

# An Alaska Herb Garden

Recipes and growing tips for enjoying your herb garden



anise hyssop



arugula



basil



borage



calendula



chervil



chives



cilantro



dill



lemon balm



lemon verbena



lovage



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Recipes and growing tips for enjoying  
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**FNH-00026**



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Published by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The University of Alaska Fairbanks is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution.

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2014/MM/11-14

**New November 2014**

This book is dedicated to Barbara Fay, who has spent her life growing, preserving and cooking with herbs in Alaska. Her years as an herb researcher at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Georgeson Botanical Garden and at her own garden yielded the data we used in creating this book. She generously shared her notes and class materials to help us create the framework for *An Alaska Herb Garden*.



## **Contributors**

A number of people contributed to this book. The information in Chapter 1, Cultivating Herbs, came from Pat Holloway, professor of horticulture and director of the Georgeson Botanical Garden, and Grant Matheke, retired horticulturist, University of Alaska Fairbanks. They spent many years studying herb cultivation and have generously contributed their data and knowledge to this publication.

Roxie Rodgers Dinstel and Marsha Munsell, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, and Virginia Damron, horticulturalist and herb enthusiast, compiled the information, tested recipes and provided editorial assistance.

Many thanks to all of the contributors. Without them, this book would never have been written.

# Contents

Cultivating Herbs .....	1
Harvesting Herbs.....	17
Storing Fresh Herbs.....	21
Using Herbs.....	29
Recipe Index.....	67





# cultivating herbs

Herbs grown in Alaska include outdoor garden herbs, herbs grown in protected cultivation (raised beds, containers, greenhouses, high tunnels) and indoor garden herbs. The biggest difference in Alaska herb gardens compared to gardens at lower latitudes is winter survival. Many herbs listed as perennials in garden catalogs cannot tolerate the long, cold winters in Alaska. Herbs used in a perennial outdoor garden in warmer climates might be relegated to pots or a windowsill garden with supplemental lights in Alaska (there is not enough natural light for a windowsill garden in the winter). The well-known Elizabethan knot gardens are challenging to establish in Alaska because the herbs traditionally used in the designs are not hardy. Despite the challenges, however, Alaskans can enjoy a bounty of culinary herbs both outdoors and indoors, and by using recommended preservation techniques, herbs can be enjoyed year-round.

## propagating herbs

Many common herbs, such as oregano, basil, coriander and sage, are propagated easily by seeds that are available from commercial sources and may be started year-round for indoor and outdoor gardens. Other herbs, such as thyme and some mints, are propagated by cuttings or division. Tarragon sold as seed is Russian tarragon, which is worthless as a culinary herb. Only cutting-propagated French



### What we get out of the herb

in the way of flavor and aroma depends on the care and nurturing we give to the plant:

- propagation
- care and maintenance
- how we harvest it
- how we preserve it
- how we store it
- the care we take when we cook with it

From seed to table there are many opportunities to enhance or destroy flavor.

tarragon should be grown. True peppermint rarely produces viable seeds, so it is propagated mostly by stem cuttings and rhizomes (underground spreading stems). Some English thyme plants produce only female flowers. Seeds from these plants can be highly variable because of cross-pollination with related species.

Rooted plants are expensive to purchase and ship, so many gardeners purchase one plant and propagate it by cuttings to keep it alive for many years. Some perennial herbs have been selected for specific qualities (e.g., dwarf growth habit, length of time to blooming, variegated foliage). These cultivated varieties, or cultivars, have been given names such as 'Purple Carpet' thyme. Cultivars must be propagated by cuttings to maintain their unique horticultural characteristics. However, other herbs such as lavender, rosemary and lemon balm can be started from seed, but once they are established, they are easily propagated by

cuttings to get more plants or share with friends.

## seed propagation

Only a handful of herbs can be directly sown in Alaska gardens because the season is too short for optimum growth. Some herbs, however, can be directly sown in greenhouses and high tunnels or beneath row covers, all of which extend the season several weeks or months. Plants that barely grow to bloom stage in outdoor beds may self sow prolifically in greenhouse beds. Wild herbs in Alaska such as lambsquarters (*Chenopodium album*), wild chamomile (*Matricaria matricarioides*) and wild chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) complete their life cycle so rapidly they may self sow outdoors, and they are easy to direct sow in fall or spring.

Most herbs for outdoor gardens are sown indoors and transplanted after the threat of frost has passed. Seed-propagated herbs require 5 to 20 weeks of indoor growth (Table 1), and most herbs germinate easily given a warm, moist, well-lighted environment.

Containers for seed starting include cleaned and sterilized flats, pots, cell packs or tiny plug trays that hold 1 or 2 seeds per plug. Soak used containers for 30 minutes in a 10 percent bleach solution, rinse and thoroughly air dry before sowing. A commercial soilless peat-vermiculite/perlite seed starting mix works best for germinating herb seeds because it is sterile, allows great drainage and is fine enough so tiny seeds do not get buried too deeply. Make your own mix by combining sphagnum peat and vermiculite (equal parts by volume) and sieving it through a fine screen to create a very fine sowing surface. Test the pH; if it is too acid, add dolomitic lime, hardwood ash or bone

meal, then retest the pH over several days until pH 6.5 is reached.

Moisten the mix and then sow the seeds, covering them with 2 to 4 times their thickness unless they require light (Table 1). Small seeds should be sown on the surface of the medium. Alternatively, use a thin covering of silvery horticultural-grade vermiculite instead of seeding mix to provide a visual reminder that a container has been sown. Mist the surface of the medium to prevent washing the seeds below the surface. Avoid pressing the surface with your hands to minimize contamination. Keep the soil moist but not wet. To prevent drying, cover containers or flats with clear plastic wrap, rigid plastic or glass until the seeds germinate.

Indoor sowing requires good light. Fluorescent shop lights timed for 16 to 20 hours of light per day and suspended 4 to 6 inches above the top of the container are usually sufficient. Suspend the lights on chains that can be raised as the seedlings grow to allow sufficient light and minimize legginess. Many people place seedling flats in front of a south-facing window, but — especially in areas with plenty of spring sunshine — they often find the seedlings are tall and leggy even in great light. The culprit is heat. Air temperatures adjacent to windows can often rise to 80°F and higher on sunny spring days. The heat causes the seedlings to stretch and become weak, making transplanting difficult.

Leave seedlings in the seed-starting mix until the first true leaves appear, then transplant them into a sterile potting mix. Allow the seeding mix to dry on the surface to facilitate teasing apart individual seedlings and minimize root damage. Seedlings

should not be grown or held in the seed starting mix beyond their transplant date. It holds too much moisture for good growth, and roots form a tangled mess that makes separating the seedlings difficult. Leftover seedlings that are not transplanted can be used like sprouts in cooking.

Commercial soilless potting mixes work well for most herbs, but they can also be made from topsoil, well-rotted compost and commercial perlite (see “herbs in containers, cold frames, raised beds and green-houses”). Perlite can be eliminated, but watch the watering. The perlite helps with drainage. Homemade mixes require pH adjustment to 6.5 as well as pasteurization in ovens to an internal temperature of 180°F for 30 minutes. Place moistened potting mix in a baking tray and cover with foil. Insert an oven-safe thermometer into the center of the mix and bake at low temperatures until the thermometer reaches 180°F. Keep at that temperature for 30 minutes.

Cool soil and use for transplants.

Many soilless, peat-lite potting mixes have a fertilizer additive, so seedlings may not need fertilizer for the first 2 weeks after transplanting. Seedlings require a complete soluble fertilizer with a nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium level of 15-16-17 or 5-10-5 or a commercial houseplant fertilizer.

Follow the commercial package directions for rates and frequency. Maintain high light levels and an air temperature of 60° to 68°F.

One week before planting, harden off seedlings gradually by exposing them to outdoor light levels, drying breezes and cool air temperatures. Begin by setting flats outdoors in full sun for 2 hours on the first day, 4 hours the second day, 6 hours on the third day and 8 hours on the fourth day. On the fifth day, flats can remain outdoors, protected from late season frost if necessary. In hot, sunny weather, start with 1 hour outdoors and increase by 2 hours daily.

**Table 1. Seed germination of culinary herbs**

Weeks to transplant*	Name	Temp (F)**	Days to germination	Comments
20	Lavender <i>Lavandula</i> spp.	70, 40, 70	15–20	Warm stratification 2 weeks,*** cold stratification 4 weeks, then back to warm for germination; seed heavily.
17	Calamint <i>Calamintha nepeta</i>	68	1–5	If no germination in 3–4 weeks, cold stratify 2–4 weeks, then try again.
15	Lemongrass <i>Cymbopogon flexuosus</i>	68	10–90	Slow and erratic germination; needs light for germination; mostly propagated by division.
15	Stevia <i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>	75	10+	Germination can be slow and erratic.
13	Caraway <i>Carum carvi</i>	70–72	10–15	May be directly sown in fall or spring in mild regions.
13	Cicely, sweet <i>Myrrhis odorata</i>	65	14–42	Cold stratify 2–4 months.
13	Lovage, black <i>Smyrnium olisatrum</i>	70, 40, 70	28–42	Warm 3 months, cold 2–3 months, then return to warm for germination.

12	Chives, garlic, Chinese leek <i>Allium tuberosum</i>	60–70	10–14	Transplant singly.
12	Welsh onions <i>Allium fistulosum</i>	60–70	10–14	Transplant singly.
12	German garlic, flat-leaf onion <i>Allium senescens</i>	60–70	10–14	Transplant singly.
12	Chives <i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>	60–70	10–14	Transplant in clumps; will self sow in the garden.
12	Dianthus, carnation <i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	70–75	10–14	
12	Fennel <i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	68–72	7–10	If harvesting leaves, sow every 2 weeks; does not mature seeds except in greenhouse/high tunnels in warm locations.
12	Vietnamese coriander, Rau Ram <i>Polygonum odoratum</i> ( <i>Persicaria odorata</i> )	72	21–60	Poor germination; many seeds may be empty. Better propagated by cuttings.
11	Ajmur, Indian celery <i>Trachyspermum</i> ( <i>Carum</i> ) <i>roxburghianum</i>	70–75	21–25	May take up to 1 month to complete germination.
11	Ajwain, Ajowan, Bishop's weed, <i>Trachyspermum ammi</i> ( <i>Carum copticum</i> )	70	12+	May take up to 1 month to complete germination.
11	Rosemary <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	55	18–21	
11	Sweet mace, Mexican mint marigold <i>Tagetes lucida</i>	68–77	7–21	Cover lightly.
10	Cilantro, coriander <i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	70	10–14	Grown as cilantro: goes to seed rapidly so it is best direct seeded in plantings every 2 weeks. Grown for the seed: best started as transplants.
10	Pansy <i>Viola x wittrockiana</i>	65–75	10–20	Sow fresh seeds for best results.
10	Perilla, shiso <i>Perilla frutescens</i>	70	15–20	Needs light for germination.
10	Garland chrysanthemum, Shungiku <i>Chrysanthemum coronarium</i>	68–70	10–18	
10	Spearmint <i>Mentha piperita</i>	68–70	10–14	
10	Sweet woodruff <i>Asperula odorata</i>	70	4–8	Use fresh seeds only; old seeds need cold stratification of up to 1 year.
10	Verbena, lemon <i>Aloysia tryphylla</i>	70	30+	Difficult from seed; needs light for germination; better propagated by cuttings.
10	Viola <i>Viola spp.</i>	65–75	10–20	Sow fresh seeds.

