



# How **TRADITIONAL MEDICINE** Is Practiced Today!

## Understanding Traditional Medicine

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Three quick examples of Traditional Medicine still practiced today:



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Traditional  
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Traditional Chinese  
Medicine



Indian Traditional  
Medicine

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Throughout my childhood, I can remember pots containing water, leaves, and roots boiling away in our kitchen. My mom's Jamaican home remedies included fever grass (aka lemongrass), ginger root, cerasee, and peppermint teas. I later learned that these plants are full of powerful compounds that serve many healing purposes, including anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal and antimicrobial properties.



Fueled by a lifelong curiosity about natural health, in 2002 I became a certified health coach through the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York City. We were trained to isolate aspects of traditional healing modalities and put them together to customize individual wellness protocols. In 2017 when I was diagnosed with Graves' Disease, I decided to draw upon my knowledge of traditional medicine to aid in my recovery. I incorporated milk thistle and dandelion to protect my liver from the damaging effects of my thyroid medication while herbs such as ashwagandha and turmeric helped to battle anxiety and inflammation.

### Here are 3 quick examples of Traditional Medicine still practiced today:

**The San Bushmen** have inhabited Southern Africa for over 20,000 years and are master herbalists. They use the hoodia gordonii plant to successfully suppress appetites while on long hunting expeditions. **Traditional Chinese Medicine** has been in practice for over 3,000 years, dating from the Shang dynasty. This practice includes the use of herbs, acupuncture, and food to treat

ailments emanating from deficiencies of the Qi (or life force energy). **Indian Traditional Medicine** is called Ayurveda in which everyone requires specific herbs and diet to balance doshas and maintain wellness.

The **W.H.O.** defines Traditional Medicine as: "the sum total of the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health..." Traditional doctors have been prescribing plant-based medicines for thousands of years while modern medicine is a fairly new science. Its genesis dating back to the industrial age of the 18th century. But the history of colonialism around the globe is directly associated to our negative understanding of traditional medicine. As colonists grabbed land around the globe, they attempted to squash local traditions and beliefs and imposed their own.

They simply believed that their views on religion and medicine were superior to those of the native doctors they encountered. Unfortunately, these beliefs persist to this day. Although there are purists on both sides, I do believe the traditional and modern can work together for the betterment of the patient and I look forward with great hope, to that bright future.

By Dawn Hewitt, KUOMagazine's Traditional Medicine Journalist

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