

10 Great Uses for Vodka - The Strong Spirit Can Help You Save Money and Reduce Chemicals

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Vodka has been enjoyed since at least the early Middle Ages, and is well known as one of the world's most popular spirits. Its versatility in mixing and high alcohol content have made it extremely popular in cocktails, and it is still widely enjoyed 'neat' (straight up) in much of Eastern and Northern Europe.

Vodka also has a long history of use as medicine, having been sold by druggists to cure everything from infertility to colic and the plague. While some of those historic promoters were half-cocked, it's true that vodka has a wide range of potential uses beyond serving as a relaxer and social lubricant.

Why would you want to do anything else with vodka but drink it? It is widely available, effective and less toxic than many of the chemical alternatives you might use for these tasks.

Make a Soothing Tincture - THIS IS AWESOME!

Do you find the scent of lavender soothing? Did you know that herbalists have used it for generations to ease aches and pains? Here's a fun DIY tip:

Fill a clean glass jar with fresh lavender flowers, then top off with vodka. Seal the lid tightly and place in the sun for three days (same idea as making sun tea!).

Strain the resulting liquid through a coffee filter, and poof! You have a homemade tincture to rub into aches and pains. You can pour into smaller bottles, decorate them, and give them as unique gifts

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Clean Away Mold

Got mold? The stuff spreads easily and can severely diminish indoor air quality. Unless you are shacking up with the Crypt Keeper, who wants to look at those grimy dark stains that build up on caulking (sometimes even on mold-resistant varieties)?

But instead of harsh chemical sprays, try filling a recycled spray bottle with some bottom-shelf vodka.

Spritz on, then let sit for 15 minutes. Scrub away with an old toothbrush (please don't use your sister's)

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Defeat Poison Ivy

For many, one of the hazards of enjoying the great outdoors is an encounter with poison ivy, oak or sumac. It can lead to a nasty, long-lasting rash. Unfortunately, the plants are spreading thanks to global warming.

Many people have reported that if they immediately pour vodka over an area that has contacted poison ivy, the alcohol will wash away the culprit urushiol oil, and they won't experience an uncomfortable reaction. Some have said that the vodka needs to be at least 100 proof to work.

Others have argued that straight rubbing alcohol works better, but we're guessing you may not have that as handy if you are on your average picnic.

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Soothe Jellyfish Stings

Jellyfish are fascinating, beautiful sea creatures. But their stingers can pack a powerful, painful punch.

For vegetarians and others who don't travel with meat tenderizer (or who don't feel comfortable asking friends to, um, relieve the pain) take heart. Vodka can also disinfect and alleviate some of the bite of a jellyfish sting

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Do Battle with Insects

Unless you are intent on proving how 'hardcore' you are, or have a bizarre fetish, you probably don't enjoy getting feasted on by insects. But you've read media reports questioning the safety of DEET-based repellents, and you are pretty sure you don't want to take the risk of spraying yourself in the face with poisonous bug killers.

Who knew that vodka can kill pesky insects, as well as nagging doubts at the bar? Pour a little of the saucy spirit in a spray bottle and squirt on the little buggers, or yourself as a repellent. But please don't take aim at any beneficial bees!

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Get Great, Shiny Hair

Vodka doesn't just make you think people look prettier. It actually can *make* people prettier. How?

Try this remedy for healthier, lush hair: Add a jigger of vodka to a 12-ounce bottle of shampoo.

Tell Billy Madison that vodka is better than both shampoo *and* conditioner

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Ease a Toothache

Got a toothache? Your first priority should be to see a dentist. But sometimes you can't get an appointment right away, or the professionals tell you it will just have to heal on its own.

In that case, try swishing a shot of vodka over the affected area. It can help disinfect, and should numb some of the pain in your gums. Just beware that your honey may accuse you of smelling like a saloon.

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Get Your Shine On

It's easy to get your chrome, glass and porcelain fixtures shining like the top of the Chrysler Building. Guess what does the trick?

Moisten a soft, clean cloth with vodka, then apply a little elbow grease.

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Freshen Laundry

The only people I know who like doing laundry have OCD. If you find the task calming, that's great. But the rest of us would prefer to wear clothes as much as possible without having to count quarters or lug baskets up and down stairs.

Keep your clothes smelling fresher with vodka! Simply spritz your duds with the stuff, then hang to dry in a well-ventilated area. (Do a spot-test first to be safe.)

Vodka kills odor-causing bacteria, but doesn't leave a scent when dry.

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Preserve Flowers

If vodka can help you find love, then it can also help you preserve it -- or at least the symbols of it.

Add a few drops of vodka and a teaspoon of sugar to the water in your flower vase. It should help keep your flowers fresh longer. Change out the mixture with fresh ingredients daily.

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