9	Anise hyssop <i>Agastache foeniculum</i>	68–86	7	In milder parts of the state can be directly sown in fall or spring.
9	Thyme, common <i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	55	21–30	
9	Thyme, creeping <i>Thymus serpyllum</i>	55–80	5–20	Germinates faster at higher temperatures.
9	Thyme, lemon <i>Thymus citriodorus</i>	55	15–30	Needs light for germination.
8	Bee balm, bergamot <i>Monarda didyma</i>	68–86	7	Transplant at four-true-leaf stage. Perennial in Southcentral, Southeast and southern coastal areas and annual in Interior.
8	Calendula <i>Calendula officinalis</i>	70	5–10	Will self sow in the garden if not deadheaded.
8	Cumin <i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	70–72	10–14	
8	Lemon balm <i>Melissa officinalis</i>	70	14	Needs light for germination.
8	Lovage <i>Levisticum officinalis</i>	60–70	4–18	Can be directly sown in fall or spring in milder parts of the state. Grow as transplants in central and northern areas. Will self sow on warm sites.
8	Love-in-a-mist <i>Nigella sativa</i>	65–70	7–14	Sow heavily directly into cell packs; seeds will mature in the garden if from transplants.
8	Mitsuba <i>Cryptotaenia japonica</i>	77	3–5	
8	Mountain mint <i>Pycnanthemum pilosum</i>	70	7–14	
8	Oregano <i>Origanum vulgare</i>	70	8–14	
8	Parsley, curled & flat leaf <i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	70–75	14–21	Soak seeds in water 24 hours before sowing; germination may take up to 3 weeks for some types.
8	Pennyroyal <i>Mentha pulegium</i>	70	12–16	
8	Sage <i>Salvia officinalis</i>	60–70	14–21	
8	Savory, summer <i>Satureja hortensis</i>	60–70	10–15	Needs light for germination.
8	Savory, winter <i>Satureja montana</i>	60–70	10–15	Needs light for germination.
8	Sweet marjoram <i>Origanum majorana</i>	70	8–15	
7	Salad burnet <i>Sanguisorba minor</i>	70	8–10	
7	Mustard <i>Brassica juncea</i>	70–75	8–10	Will self sow in the garden.

6	Anise <i>Pimpinella anisum</i>	60–70	10–14	
6	Borage <i>Borago officinalis</i>	70	7–10	Can be directly sown in fall or spring; will self sow in the garden. May become weedy in milder areas of the state. Cover seeds very lightly if at all.
6	Chervil <i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i>	60–70	7–14	Can be directly sown and will reseed in the garden.
6	Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	40–80	4–10	Directly sow, fall or spring. Will self sow everywhere. Grow special cultivars from seed.
6	Dill <i>Anethum graveolens</i>	60–70	21–25	Needs light for germination; sow successively every 2 weeks if you want the leaves and seeds; will self sow in greenhouses and gardens in milder parts of the state.
6	Garden cress <i>Lepidium sativum</i>	70	10–14	Will self sow if allowed to go to seed. Sow directly in ground or pots in successive plantings every 2 weeks.
6	Lambsquarters <i>Chenopodium album</i>	70–80	7–10	Directly sow, fall or spring; will self sow in the garden.
6	Strawberry blite <i>Chenopodium capitatum</i>	70–80	10–14	Directly sow in fall or spring; will self sow in the garden.
6	Marigold, signet <i>Tagetes signata</i>	70–75	5–7	
6	Nasturtium <i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	65	7–12	
6	Safflower <i>Carthamnus tinctorius</i>	68–72	5–14	
6	Sorrel <i>Rumex scutatus</i>	65–71	7–11	Will self sow in milder areas and in greenhouses/high tunnels.
5	Chamomile, German <i>Matricaria chamomilla</i>	55–60		Sow in garden or directly into cell packs; very fine seeds, do not cover. Will self sow prolifically in the garden.
5	Mizuna <i>Brassica rapa</i>	70–75	8–10	
4	Arugula <i>Eruca sativa</i>	60–70	5–6	Also direct sow in successive plantings.

\* The sowing time will vary with the germination environment, especially temperature. The weeks listed give the approximate time needed to establish a well-rooted seedling. Choose a planting date and count backwards on the calendar to establish sowing dates.

\*\* The temperature listed is the seeding mix temperature, not the air temperature. Many growers sow seeds on a heating mat at the temperature listed to save energy costs for heating an entire room. Germination temperatures are often warmer than temperatures required for further seedling growth.

\*\*\* Some seeds are dormant and require special warm and/or cold temperatures to remove seed germination inhibitors. In warm stratification, sow seeds as for normal germination. Keep moist; never allow the seeds to dry out. During this time, seed embryos mature but germination may not occur. This warm treatment is often followed by cold stratification. Sow seeds as for normal germination; enclose pot or flat in a plastic bag and place in a refrigerator (not freezer) at approx. 40°F for up to 90 days. Do not allow seeds or mix to dry out. Return to warm room to complete germination.



## vegetative propagation

### stem cuttings

Stem cuttings are the most common method of propagating herbs throughout the year. A simple propagating box is a clear plastic shoebox or storage container with a clear lid that is 6 inches or taller in height. Many kinds and sizes of containers are available, but make sure they have see-through clear (or pale pink or blue) sides and lids. An alternative is a flat with a clear dome lid, but cuttings dry out faster in flats than in boxes. Fill the box or flat with 2 to 3 inches of moistened vermiculite (no standing water).

Pinch or cut off new tip growth when it is about 3 to 5 inches in length. If flowers are present, remove all flowers and flower buds from the cutting. For most herbs, treatment with a rooting powder is not necessary, but it can make rooting faster and more uniform. Herbs that benefit from a rooting hormone treatment include herbs with woody stems such as bay laurel, rosemary and scented geraniums. Remove any leaves from the bottom 1½ inches of stem, treat with rooting powder if necessary, then stick cuttings into the vermiculite, angling the cuttings sideways, if necessary, to fit in the box.

Close the lid and set the box in indirect sunlight or beneath fluorescent shop lights. Avoid hot, south-facing windowsills. Check the box daily. If a lot of condensation forms on the lid, open it a bit for a couple of hours to allow the excess moisture to evaporate. Close the lid again and continue to watch daily. If gray mold forms on the cuttings, there is too much moisture. Open the lid again for an hour or 2, then close it.

A bit of trial and error is required to get the right level of light and moisture.

Most herbs will begin rooting in 2 to 3 weeks. Bay laurels may take up to 1 year. Test for rooting by gently tugging on the cuttings. If there is any resistance, dig beneath the cuttings with your fingers until the cutting is cradled in your hand, then lift the entire cutting out of the box to avoid ripping off the roots. If there are only 1 or 2 roots, replace the cutting in the box. If there are so many roots that the vermiculite cannot be shaken off, the cutting is ready to transplant. Pot the rooted cuttings in a potting mix suitable for houseplants. Harden them off before taking outdoors.

The vermiculite is reusable until it becomes moldy or green with algae. It can then be recycled by mixing it into a houseplant potting mix or placing it in a compost pile or directly into the garden. To reuse plastic boxes, clean, sterilize by soaking for 30 minutes in a 10 percent bleach, rinse and air dry.

A handful of some herbs will root well when stem cuttings are placed in a cup of water. They include basil, some cultivars of lavender, lemon verbena, mints, pineapple sage, rosemary and most scented geraniums. Remove the leaves from the portion of the stem that will be submerged, and keep the cup full of water until ample roots appear in 2 or more weeks. Plants with woody stems, such as scented geraniums and lavender, take much longer to root than the herbaceous basil and mints. Put the cup on a warm windowsill or beneath lights. Pot the rooted cuttings in sterile potting mix and keep moist. Top growth will begin when new roots have become established in the solid medium.

## **root cuttings**

Plants that regenerate from root cuttings include those with thin, fibrous roots as well as those with thick storage roots. They should not be confused with plants that grow from rhizomes, which are underground horizontal stems that look like roots. Select root pieces that are at least 4 inches in length, and plant them in flats with a 2- to 3-inch layer of potting mix used for houseplants (one that does not contain large amounts of bark). Lay the root pieces horizontally, then cover them with at least 2 inches of potting mix. Water the flats and keep them slightly moist at room temperature (65° to 70°F). As with seedlings, bottom heat from a heating mat often speeds up shoot production. Lights are not required until shoots emerge.

When shoots emerge, suspend a bank of fluorescent lights 6 inches above the flats. Root cuttings must regenerate new shoots and new roots, so propagation often takes longer than it does for stem cuttings. Just because shoots form does not mean roots have formed, and without new roots, the cutting often dies. Look for new roots after shoots have formed. If the cutting has big clumps of roots (may only be at one end of the cutting), it is ready to transplant.

Once the shoots are 4 to 6 inches tall and new roots are present, the shoots and root pieces can be removed from the propagating flat and transplanted into larger containers. The connection between these new shoots and the old root is very delicate. Take special care when moving the cuttings to avoid breaking off the shoots. Like seedlings, these plants need to be hardened off for 1 week before planting outdoors.

## **layering**

Layering is a process of regenerating roots on a piece of stem while it is still attached to the mother plant. Many plants layer naturally, producing roots whenever a stem bends to the soil or is naturally buried by leaves or soil. To layer in the garden, select stems at the lower and outer edge of the plant. Remove leaves from a 3- to 4-inch section of the stem that will eventually be buried in the soil. Secure the stem to the soil with a stick, a tent peg or a piece of bent wire or whatever will hold the stem in contact with the soil. Cover with a small amount of soil mounded over the secured stem. The leafy stem tip should be sticking out of the soil. Keep the soils moist. When plants are well rooted beneath the mound, cut off the newly rooted plants and pot in a container of potting soil or move directly to another part of the garden. This process can take 4 weeks or all season in order to get sufficient roots for the plant to survive. In difficult-to-root species, the piece of the stem that is buried can be wounded by scraping off some of the bark. This wound can be dusted with rooting powder to hasten rooting.

