Vesperian Flying Ointment Recipe

Among the most enduring elements of European witchcraft folklore is the notion of the *flying ointment*—a salve or unguent believed to enable witches to traverse great distances through the air, often to attend sabbats or clandestine gatherings with the Devil. These ointments, deeply rooted in both herbalism and esoteric practice, reveal the intersection of pharmacology, folklore, and mystical experience in the early modern imagination. It is important to understand the historical relevance of flying ointments before undertaking construction of the Vesperian Flying Ointment.

The earliest recorded mentions of flying ointments appear in late medieval inquisitorial texts and early modern trial records, particularly from 15th to 17th century Europe. While their descriptions vary, a recurring theme involves witches applying a salve to their skin (or, more specifically, their genitalia or underarms), after which they would experience vivid sensations of flight or transformation.

One of the clearest references appears in the 15th-century *Witches' Hammer* (*Malleus Maleficarum*, 1487), where inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger mention witches using “unguents and concoctions” to fly to sabbats. The *Compendium Maleficarum* (1608), by Francesco Maria Guazzo, includes woodcut illustrations of witches preparing and using such ointments[1].

The recipes for flying ointments were rarely recorded by the accused—most were reconstructed by inquisitors or physicians. Nonetheless, modern analysis of folkloric and alchemical texts suggests that the active ingredients were typically tropane alkaloid-containing plants, including:

- *Atropa belladonna* (Deadly Nightshade)
- *Datura stramonium* (Jimsonweed)
- *Hyoscyamus niger* (Henbane)

- Mandragora officinarum (Mandrake)
- Aconitum (Monkshood)
- Conium maculatum (Hemlock)

These plants are known to induce hallucinations, delirium, and sensations of flight or weightlessness when absorbed through the skin in small doses. Tropane alkaloids such as atropine, hyoscyamine, and scopolamine, act on the central nervous system and produce out-of-body sensations, often interpreted in pre-modern contexts as spiritual journeys.

Do NOT ingest these herbs, they are toxic. While it is often tempting for the novice to try to reconstruct a traditional ointment using these herbs, doing so is *extremely* misguided and unwise. These herbs are far too dangerous for inexperienced handling. For this reason, the Vesperian ointment makes use of safer herbs that may still have a potent spiritual effect.

Crucially, many of these traditional ointments were fat-based, often using rendered animal fat or plant-based oils to aid in transdermal absorption. The use of mucous membranes (i.e., application to the genitals or anus via a broomstick or phallic object) likely enhanced absorption, explaining the infamous association between witches and “riding broomsticks.” Though this is often taken out of context and reduced to a sexualized caricature, the method is pharmacologically plausible given the nature of the substances involved.

While early modern inquisitors dismissed such practices as satanic delusion or demonic trickery, modern interpretations suggest these ointments were likely part of a shamanic survival in European folk magic. The *flight* experienced by witches may have mirrored astral projection, spirit journeying, or lucid dreaming states induced by entheogens—paralleling indigenous trance traditions worldwide.

In her landmark study *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, Barbara Ehrenreich argued that women’s knowledge of herbs and traditional medicine—including such unguents—was deliberately suppressed by Church and State as part of a larger campaign to marginalize female healers[3].

Recipe

The following recipe is intended to construct a modern Witch’s Flying Ointment that is safe for consumption while also introducing relaxing and, in some cases, mildly hallucinogenic effects. This recipe is safer than most historical brews, with their toxic herbs that risk drastic health effects. While this won’t be as intense as traditional flying ointments, it can still help you enter a visionary or shamanic state with mild psychoactive effects, especially when paired with ritual.

When considering dosage, please take into consideration your own biometrics (size, weight, metabolism, possible allergies, etc) before consuming.

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Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon dried Blue Lotus (*Nymphaea caerulea*)
- 1 tablespoon dried Wild Dagga (*Leonotis leonurus*)
- 1 tablespoon dried Calea Zacatechichi (Dream Herb)
- 1 tablespoon dried Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)
- 1 cup of coconut oil or olive oil.
- 1 tablespoon beeswax (optional, for thickness)
- 2-3 drops Palo Santo essential oil or moon water (optional)
- A pinch of grated nutmeg (optional)

Materials Needed

- Small saucepan or double boiler.
- Cheesecloth or fine strainer.
- Small glass jar with a lid.
- Wooden spoon or stirring utensil.
- Measuring spoon.

Step One – Prepare the Herbs

- Measure 1 tablespoon of each dried herb.
- Place all herbs in a small bowl, and gently crush them with your fingers to release their natural oils.

Step Two – Infuse the Oil

- Pour 1 cup of coconut or olive oil into a small saucepan. If you have a double boiler, place the oil in the top pot.
- Set your stove to low heat. Let the oil warm up slowly, but don't let it boil.
- Add the prepared herbs to the warm oil.

- Stir gently with a wooden spoon and let the herbs infuse on low heat for 30-60 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure the herbs are well-mixed with the oil.

Step Three – Strain the Herbs

- Turn off the heat and let the oil cool slightly.
- Place a cheesecloth or fine strainer over a clean glass jar.
- Carefully pour the herb-infused oil through the cheesecloth or strainer into the jar, letting the oil drip through to remove the herbs.

Step Four – Thicken the Ointment (Optional)

- If you'd like a thicker consistency, pour the strained oil back into the saucepan and add 1 tablespoon of beeswax. Heat on low, stirring until the beeswax completely melts into the oil.
- Remove from heat once the beeswax is melted.

Step Five – Add Optional Ingredients

- For added effects add a pinch of grated nutmeg to the warm mixture (moon water is great for its energy as well). Stir gently to combine.

Step Six – Store the Ointment

- Carefully pour the finished ointment into a clean glass jar. Let it cool completely, then seal with the lid.
- Store the ointment in a cool, dark place until you're ready to use it.
- I recommend drawing the Vesperian Mark of the Devil (the sigil from the ritual) on the jar.

How to Use

Apply a small amount (about a pea-sized dab) to pulse points such as the wrists, temples, or the soles of the feet. This ointment is best used before meditation or ritual work, and can be used before bedtime to encourage astral projection or lucid dreams.

- Always do a patch test first on a small area of skin to check for any unknown allergies or sensitivities.
- Use sparingly to start, as a small amount goes a long way.
- Do not use on broken or sensitive skin.
- ***Store out of reach of children and pets.***