Layering is also possible in containerized plants. Choose a pot that is the same height as the pot containing the herb or one that can be elevated so the rims of the pots are nearly level. Fill the new pot with a moistened potting mix, one recommended for houseplants, that does not have large chunks of bark. Repeat the same method of layering outlined above. The main difference in container layering is moisture. The layer in a pot must not be allowed to dry out. The pot can be partly covered with plastic, but the leafy shoot tip should remain exposed. Indoor layering is faster



with a good light source, either natural sunlight or the same fluorescent shop lights used for seed starting. Separate the layered plant from the mother plant when roots are ample as shown by resistance to tugging when you try to pull up the new plant.

### **division, separation of offsets**

Many plants that spread naturally by rhizomes (underground stems), such as mints or those forming large crowns, such as French tarragon, may be divided any time during the nonflowering season. Avoid the heat of midsummer. If the plants are actively growing, cut back the foliage by at least one-half to minimize moisture loss and encourage new growth. Dig up the clump of roots and cut through the entire crown with a sharp blade, shovel or saw. Each division should include enough roots and shoots for continued growth. Discard any dead centers or old, rotten roots. Replant so the roots are the same levels in the soil as they were before they were dug up.

Plants such as chives produce naturally forming lateral shoots that allow the plant to spread. These shoots are easily separated from the mother plant by pulling them apart. Cutting with a shovel or saw is usually not necessary.

**Table 2. Herbs that can be propagated by stem cuttings, root cuttings, layering and division**

#### **Stem Cuttings**

Apple mint	<i>Mentha rotundifolia</i>
Basil	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>
Bay laurel	<i>Laurus nobilis</i> (slow to root)
Bee balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>
French tarragon	<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>
Geranium, lemon-scented	<i>Pelargonium crispum</i>
Geranium, rose-scented	<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i>

Geranium, mint  
Lavender  
Lemon balm  
Oregano  
Pennyroyal  
Peppermint  
Rosemary  
Sage  
Sage, pineapple  
Savory, summer  
Savory, winter  
Spearmint  
Sweet mace (Mexican mint marigold)  
Sweet marjoram  
Sweet woodruff  
Thyme, common  
Thyme, lemon  
Verbena, lemon  
Vietnamese coriander

#### **Root cuttings**

Geranium  
Horseradish

#### **Layering**

Lavender  
Oregano  
Rosemary  
Sage  
Sweet mace (Mexican mint marigold)  
Thyme, creeping  
Thyme, English  
Verbena, lemon

#### **Division, Separation**

Apple mint  
Bee balm  
Chives  
Fennel  
French tarragon  
Garlic  
Garlic, elephant  
Garlic, German, flat-leaf onion  
Lemon balm  
Lemongrass  
Lovage  
Oregano  
Parsley  
Peppermint

*Pelargonium tomentosum*  
*Lavandula* spp.  
*Melissa officinalis*  
*Origanum vulgare*  
*Mentha pulegium*  
*Mentha piperita*  
*Rosmarinus officinalis*  
*Salvia officinalis*  
*Salvia elegans*  
*Satureja hortensis*  
*Satureja montana*  
*Mentha spicata*

*Tagetes lucida*  
*Oreganum majorana*  
*Asperula odorata*  
*Thymus vulgaris*  
*Thymus citriodorus*  
*Aloysia tryphylla*  
*Polygonum odoratum* (*Persicaria odorata*)

*Pelargonium* spp.  
*Armoracea rusticana*

*Lavandula angustifolia*  
*Origanum vulgare*  
*Rosmarinus officinalis*  
*Salvia officinalis*

*Tagetes lucida*  
*Thymus serpyllum*  
*Thymus vulgaris*  
*Aloysia triphylla*

*Mentha rotundifolia*  
*Monarda didyma*  
*Allium schoenoprasum*  
*Foeniculum vulgare*  
*Artemisia dracunculus*  
*Allium sativum*  
*Allium ampeloprasum*

*Allium senescens*  
*Melissa officinalis*  
*Cymbopogon flexuosus*  
*Levisticum officinale*  
*Origanum vulgare*  
*Petroselinum crispum*  
*Mentha piperita*

Pennyroyal	<i>Mentha pulegium</i>
Geranium, lemon-scented	<i>Pelargonium crispum</i>
Geranium, rose-scented	<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i>
Geranium, mint	<i>Pelargonium tomentosum</i>
Peppermint	<i>Mentha piperita</i>
Salad burnet	<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>
Savory, winter	<i>Satureja montana</i>
Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
Spearmint	<i>Mentha spicata</i>
Sweet woodruff	<i>Asperula odorata</i>
Thyme, common	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>
Thyme, lemon	<i>Thymus citriodorus</i>
Vietnamese coriander, rau ram	<i>Polygonum odoratum</i> ( <i>Persicaria odorata</i> )

## growing herbs in the garden

Herbs grow best in warm, sunny locations with well-drained soils and a pH of 6 to 6.5. Although some herbs (horseradish, sweet woodruff) can tolerate wet soils, most will rot or are prone to winterkill in soggy soils. If garden soils are poorly drained, consider growing herbs in raised beds or containers. Herbs are often grown in vegetable and flower gardens, and some of the low-growing perennial herbs work well in rock gardens. Herbs that spread, especially the mints, need to be isolated from other parts of the garden or they can be quite invasive where they are hardy. A trash can or washtub with the bottom cut out, block or rock walls, recycled greenhouse panels and large clay pots buried in the garden all make effective barriers. A barrier at least 12 inches deep is needed to keep most spreading herbs from taking over. Soils should be well cultivated to at least a depth of 8 inches and amended with compost, seaweed or other types of fertilizer. Heavy, clayey or sandy soils need significant amendment with compost or other organic matter for best herb growth. Follow recommendations based on soil test results.

Consider clustering perennial herbs such as French tarragon and lovage to avoid damage from frequent digging and transplanting of annuals. Learn which herbs self sow easily in your area and leave room for some seedlings to sprout. These can be transplanted to expand your herb garden or shared with other gardeners. Plant herbs after they have been hardened off and after the last frost date. Water well for at least 2 weeks to establish the root system.

Summer maintenance in herb gardens involves weeding, flower removal and pruning. Weeds, especially chickweed, can overtake herb beds in a very short period of time. However, chickweed, dandelions and lambsquarters are tasty springtime greens for salads, so the “weedlings” can be eaten rather than thrown out. All weeding should be done by hand rather than with chemical sprays where possible. Only use chemicals that are recommended on the label for culinary herbs.

Once herbs become established, many bloom almost immediately. Plants such as mint, summer savory and basil have edible flowers, but once flowering begins, leaf growth diminishes. To maintain a season-long abundance of leaves, pinch off the flowers every week (and add them to a salad) or prune back the stems to encourage side branching. Most herbs will provide a steady supply of fresh leaves and stems all season long without additional care.

## herbs in containers, cold frames, raised beds and greenhouses

Herbs are perfect for all kinds of containers, cold frames and greenhouse culture because most people grow only a few plants of any one kind; they can be interplanted with other main crops such as tomatoes and cucumbers; and the extra warmth of the structure promotes abundant growth. A mixed bowl of herbs is a great centerpiece for a summer picnic table. Containers of rosemary, lavender, Vietnamese coriander, bay laurel, lemon verbena, pineapple sage and lemongrass can decorate a sunny porch or greenhouse in summer and be moved indoors in winter.

Container and raised bed herb gardens need soils that are weed-free, have great drainage and are capable of holding up under repeated irrigation. Garden soils and topsoil alone are not good potting mixes for containers and greenhouses. They compact over time and provide a poor rooting environment. Additionally, they are very heavy, making it difficult to move containers.

If liberally amended with compost and something to promote fast drainage (one-third each by volume), garden soils can be designed to suit container and greenhouse beds. One of the most common, lightweight amendments is perlite, which is a sterile, crushed rock product commonly used in soilless peat-lite mixes.

It provides excellent drainage in all sizes of containers and significantly reduces the weight of the soils. Vermiculite, another crushed rock product, is also useful for container mixes, but it collapses over

time. It is great for one-season plants but is not the best for perennials. Both perlite and vermiculite are sold in several size grades. Choose products that are not finely crushed; use ones that are approximately  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in diameter.

Commercially available potting mixes are expensive, especially for large greenhouse benches, but work well for containers. Many products are on the market, and many do not contain any mineral soil. Avoid commercial mixes composed of large chunks of uncomposted wood chips and bark. For perennials such as bay laurel, a mixture of a commercial soilless peat-lite mix and a soil-based mix provide a better combination of nutrients for long-term growth.

Because garden soils vary from one site to another, homemade potting mixes need to be analyzed to identify available nutrient levels and ensure a pH of 6.5 to 6.8. The most common amendment to raise pH levels in potting mixes is dolomitic lime. Fertilizers may vary depending on the results of the soil analysis, but normally a complete organic or chemical houseplant fertilizer is adequate for nearly all herbs. Consider amending container and greenhouse bench mixes with biodegradable, water-absorbing crystals. They look like giant salt crystals

and absorb and hold huge amounts of water, then slowly release it to plant roots. They do not change the quantity of water needed by container plants, but they change how often watering needs to occur. Gardeners can go on a weekend hiking trip without losing their container gardens to drought.



## **indoor herbs**

Growing herbs in indoor gardens can be challenging in Alaska because of low light levels and, in some locations, low indoor humidity. Stem cuttings of herbs such as thyme, lavender, scented geraniums and rosemary from outdoor-grown plants (Table 2) can be rooted in late summer, then potted for a winter garden or to hold for the next season. Herbs such as chives, mints and Vietnamese coriander can be divided in late summer and a portion of the plant potted for indoor use. Many of the seed-propagated herbs, such as dill, fennel and mustard, can be grown thickly as seedlings and harvested when they are 6 to 8 inches tall.

Many hardy perennial herbs become dormant at the end of the season and need a period of chilling temperatures (32° to 50°F) to begin active growth. These herbs should be potted from the garden and held outdoors or in a cold garage at above-freezing temperatures for at least 2 months, then brought indoors. They also grow best at cool temperatures between 50° and 65°F. Tender herbs such as lemongrass and ginger cannot tolerate frost, and containers need to be brought indoors before cold weather commences. They, along with direct-seeded herbs, grow best at indoor temperatures of 65° to 68°F. Herbs brought from the garden need to be examined carefully for spider mites, aphids and other garden pests. A few insects can explode easily to epidemic proportions indoors and spread to other houseplants.

Potting mixes recommended for container herbs work well for indoor herbs, although the mix should be pasteurized to kill diseases and weed seeds. Most people use

commercial mixes indoors because they normally have been heat-treated to kill pests. Homemade mixes need to be pasteurized (see “seed propagation”).

Indoor herbs need high light for best growth. Follow the directions for fluorescent shop lights for seed starting, or provide the highest affordable level of indoor spotlights to keep herbs from dying over winter. Because most herbs do not need to produce flowers, they do not need expensive grow lights. Most herbs need a consistent moisture supply throughout winter. Rosemary, in particular, will die quickly with the slightest amount of drying. Young seedlings need a full-strength fertilizer (see “seed propagation”) for optimum growth, whereas transplanted herbs in cool environments grow well with a half-strength houseplant fertilizer.

## **hydroponic herbs**

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in growing plants hydroponically, and many commercial kits have become available for tabletop gardens, container gardens and greenhouse benches with water or fog as the growing medium. Many herbs lend themselves easily to hydroponic culture (Table 3). Their growth is fast, they easily fit into small spaces and they adapt well to water culture. Many hydroponic systems are available, from nutrient film technique to aeroponic and ebb and flow systems. Be sure to check the Internet for specific solutions for each commercial source. Many herbs grow so easily that the extra expenses involved in hydroponics are not warranted. However, when good potting soil is not available and when gardeners are interested in experimenting, herbs provide one of the easiest group of plants to

grow hydroponically. These systems require a little knowledge of chemistry, strict attention to sanitation and regular monitoring for best results.

**Table 3. Herbs recommended for hydroponic culture**

Arugula	Basil	Chervil
Chives	Cilantro	Dill
French tarragon	Lemon balm	Marjoram
Mints	Oregano	Parsley
Rosemary	Sage	Sorrel
Thyme		

## pests

Many Alaska herb gardens are relatively pest-free, but outbreaks can be destructive; aphids, especially, and hungry voles can decimate a bed of parsley if their populations are high. Aphids and spider mites in greenhouses and container gardens can be a significant problem. Most gardeners remove them by hand, wash them off with sprays of water or use horticultural soap sprays. In mostly hot, dry gardens, leafhoppers can cause damage to leaves. Whiteflies can congregate on herbs grown in greenhouses and indoors. Most whiteflies are imported on plants grown by mail order businesses. Purchase plants from a reputable source and place yellow sticky cards in pots or adjacent to the plants to trap flying adults.

Some herbs are susceptible to damage by gray mold and powdery mildew, both diseases of foliage that may spread rapidly, especially where there is high humidity and condensation on the leaves. Damage can be minimized by providing good air circulation around plants, allowing the foliage to dry completely and watering from below so

foliage does not get wet. Parsley and basil are susceptible to root rots that can be minimized by using sterile potting mixes.

All herbs grown as seedlings are susceptible to damping off, which occurs when seedlings become watery and pinched right at the soil surface, and eventually die. Damping off can be minimized by using sterile flats and seeding/potting mix, allowing the medium to surface dry between watering, not crowding the seedlings and removing affected plants immediately to avoid spread. Slugs can decimate the foliage of many garden herbs. Although raised beds and containers do not stop slugs, the containers and beds can be situated to reduce damage. Diatomaceous earth spread around plants will deter slugs. There are also chemical and organic sprays for these pests. Check with your local Cooperative Extension Service agent for current recommendations.

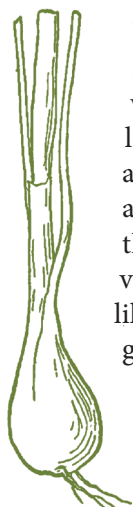
## garden notes

### the alliums

Some of the most commonly grown herbs are members of the amaryllis family (Amaryllidaceae) and include plants with pungent and flavorful leaves, stems and bulbs. Chives are nearly ubiquitous in Alaska herb gardens and can be grown in garden beds, greenhouses, containers and indoor gardens. Similar hardy alliums include garlic chives, Welsh onions, German garlic and true garlic. Most have edible ornamental flowers and attract insect pollinators. Except for the garlics, they will self sow in gardens to the point of being a nuisance. They can be trimmed back, divided and brought indoors for winter growth.

Chives also grow wild in parts of Alaska, and the native plants adapt well to gardens.





Welsh onions produce huge, hollow, edible green stems with thickened bases similar to leeks. They have a very pungent and sharp flavor. They produce abundant seeds that are often thickly sown and harvested as very young sprouts and eaten like green onions. The German garlic has leaves that look like the strap-shaped daffodil and have a wonderful mild flavor. They are most often grown as ornamentals, and they usually bloom so late outdoors that seed does not mature. These alliums grow well in herb gardens and mixed perennial flower gardens and scattered at the edges of rhubarb leaves.

Several types of garlic (softneck, elephant and hardneck) can be grown in Alaska gardens, but only one has a chance in the Interior (softneck). In all areas, garlic must be heavily mulched in winter to avoid injury from freezing and frost heaving (where soils freeze and thaw throughout the winter). Individual cloves are planted in fall, regenerate new offsets in spring and are harvested in late summer of the second year. Where soils are too cold, they can be grown in greenhouses and high tunnels with winter protection. They can also be grown as annuals in containers, where the young garlic-flavored shoots can be harvested like chives.

### **herbs with umbels**

Several herbs grown in Alaska belong to the carrot family, (Apiaceae). They include dill, chervil, sweet cicely, coriander/cilantro, fennel, lovage, parsley and anise. They are bushy plants with edible foliage and/or

seeds, and the flowers/seeds are clustered in distinct, flat-topped heads called umbels. Dill is a tender annual growing from 2 feet to more than 6 feet tall, depending on the cultivar and location. It is grown in gardens for its foliage and seeds. Because of its height, it needs protection from wind or rain by staking; the top-heavy stalks are easily blown over and broken.

An herb that is similar in appearance and use to dill is fennel, which has two distinct growth habits. Choose sweet fennel for harvesting leaves, stems and seeds. Choose Florence fennel for plants that have thickened leaf bases, often mistakenly called bulbs. Sweet fennel is more easily grown in Alaska gardens. Florence fennel requires lots of heat and must be grown in a greenhouse or high tunnel.

Many umbel herbs such as cilantro, dill, chervil and fennel grow well indoors beneath lights; the foliage is harvested when the seedlings are 6 to 8 inches tall. For fresh herbs all year long, repeated, thick sowings both indoors and out are necessary. For seed production, start dill, chervil, caraway and coriander indoors and transplant into the garden to allow enough time for the seeds to mature. In cool, wet areas, these herbs are often grown in greenhouses or tunnels to mature seed. All attract insect pollinators when in bloom. These herbs will self sow in the garden if mature seeds are not harvested.



Parsley is commonly grown for its frilly dark green leaves. Flat-leaf Italian parsley has a more robust flavor than curly parsley and is preferred for cooking. Curly-leaf types are generally used as garnishes. Both can be dug, divided and brought indoors for fresh winter herbs.

The most important perennial umbel herb is lovage, which looks similar to celery and provides an abundance of leaves and stems nearly all season long. It is hardy even in the Interior as long as it gets ample snow cover. Plants grow to 3 feet in most in Interior gardens but can easily grow to 6 feet or more (support required) in Southcentral, Southeast and southern coastal areas.

### **aromatic herbs**

Nearly all herbs have a distinctive aroma that may or may not survive processing into the dried, salted, oil-infused or frozen herbs we use in cooking. Most famous are the mints, garlic, nearly all of the umbel herbs and lavender, but also popular are chocolate mint geranium and pineapple sage, which are used to infuse pastry with intoxicating scents. The aromas are mostly from essential oils that accumulate in hairs and special cells on the surface of leaves. It is worth experimenting with individual cultivars of aromatic herbs because all will differ in the quality and intensity of these essential oils. Also, herbs grown in gardens may smell different or less intense than those grown in greenhouses; air temperature can influence the quantity of essential oils produced.



### **asian, indian and tropical herbs**

Commercial seed and plant sources are beginning to offer a wide variety of exotic herbs, some of which can be adapted to Alaska gardens. Lemongrass, Vietnamese coriander and ginger add special flavors to foods, but they require a lot of heat. Lemongrass and ginger must be grown in a greenhouse or high tunnel or in a container sitting on a hot, sunny porch. Vietnamese coriander and shiso (perilla) grow abundantly in warm, sunny gardens as well as in containers and greenhouses. All of these herbs can be overwintered indoors as long as there is plenty of light, high temperatures (>65°F) and lots of humidity. The Indian herbs ajwain and ajmud do not mature seeds except in the hottest sites. They are best grown in greenhouses and high tunnels for added heat.

### **edible flowers**

There are many flowers that provide color and flavor to a variety of culinary delights. Among the favorites are anise hyssop, calendula, chives, chamomile, nasturtiums, violas, pansies, borage and bee balm. All are easily interplanted in flower and vegetable gardens. Many will self sow in garden soils (Table 1); borage can become a nuisance if the flowers are not removed. Beware that many garden flowers are not edible and can be poisonous. Check with reputable sources or local experts before experimenting.

### **the mint family (Lamiaceae)**

The name “basil” is such a singular word for an incredible diversity of leafy annuals; for some gardeners, it is the only herb worth growing. Garden catalogs list a dizzying assortment of basil, including some with giant leaves and others that grow as globes with leaves no bigger than a pea. Flavors

range from sweet to lemony and spicy. In appearance, basil can be ruffled or smooth, with purple or green leaves and edible flowers. Basil is highly recommended for Alaska's gardens, but the key to growing success is heat. Even in the warm Interior, the added heat of a greenhouse, row covers or raised beds is recommended. Given enough heat, plants grow and branch rapidly, often developing flower buds at a very young age. They require frequent pruning and pinching to keep leaf production at its peak.

Like basil, mints have a wide variety of flavors and aromas. Spearmint and peppermint are the most popular, but commercial sources also sell flavors such as pineapple, ginger, chocolate and even banana. The traditional species are winter-hardy in Southcentral, Southeast and southern coastal areas, but they are marginal, at best, in the Interior. The "flavored" mints are not as hardy as the standards. Where they overwinter, they can become quite a nuisance in gardens because of their rampant spreading habit. They are best kept separated by deep edging or in raised beds or containers to keep them in check. In colder locations, they are best grown in containers and brought indoors for winter. Indoor temperatures should be cool (40° to 60°F).

Four other members of the mint family — sweet marjoram, sage, thyme and oregano — are some of easiest herbs to grow, but like basil, they tend to flower early and require repeated harvests all season long. All may overwinter in protected locations in Southcentral, Southeast and southern coastal gardens, but they are grown as annuals in the Interior. Thyme might overwinter in the Interior, but only on protected, heavily mulched sites. Even then, it is considered a short-lived perennial at best.

## **mustard family (Brassicaceae)**

Several members of the mustard family are grown in herb gardens, often for seed but also for young, green leaves that give sharp, spicy, tangy flavors to salads. One member, horseradish, produces thickened roots that don't usually measure up to the giant roots harvested at lower latitudes but nevertheless have a pungent aroma and strong flavor. Tilling in gardens does not destroy horseradish. Even tiny slivers of roots will regenerate into a new plant. Some of the mustards will set seed if allowed to mature and can become weedy in the garden. Most are harvested as very young leaves and never reach seed stage.





# harvesting herbs

The goal of preserving herbs is to preserve the essential oils, which give them their characteristic flavor and aroma.

Herbs can be stored fresh, frozen or dried or processed into special products.

## when to harvest

The ideal time of season to harvest most herbs is when the flower buds are forming, just before they open. The best time of day is in the morning when the dew has dried off the leaves and there is no moisture clinging to the plant. The volatile oils will be at their best this time of day, concentrated in the leaves. During the day, or when temperatures start to go up, the plants are growing and transpiring and their oils and moisture are moving through the plant.

If you want strong flavor and aroma, harvest herbs first thing in the morning before they start actively growing for the day.

To ensure that the plant material is clean, spray it down the evening before you plan to harvest, gently washing away any dirt clinging to the leaves.

## how much to harvest

It depends on the plant.

As much as 50 percent of an annual plant can be harvested by snipping the stem at least 4 inches up from the ground. This will cause the plant to develop new branches and it will be ready to harvest again before the season is finished.

With perennial plants, no more than one-third should be taken. With some plants, such as rosemary, only the growing tips can be harvested.

To maintain the vigor of your plants, it is vital to have either good sharp shears or a knife when harvesting. Pulling at the plants with the fingers damages the root systems; this will become evident the following season with poor growth patterns. If you plan to harvest roots, cut them into small portions and dry using a dehydrator to insure proper dehydration before storage.

## which part of the plant to harvest

Some plants are prized for only one part—their seeds, flowers or leaves. Some plants are used for all three.

**Harvest the leaf:** Chervil, basil, lemon balm, cilantro, lemon verbena, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, savory, marjoram, tarragon and thyme

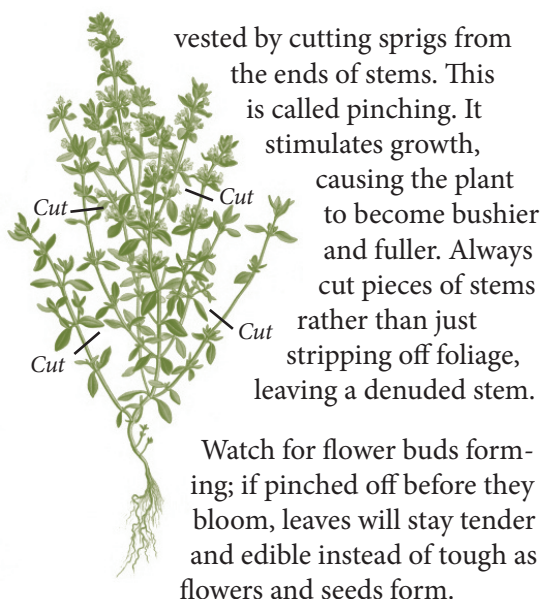
**Harvest the root:** Horseradish, ginger, some parsleys

**Harvest the seeds:** Dill, anise, coriander

## harvest methods

There are two kinds of plants that require different methods of harvesting.

Plants that grow from a single stem with branches, such as thyme, tarragon, basil, marjoram and savories, should be har-



vested by cutting sprigs from the ends of stems. This is called pinching. It stimulates growth, causing the plant to become bushier and fuller. Always cut pieces of stems rather than just stripping off foliage, leaving a denuded stem.

Watch for flower buds forming; if pinched off before they bloom, leaves will stay tender and edible instead of tough as flowers and seeds form.

Plants that grow in a clump, such as sorrel, chives, parsley and lovage, should be harvested by cutting whole spears from outside of the clump, just above ground level, instead of giving the plant a “haircut,” which reduces the plant to unsightly yellow stubble and prevents the plant from manufacturing food supply to be stored in roots.

Herbs might be harvested at any time for any number of reasons:

- for use as fresh herbs — can be picked at any time
- for plant maintenance and grooming to keep plants looking neat and to get maximum production and flavor
- for preserving for use when fresh herbs are no longer available
- for end-of-season final stripping and for caring for perennials that will overwinter in Alaska



## harvest for use as fresh herbs

Use immediately any time before the plant blooms. In the case of some herbs, sooner is better; for example, herbs such as borage, burnet, nasturtium and dill can be used as tender salad greens.

Pick only healthy green leaves, not yellowed or dead ones.

Don't injure the plant's growth by pulling off too many leaves from one stem or plant, particularly young ones.

## harvest for grooming

Remove damaged, yellowed leaves and leaves with insect damage; don't use these.

Pinch or snip to give the plant a pleasing shape, particularly if used as a border plant (basils, sorrel).

Once flowers develop, flavor and production are affected (marjoram, basil, sorrel, savory, thyme, oregano).

### some points to keep in mind:

- Snip throughout the season. For the best flavor, don't wait until the plants move toward old age.
- When growing a plant for its leaves, make sure to pinch off flower buds to lengthen its useful season.
- Don't be stingy when harvesting. Many herbs can be pruned to within 4 inches of the ground or to within the last few inches of leaves and still bounce back to produce a bounty.
- Don't rinse your herbs until you are ready to use them, except parsley,

which loves a cool bath right away. Washing removes some oils and vitamins. If you don't use repellents or fertilizer sprays, rinsing may not even be necessary.

- Let seeds ripen on the plants for full flavor. Look for ready-to-burst seed-pods or brown seeds. If you are afraid you will miss them, tuck a paper bag around the ripening seeds near their prime ripening time and tie it to the stem. When the seeds rattle within the bag, cut the stem and shake your harvest into the bag.
- Be patient when harvesting roots. Wait until the plants are at least 2 years old, then trim small pieces off the roots as you need them. Air dry for fresh use. At the end of the season, dig the roots carefully and air dry. Then peel, chop and freeze for later use.
- Harvest flowers when they are dry. Be sure to shake blooms gently to get rid of any bugs or soil.
- Harvest perennials judiciously their first year to help them develop some vigor.



# storing fresh herbs

If you are buying fresh herbs or taking them from your garden, look for the best quality that you can find. They should be vibrant, crisp and blemish-free. Stem ends should look freshly cut, not dried out, wilted or discolored.

If purchasing herbs, remove elastic bands or twist ties or remove herbs from the box. Pull off yellowed leaves and pat dry. Don't wash or cut until ready to use. Put them back into the box, or place in a perforated plastic vegetable bag.

Store in the coldest, moistest part of the refrigerator. Herbs suitable for refrigerator storage are parsley, oregano, rosemary, savory and thyme. Keep separate from fresh fruits, especially apples, as they emit ethylene gas, which shortens the useful life of the herb.

Some herbs (basil, chervil and coriander) should be kept at room temperature. Place in a glass of water like a bouquet and cover loosely with a paper bag.

## freezing

Most herbs can be frozen successfully. Freezing is the best method to preserve basil, chervil and cilantro. Drying diminishes the flavor of these herbs.

Freezing in a freezer bag or foil is the best method for small-leaved herbs. Strip leaves and place in the bag or foil. If you chop leaves before packaging, they will be ready to use, but they will lose some of the aromatic oils that give them their flavor.

Large-leaved herbs such as basil, lovage and sage can be rolled into “cigars” and frozen. These can then be used as whole leaves in recipes. Roll the first leaf in a tight roll and layer other leaves on top, wrapping them tightly around the center leaf. Another method is to line overlapping leaves on plastic wrap. Roll and repeat until all leaves are used. Place in a freezer bag or foil and label with the name and date of freezing. Many cigars can be placed in the same bag. To use, simply chop off the amount needed from the end of the cigar and return the rest to the freezer bag.

Herbs can also be placed in water or oil and frozen. Take 2 cups of herbs and place in ½ cup of water or stock and whirl in a blender or food processor until well combined. The mixture can be transferred to a freezer bag or frozen in ice cube trays. Keep some in a small bag for ease of use.

Herbs retain flavor and aroma better when stored in oil. Combine 2 cups herb leaves with ½ cup oil and whirl gently in a food processor or blender. Place in zipper-type bags for long-term storage in the freezer. Don't reduce the measurement of oil — it allows for chopping or blending with a minimum of bruising. The oil also acts as a barrier against oxidation and dehydration in the freezer and maintains the integrity of the herb's essential oils longer for better flavor.

## drying

Drying is a simple method of preserving herbs. Herbs can be dried naturally or in the dehydrator, oven or microwave. It is best to dry herbs away from light and using a warm, even temperature. If leaves are clean, it isn't necessary to wash them before drying. Washing causes degradation of the herbs and makes them slower to dry. Keep leaves as whole as possible to preserve aromatic oils.

Tying in a bunch is a traditional method of drying. Herbs that are sturdy and dry quickly are most appropriate for this method; these include catnip, mints, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage and savory. Bundles of drying herbs need good air circulation. Use a string or rubber band to gather bunches of herbs and suspend them in an out-of-the-way place where they won't be bothered. If you are concerned about losing leaves or dust gathering on them, suspend the bunch inside a paper bag punched full of holes or a pillowcase to catch leaves that fall off. You can also simply place cut stems in a labeled paper bag. When the herbs are dry, strip whole leaves and store in glass or plastic jars or plastic bags.

Tender-leaved herbs can be dried on screens or a clean surface. Herbs appropriate for this method include basil, chamomile, chive flowers and leaves, dill, oregano, parsley, rosemary and thyme. To dry these herbs on screens or trays, pull leaves from the stalk or stems after harvesting. These herbs require more careful handling since they can turn yellow or brown unless quickly dried. Cut stems into small pieces for quicker drying but leave flowers whole. Lay on drying screens, cookie sheets or other clean surfaces. Stir daily to ensure even drying.

All leaves should be dried whole and not crumbled until you are ready to use them. Store in airtight glass or metal containers or plastic bags. Do not store in paper or cardboard because herbs can easily reabsorb moisture and mold. Check for moisture during the first week. Be sure to label containers with the type of herb and date of processing.

For best quality, do not store herbs near radiators, ovens or windows.

Dried herbs retain their flavor for 18 months to 2 years, depending on the herb. Taste herbs to determine their potency before using.

Dehydrator drying is a fast and easy way to dry herbs because temperature and air circulation can be controlled. Preheat the dehydrator to 100° to 120°F. Place herbs in a single layer on dehydrator trays and dry from 1 to 4 hours depending on the thickness of leaves. Check closely for dryness. Dry herbs have crumbly leaves, and stems break when bent. Check your dehydrator instructions for specific recommendations.

Oven drying is another way to preserve herbs, particularly mint, sage and bay leaf. Remove the best leaves from the stems. Lay the leaves on a paper towel, without allowing leaves to touch. Cover with another towel and layer of leaves. Up to 5 layers of leaves can be dried at one time using this method. Dry in a very cool oven (100° to 130°F). Leaves dry flat and retain good color.

Microwave drying is a fast way to dry small amounts of herbs. Prepare leaves as instructed for oven drying. Microwave herbs in 15-second increments until leaves are crumbly. Check your microwave oven instructions for specific recommendations.

How do you know leaves are dry enough? When leaves are crispy dry and crumble easily between fingers, they are ready to be packaged and stored. Dried leaves may be left whole and crumbled as used or coarsely crumbled before storage.

To store, place herbs in airtight containers and store in a cool, dry, dark area to protect color and fragrance.

### Best preservation methods for herbs

Anise hyssop	dry
Arugula	best fresh
Basil	freeze
Borage	dry
Calendula	dry
Chervil	freeze
Chives	freeze
Cilantro	freeze
Dill	freeze, dry
Fennel	freeze, dry
Lemon balm	dry
Lemon verbena	dry
Lovage	dry
Marigold	dry
Marjoram	dry
Mints	dry
Mitsuba	freeze
Nasturtium	pickle seeds
Oregano	dry
Parsley, curly	freeze
Parsley, flat leaf	freeze
Rosemary	dry
Sage	dry
Savory, summer	dry
Savory, winter	dry
Sorrel	freeze
Sweet cicely	best fresh
Sweet woodruff	in alcohol
Tarragon, French	freeze, dry
Thyme	dry
Thyme, lemon	dry
Thyme, silver	dry

### Rule of thumb

When using dried herbs instead of fresh, use one-fourth to one-third as much.

1 teaspoon dried = 3 to 4 teaspoons fresh

## other methods for preserving herbs

### pesto

Pesto, an uncooked seasoning that includes fresh basil, garlic, pine nuts and oil, must be refrigerated or frozen. There are no directions for canning pesto. Do not store in the refrigerator longer than 4 days. Freeze for longer storage.

#### Basic Basil Pesto

2 cups packed fresh basil leaves  
2 cloves garlic  
½ cup pine nuts  
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
¾ cup olive oil

Pulse all ingredients until combined. Add black pepper to taste.

*Variations:* Substitute other herbs for basil, such as cilantro, tarragon, mint, sage or dill. Other nuts, such as almonds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts and cashews, can be substituted for pine nuts. Try lemon basil with almonds, cilantro with toasted pumpkin seeds, oregano with walnuts and mint with cashews.

### flavored vinegars

Create your own special vinegar by making a combination of herbal leaves, seeds and spices in a good-quality vinegar. Choose a rice or wine vinegar for best results. White distilled or apple cider vinegars have strong



flavors that can override the more delicate flavors of herbs.

Use a glass container that has been cleaned and sterilized. Select clean, fresh aromatic herbs on the stem; herb seeds such as anise, caraway, celery, coriander, dill, fennel or mustard; whole spices such as allspice, cinnamon, cloves, mace and black or white peppercorns; garlic cloves; fresh ginger; hot chilies; and citrus peel.

Bruise herb seeds with a rolling pin or the back of a heavy spoon. Place seeds, spices, and peeled and cut garlic in the bottom of the container. Begin adding herbs, citrus peel, peppers and other lighter material. A wooden skewer can be used to move them around. Twist branches to get them through narrow bottlenecks. Pack the container as full as possible with flavoring materials, then fill with unheated vinegar of your choice. Move the materials around to be sure there are no pockets of air in the container. Cover and seal with a noncorrosive cap. Check the bottle within 24 hours to make sure all plant materials are covered with vinegar; otherwise, as the herbs settle in the bottles, the sprigs may become exposed to the air, which causes a discoloration of the foliage.



The vinegar should be ready to use in 24 to 36 hours. Store in a cool, dark place. Add vinegar to the bottle as it is used up, always keeping the plant material completely covered.

To hasten the flavoring process, the vinegar can be heated to just below the boiling point and poured over the herbs. To preserve the herb foliage, care

should be taken so that the vinegar is not boiled. Heating the vinegar also changes the color of the herbs and causes them to decompose more readily. Unless the vinegar is needed quickly, the cool vinegar method is preferred.

Some fresh herbs add color as well as a special flavor to vinegar. Purple basil results in a rich, ruby red vinegar; chive blossoms make pink; tarragon results in a pale gold; and nasturtium blossoms make an orange vinegar.

### **concentrated herbal vinegar**

To get as much flavor as possible, with the least effort and expense, make a concentrated herbal vinegar. Put as much of an herb as possible into a jar and fill it with a good quality white wine vinegar. The vinegar is ready to use almost immediately. Each time you use the vinegar, top off the bottle with more white wine vinegar. The flavor usually lasts for 3 or 4 fillings before the plant material breaks down or loses strength of flavor. When this occurs, pour the vinegar through a strainer and discard the plant material. Other ingredients can be added with the herbs to create flavored vinegars.

### **teas and beverages**

You can brew a tea from almost any culinary herb alone or in combination with black or green tea. Good tea herbs are lemon balm, lemon thyme, lemon grass, lemon verbena, mint, sage, lavender, chamomile, anise hyssop, scented basil, scented geraniums and sweet marjoram.

Start by using 1 teaspoon of dried herb or 4 teaspoons of fresh herb per 6-ounce serving. You may vary the amount based on your taste. Crush to help release flavor. Put directly into preheated teapot or a tea ball.



Add boiling water and steep no longer than 10 minutes. If steeped too long, the herbs will become bitter. For a stronger flavor, use more herbs instead of steeping longer.

If sweetener is desired, use honey since it combines better with herbal teas.

### ***Herbfarm Haymaker's Switchel***

- ¼ cup mint
- ¼ cup lemon balm
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup simple sugar syrup

Make sugar syrup by combining ½ cup sugar and ¾ cup boiling water. Measure ¼ cup and set remainder aside. Squeeze citrus juices. Chop mint and lemon balm very fine (if lemon balm isn't available, use all mint). Add orange and lemon juices to the hot sugar syrup. Remove from heat. Add chopped herbs and let steep, covered in the hot sugar syrup for 1 hour. Strain mixture through a fine sieve or cheesecloth. Combine with 2 quarts of ginger ale. Serve chilled.

### **herb sugars**

Herb sugars are delicately flavored sugars that can be used to sweeten tea, whipped cream, cream toppings, frosting, meringues and fruit, eliminating the necessity of adding vanilla or other flavorings.

Sugars are made by layering white sugar and the fresh leaves and flowers of sweet aromatic herbs such as scented geraniums, lemon verbena, anise hyssop, mint, lavender and rose petals. Each sugar should be stored in its own tightly closed container or plastic bag.

Alternatively, sugar, fresh herbs and flowers can be whirled together in a processor or blender until well combined, then stored in plastic bags in the freezer. Storing sugars in the freezer will prevent caking.

The sugar will be ready to use in 2 or 3 weeks but will become more flavorful with age.

Leaves and flower of many herbs can be candied or crystallized into delicate, sweet, sugar-crisp decorations just like the French confections sold in specialty stores. Dip or paint the leaves or flowers with pasteurized egg whites. Dip in superfine sugar and allow to dry on a rack or on wax paper until completely dry.

### **herb salt**

Herb salts are a flavorful way of adding both herbs and salts to meals.

Start with ½ cup sea salt.

Sea salt can be readily blended with your herbs. If using fresh herbs, do not wash unless necessary. If washing, be very careful that every drop

of moisture is removed from the foliage.

Mince the leaves, then crush them with the salt using a mortar and pestle or the base of a heavy jar. An easier method is to put the salt and herbs in the blender or food processor and whirl for a few minutes. A very fine end product results.

After crushing, spread the salt on a cookie sheet and dry in a 200°F oven for about 40 to 60 minutes or until the mixture seems dry. Be sure to break up any lumps and stir frequently during drying. When cool, seal in a glass jar.



To make herb salts in a hurry, use dried herbs. Place the herbs and salt in the blender or blend them together by hand. Four or 5 tablespoons of herbs to about ½ cup of salt works well. Single herbs or a combination of herbs can be used. Make sure the herbs are very fine so they can be sprinkled through a shaker. Paprika added to your herb salt gives a nice red color and enhances the flavor. Store in an airtight glass container.

To cure herbs with salt, layer dry herbs and salt in a glass jar. Press down and cover. Store in a dark place. Use them as you would fresh herbs. Rinse well to remove excess salt when using herbs in a recipe, or reduce added salt.

### **jams and jellies**

Most culinary herbs can be used in either dried or fresh form to flavor jelly. Good jelly herbs include scented geraniums, chive blossoms, lemon verbena, scented basil, lemon thyme, chamomile, lavender, rosemary, marjoram, parsley, thyme, fennel, sage and mint.

In a large kettle, combine water, fruit juice or wine and the herbs (1 cup fresh herbs to 2 cups water or 2½ cups juice or wine). Heat to scalding. Remove from heat and let stand for 15 minutes. Strain the liquid through a fine cloth or several thicknesses of cheesecloth. Use this liquid and follow the directions for making mint jelly included with packaged pectin.

You can also produce a delicate herb flavor in any fruit jelly by putting a leaf or small sprig into the jar after pouring the jelly.

### ***Jam in a jiffy in the microwave***

In a very few minutes an extra cup or 2 of berries can be converted into an excellent jam. The microwave cooking time is short, so the sparkling color and flavor of the fresh fruit is preserved.

Begin with about 1½ cups of fresh or frozen berries. Mash them until well crushed and juicy. Stir in ¾ cup of sugar and 2 teaspoons lemon juice. Add ¼ teaspoon butter to keep the foaming down. Cook uncovered in the microwave for about 7 or 8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes to ensure even cooking. Pour into a small jar. The jam will thicken as it cools. The jam will keep well in the refrigerator for about a month, or it can be frozen for longer storage.

### **mustards**

Mustards can be as mild or tangy as you like. Experiment with flavors to see what you like.

To get a wider range of tastes, use powdered mustard or mustard seeds. Sharpness is affected by the liquid used. Vinegar results in an English-style mustard, champagne or white wine makes a Dijon-type mustard and flat beer makes a Chinese version.

### ***Tarragon and Green Peppercorn Mustard***

- ¼ cup light or dark mustard seeds
- ⅓ cup tarragon white wine vinegar\*
- ⅓ cup water
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, minced
- 1 tablespoon green peppercorns, crushed
- 1 tablespoon honey or 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves

\*You can make your own tarragon white wine vinegar by steeping fresh tarragon in white wine vinegar (see pages 23–24).

Combine mustard seeds, vinegar, water and wine in a bowl. Let sit for 4 hours, uncovered, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a blender or food processor. Process to the desired consistency, from slightly coarse to creamy. Pour into the top of a double boiler over simmering water. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cook for 10 minutes or until thickened, stirring often. Mustard will be thicker when cooled. Pour into sterilized jars, cap tightly and store in the refrigerator. Wait several days before using to allow flavors to blend. Makes 1 cup.

The easiest way to make herb mustards is to add herbs of your choice to prepared Dijon-style mustard.

#### **Quick Herb Mustard**

- 1½ cups Dijon-style mustard
- ½ cup (or to taste) chopped fresh herbs of your choice
- 1½ tablespoons dry white wine

Mix all the ingredients together well, place in a sterilized jar with a tight-fitting lid and store in a cool, dark place for up to 3 months.

#### **Lemon-Dill Mustard**

- 2 cups Dijon-style mustard
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon rind

Mix all ingredients together well. Makes 2½ cups.

## **herbal honeys and syrups**

Honeys and syrups benefit from the addition of flavorful herbs. Some good herbs to use in honey and syrup are flavored basil, rose geranium, lemon verbena, lemon thyme, lemon balm, fruit sages, lavender, rosemary, anise hyssop and mints.

#### **Basic herb honey**

Bruise herbs very slightly to release flavors. Place a layer of herbs in a small saucepan. Cover with a mild honey and warm over low heat for 2 minutes. Pour into sterilized jars and seal tightly.

Allow honey or syrup to stand in a warm room for 2 weeks to mingle flavors. Strain to remove herb leaves. Serve on hot biscuits or use as a sweetener for tea.

#### **Basic Herb Syrup**

Make an infusion by bringing 3 cups of water to a boil and pouring it over 1 cup of herbs. Cover and infuse for several hours. Strain the liquid and combine with 2 cups of sugar in a non-aluminum saucepan over medium heat. Bring the mixture to a boil; when the sugar dissolves, continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the syrup thickens, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat, cool and bottle. This syrup will keep in the refrigerator for 3 months.

## **herb butters**

To make herb butter, simply add minced herbs to butter that has been allowed to warm to room temperature. For each ¼-pound stick use 4 tablespoons fresh or 2 tablespoon dried herbs and 1 teaspoon lemon juice or a few gratings of lemon zest. Add a little lemon juice and beat in a bowl or whirl in blender until fluffy and smooth. Place in covered container in refrigerator to

mellow for 2 or 3 hours before using. Butter will keep several days in the refrigerator.

If you will be freezing the butter mixture, roll it in a cylinder, which can be easily sliced into serving-sized portions. Or cut it into decorative shapes or mold in candy molds for a pretty presentation.

### **ice cubes, bowls and rings**

Herb flower petals or whole herb flowers look lovely frozen in ice cubes, which can later be added to drinks.

To avoid bubbles in ice bowls and rings, always use water that has been boiled and cooled. In a large freezer-proof bowl, pour  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch water. Add flowers and fruits, if desired. Place in freezer until frozen. When solidly frozen, remove from freezer. Place a smaller, freezer-proof bowl inside the larger one, setting it firmly on the ice base. Add additional flowers to the larger bowl. Place a weight in the inner bowl. Carefully pour water to the rim of the larger bowl. Return it to the freezer until the water is solidly frozen. Remove the weight. Wipe the inner bowl with a very hot cloth. When the inner bowl releases, repeat with the outer side of the larger bowl. Return the ice bowl to the freezer until needed.

# using herbs

Cooking with herbs is like putting frosting on a cake. When you add herbs, you take something that is simple and make it special. Although it is a good idea to use recipes as you start cooking with herbs, make sure you know what each herb tastes like before you use it. Take a clean leaf of the herb and chew but don't swallow it. Savor the taste like you would a fine wine; check the fragrant bouquet, let the leaf meet the tongue and chew thoughtfully. Learning about the flavor of the herb this way will help you to decide if it will make the perfect pot roast or sorbet.

## by flavor groups

- Anise or licorice—anise hyssop, tarragon, anise, chervil, fennel, sweet cicely
- Mints—spearmint, peppermint, flavored mints (lemon, apple, etc.), perilla
- Savory—rosemary, basil, sage, oregano, thymes, marjoram, savory
- Citrus—lemon balm, lemongrass, lemon verbena, lemon/orange/lime thyme, lemon/lime basil, lemon/tangerine marigolds
- Fruity—pineapple sage, bergamot, sweet woodruff, lemon and tangerine geraniums

## by their function in cooking

**Accent herbs** give a subtle background to a dish, can be used in combination with each other and are added at the last moment. Accent herbs include parsley, chives, chervil and dill.

**Character herbs** impart a strong, dominant note to dishes, do not marry happily with each other and are usually cooked for some time with the foods they flavor. Character herbs include tarragon, basil, rosemary, oregano, thyme, savory, sage and coriander.

Now that you know a little about how herbs are used in a general sense, the third section of this publication will list the herbs that grow in Alaska and tell you a little about each one and how to use it and provide a few recipes.

Bon appétit!



## Easy Ways to Use Herbs

**Calendula (pot marigold)**—Add fresh petals to tossed salad, mix fresh petals into white or yellow cake batter.

**Cilantro (coriander, Chinese parsley)**—Add fresh leaves to tacos or avocado sandwiches, chop fresh leaves and sprinkle over chili, or sprinkle fresh leaves and thin slices of lime over grilled salmon.

**Chamomile**—Float fresh flowers in ice tea or a sweet white wine. Steep 2 teaspoons of dried flowers, stems or leaves in boiling water for tea.

**Chives**—Add fresh chopped leaves to a tossed salad. Mix fresh or commercially dried leaves with cottage cheese, ricotta or cream cheese for a spread.

**Basil**—Serve fresh leaves with sliced tomatoes, or mix fresh or dried leaves with butter and serve with bread.

**Dill**—Mix fresh or dried leaves with cottage cheese, ricotta or cream cheese for a spread; mix fresh or dried leaves with sliced cucumbers; sprinkle fresh or dried leaves and cayenne pepper over new potatoes; or crumple fresh stems and leaves over fish while cooking.

**Lavender**—Float fresh flowers in a sweet white wine or sprinkle fresh flowers and leaves over vanilla ice cream. Tuck fresh or dried stems into the vacuum cleaner bag.

**Lovage**—Sprinkle fresh leaves in tossed salad; sprinkle fresh leaves over soup or chili.

**Marjoram**—Add fresh or dried leaves to ground meat for burgers, meatloaf or sausage. Add fresh or dried leaves to rice.

**Mint**—Crumple a sprig into a pitcher of pink lemonade. Add fresh leaves to new potatoes.

**Oregano**—Sprinkle fresh or dried leaves on garlic bread; add fresh leaves to a tossed salad.

**Parsley**—Add fresh leaves to spaghetti squash and serve with butter, salt and pepper.

**Rosemary**—Tuck a fresh sprig into a glass of tomato juice with ice; sprinkle a few fresh leaves over a fresh fruit salad; strip leaves and use woody stem as skewer for scallops or salmon chunks; or sprinkle fresh or dried leaves in olive oil, heat in microwave and serve with toasted French bread for dipping.

**Sage**—Mix fresh or dried leaves into butter and serve with hot biscuits, or mix fresh or dried leaves with cottage cheese, ricotta or cream cheese for a spread.

**Savory**—Sprinkle fresh or dried leaves over cooked beans, or use in ground meat for meatloaf or sausages.

**Sorrel**—Add fresh leaves to a tossed salad. Remove the mid-rib of fresh leaves and add to cream of chicken or mushroom soup.

**Sweet woodruff**—Float flowers in a sweet white wine; use leaves and flower sprigs as a gift decoration; or make a small flower arrangement with the leaves and fresh flowers.

**Tarragon**—Tuck a fresh sprig into a glass of tomato juice with ice, or add fresh leaves and green grapes (cut in half) to chicken salad.

**Thyme**—Add fresh or dried leaves to bread or biscuit dough, or stir fresh or dried leaves into butter for a delicious spread.

## anise hyssop

Anise hyssop is referred to as the herb that tastes like candy. The leaves and tiny lavender-blue flowers of anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) smell and taste of anise, but the square stems and opposite leaves tell you it belongs to the mint family. The leaves and flowers have a pronounced licorice flavor.

Fresh or dried leaves and flowers can be used as an herb tea or for flavoring herb teas; chopped and added to cakes, muffins or cookies; steeped and the liquid used in custards, puddings and pie fillings; chopped and used in place of star anise in oriental-type marinades for meats and fish; or used anywhere an anise or licorice flavor is appropriate. The tiny flowers make a beautiful purple garnish and taste like licorice candy.



### ***Anise Hyssop and Almond Butter Cookies***

*Adapted from food.com*

- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup anise hyssop florets
- 1 extra-large egg
- 12 tablespoons butter
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups unbleached flour
- scant ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 ounces almonds

Remove anise hyssop florets from their stalks. Measure ¼ cup and combine with the sugar in a food processor and pulse until blended.

Add the egg and process for about 60 seconds. Cut butter into 12 pieces. Add butter

and the vanilla and process for another 60 seconds.

Lightly toast and coarsely chop almonds. Mix the flour and salt and add it to the processor. Process for about 20 seconds, until most of the flour has been incorporated. Add the almonds and process until just mixed; do not overprocess.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and gather it into a ball. Divide into 3 parts and roll each in plastic wrap into a cylinder 1½ to 2 inches in diameter. Chill for about 1 hour, until firm, or place in the freezer for about 20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Slice the dough slightly less than ¼ inch thick with a sharp knife. Place the rounds at least ½ inch apart on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake for about 12 minutes, changing the position of the baking sheets halfway through baking, until the edges of the cookies are just golden brown. Remove cookies from baking sheets immediately to cool on racks. When cool, store in airtight containers. Makes 5 or 6 dozen cookies.

### ***Anise Hyssop Pear Tart***

- 3 large, ripe Bartlett pears
- 1 to 1½ cups coarsely chopped anise hyssop leaves and flowers
- 2 cups half and half
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 egg yolks
- Pernod liqueur, to taste (optional)
- ½ cup cold butter or margarine
- 3 ounces cold cream cheese
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 or 4 fresh or dried anise hyssop flower stalks



### *Cream*

In a saucepan combine chopped anise hyssop leaves and flowers and half and half. Slowly bring to a simmer. Remove from heat and allow anise hyssop to steep for 2 to 3 hours. Strain and discard leaves.

When ready to assemble tart, mix sugar and cornstarch. Stir in anise hyssop-steeped cream. Stir over medium-high heat until boiling. Stir some sauce into the egg yolks; add to hot mixture and stir 1 minute. Stir in Pernod (if using). Use hot.

### *Pears*

With a knife, decoratively score round side of pears. Lay pears, flat side down, in a buttered 9×13-inch pan.

### *Pastry*

Cut butter and cheese into cubes. Combine in a food processor with flour. Whirl until mixture holds together. Press dough evenly over bottom and sides of an 11-inch tart pan with removable bottom.

In a 375°F oven, set pastry on a low rack and place pears on a rack above. Bake until crust is golden and pears turn brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Cool.

### *Garnish*

Carefully pull anise hyssop flowerlets from main stalk.

### *Assembly*

Pour hot anise cream into crust. Set pears, round side up, in cream. Let cool, cover lightly and chill overnight. Before serving, scatter anise hyssop flowerlets between the pears. Serves 6 to 12.

## **arugula**

Arugula is used as a type of lettuce in salads, but it is also grown and used as a Med-

iterranean herb.

In many parts of the United States it is also called rocket cress or garden rocket. In Italy it is arugula, rugula or rucolo, and in France, roquette.



Arugula has a peppery taste, akin to radishes and can be as strong as horseradish and turnips. Use sparingly in salads or by itself, with only simple garlic vinaigrette as a dressing, or combine it with other cooked greens to add a peppery flavor. Flowers have a spicy aroma and the same taste as the leaves. They can be used in a “flower” tossed salad or as a garnish.

Some simple ways to use arugula are to blend shredded arugula with melted butter for seafood, potatoes and pasta; add to vegetable frittata; serve with warm, red-skinned potato salad on top; toss with linguine (add pieces of sun-dried tomato and a generous sprinkling of Parmesan cheese); and combine with cherry tomatoes and sprinkle with coarsely grated mozzarella.

### **New Potatoes with Creamy Arugula Sauce**

6 small, red, new potatoes  
1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

#### *Dressing*

¾ cup arugula  
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts  
1½ teaspoons fresh lemon thyme or thyme leaves  
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
1½ tablespoon olive oil  
3 tablespoons whipping cream  
¾ teaspoon (or more) fresh lemon juice  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves



walnuts  
fresh mint sprigs  
borage flowers (optional)

Cook potatoes until just tender. Cut into quarters and place into a large bowl. Add ½ cup oil and mix to coat. Refrigerate while preparing dressing.

*For dressing:* Finely chop arugula and ½ cup walnuts with thyme and pepper in a food processor. With the machine running, gradually add oil through the feeding tube. Gradually add cream through feeding tube, blending with on/off turns. Mix in 1 tablespoon lemon juice.

Pour dressing over potatoes. Add chopped mint and mix. Season with salt and more lemon juice, if desired. Garnish with chopped walnuts, mint sprigs and borage flowers. Serve salad at room temperature. Serves 8.

### **Arugula Salad with Orange Vinaigrette**

1½ tablespoons white wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon fresh orange juice  
¼ teaspoon Dijon-style mustard  
¼ cup olive oil  
4 cups loosely packed arugula

In a small bowl whisk together the vinegar, orange juice, mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Add the oil in a stream and whisk until the dressing is emulsified.

Rinse arugula, spin dry and remove coarse stems. Toss the arugula with the vinaigrette. Serves 3.

## **basil**

Basil enhances almost everything and comes in a variety of flavors, including lime, lemon, clove and cinnamon. Basil is commonly

used fresh in cooked recipes. In general, it is added at the last moment, as cooking quickly destroys the flavor. For Italian cooks basil is one of the important seasonings in a variety of tomato and pasta dishes. Thai cooks use basil for stir-frying beef, seafood and poultry.

To keep the color a bright, garden green, add a pinch or two of coarse salt to basil leaves before chopping. For best aroma and flavor, shred fresh basil gently with fingers instead of chopping with a knife. Add dried basil the during last minutes of cooking or use fresh.

Basil flowers have a mild basil flavor; use any place you would use the leaves. They are lovely scattered over salads, sauces and scrambled eggs. The best way to remove florets is to snip the stem closely above and below each flower whorl, discarding the stems in between, which are bitter.

Basil is one of the most commonly used herbs. Consider one of the following simple uses:

Use basil to flavor vinegars and salad dressings. Vinegar made with opal basil is pink; vinegar made with purple ruffles is a beautiful red.

Basil butter, made by kneading a handful of finely minced basil leaves into a quarter pound of butter along with a little lemon juice, is a useful mixture to have on hand. It freezes well, and small pieces can be sliced as needed for a sauce to serve over broiled fish or poached eggs or for a spread on sourdough bread.

Perk up tossed salads by sprinkling crushed basil over the salad or adding it to French or Russian dressing. Stir shredded leaves

into melted butter to pour over steamed carrots, boiled potatoes or spinach.

Fresh basil leaves can be boiled and eaten spinach-style as an aromatic vegetable dish. Basil belongs in every tomato dish, from tomato juice to tomato aspics, soups, salads and soufflés. It gives a special touch to scrambled eggs, sausage, lamb, venison, beef, liver and all types of poultry.

The robustness of basil rescues cheese dishes from blandness. Use it in cheese soufflés, cheese omelets, cheese puddings and cottage cheese. It is the perfect flavoring for egg and potato salads.

Basil flavors Manhattan clam chowder, minestrone, bean and beef soups, and it can be used in the barbecue as a smoke producer, as a basting brush and in marinade. For a spicy taste in seafood, use it in liquid to cook fish or shellfish. It gives an elusive, tantalizing herbal taste to West Coast cioppino. Wrap foods (shrimp, chicken, fish) for cooking in lettuce leaf basil.

Rolls and bread are well seasoned with basil. It adds an aromatic twist to sandwiches and hamburgers when used in place of lettuce.

A combination of basil, parsley and savory has quite a biting flavor and serves nicely as a substitute for black pepper.

Add ¼ teaspoon of basil to the water in which you boil potatoes and spaghetti.

Scented basil gives interesting flavors to fruits and desserts. When baking apples or making apple pie, sprinkle a few leaves over the apples for delicious flavor.

Basil tea is a good tonic against the effects of rheumatism.

Pesto is a creamy emulsion of fresh basil leaves and grated Parmesan cheese, garlic, pine nuts and olive oil. Traditionally made with a mortar and pestle, pesto can be used as a classic sauce for ribbon pasta and potato gnocchi; a classic seasoning for minestrone; a sauce for boiled steaks and fish, baked potatoes or potato salad, green beans or garbanzos; a stuffing for tomatoes or roast chicken; and as a sauce over cold poached vegetables.

### **Basil, Garlic and Cheese Sauce**

- 2 cups fresh basil leaves, stripped from their stems, coarsely chopped and tightly packed; or substitute 2 cups fresh flat-leaf Italian parsley, coarsely chopped, and 2 tablespoons dried basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 to 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped pine nuts or walnuts
- 1 to 1½ cups freshly grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup olive oil

**To make in a blender:** Combine the coarsely chopped fresh basil (or fresh parsley and dried basil), salt, pepper, garlic, pine nuts or walnuts and 1 cup of olive oil in the blender jar. Blend at high speed until the ingredients are smooth, stopping the blender every 5 or 6 seconds to push the herbs down with a rubber spatula. The sauce should be thin enough to run off the spatula easily. If it seems too thick, blend in as much as ½ cup more olive oil. Transfer the sauce to a bowl and stir in the grated cheese.

**To make by hand:** Crush the coarsely chopped fresh basil (or fresh parsley and dried basil) with a mortar and pestle or

place in a heavy mixing bowl and crush with the back of a large wooden spoon until the herbs are smooth and almost paste-like. Work in the salt and pepper, garlic, and pine nuts or walnuts, and then add the olive oil, ½ cup at a time, while continuing to crush the herbs. When the sauce is thin enough to run off the pestle or spoon easily, mix in the grated cheese.

### **Lime Basil Sauce**

4 cups lightly packed fresh basil leaves  
½ cup olive oil or salad oil  
2 cups (about 8 ounces) freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
2 tablespoons sugar  
3 cloves garlic, quartered  
¼ cup lime juice

In a blender or food processor, combine basil, oil, 1 cup of the cheese, sugar, garlic and lime juice. Whirl until smoothly blended; scrape down sides of container several times.

Good served with just about everything — cooked spaghetti, spaghetti squash, boiled potatoes, steamed vegetables, fish and poultry.

The mixture freezes beautifully. Place in a zipper-type freezer bag to freeze. To use, break off what you need and put the rest back in the bag and keep frozen.

### **Braised Leeks with Lime Basil Sauce**

5 pounds leeks, trimmed to 6–7 inches from the root end and washed well  
5 cups chicken or vegetable broth  
2 lemons, sliced very thin and seeded  
½ cup olive oil  
¼ cup lime basil sauce  
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place leeks in 2 layers in a 14×9×2-inch oval dish. Pour broth over leeks. Place lemon slices evenly over leeks. Drizzle olive oil over lemons. Cover tightly with microwave-safe plastic wrap. Cook at 100 percent power in a high-power oven for 50 minutes. Prick plastic to release steam.

Remove from oven and uncover. Remove lemons, or leave on if desired. Sprinkle lime basil sauce evenly over leeks. Season with salt and pepper. Serve hot or cold. Serves 8 as a side dish.

### **Tomatoes Stuffed with Lime Basil Sauce**

medium-sized, ripe tomatoes  
dry bread crumbs  
Lime Basil Sauce

Carefully scoop the flesh, juice and seeds from the tomatoes, leaving a shell. Chop the pulp; measure and add equal parts dry bread crumbs and the Lime Basil Sauce. Pack into the tomato shells, top with more dry bread crumbs and drizzle a little butter on top, or top with some grated Parmesan cheese. Bake at 350°F just until tomatoes are heated through.

May be served hot, chilled or at room temperature as a salad or first course.

### **Lemon Basil Chicken**

½ cup butter or margarine  
2 chicken breasts, split, skinned and boned  
1 cup regular-strength chicken broth  
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or 1 tablespoon dried basil  
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Melt 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat in a 12-inch frying pan. Lightly brown chicken in butter. Add broth, grated

lemon peel, chopped basil and lemon juice; simmer, covered, until chicken is no longer pink when cut in thickest part, 12 to 15 minutes. Lift out and keep warm.

Boil pan juices, uncovered, over high heat until reduced to about half. Reduce heat to medium. Add any accumulated juices from the chicken, then add, in 1 chunk, the remaining 6 tablespoons of butter; stir constantly until butter is melted. If the sauce is too thin to coat a spoon, simmer, uncovered, shaking the pan constantly, until thicker. Pour around chicken. Garnish with basil leaves. 4 servings.

### **Tomato Basil Sorbet**

6 ripe tomatoes  
juice of 1 large lemon  
½ cup sugar syrup\*  
6–8 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped  
¾ cup tomato sauce  
salt and pepper to taste  
dash Tabasco sauce

Peel tomatoes. Put tomatoes, lemon juice, sugar syrup, basil and tomato sauce in a blender or food processor. Blend; add seasoning as necessary. Freeze until slushy. Beat. Put in freezer until ready to serve.

#### *\*Sugar syrup*

Bring 2 pounds sugar and 4 cups water to a gentle boil. Reduce heat until bubbles break the surface. Simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool. Store up to 3 weeks.

### **Melon Steeped in Basil and Mint**

2 cups water  
⅓ cup sugar  
1 cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves  
⅓ cup lightly packed fresh mint leaves  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh ginger  
1 small honeydew melon

1 small cantaloupe  
fresh basil sprigs  
yogurt

In a 2-to 3-quart pan, bring water and sugar to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat and stir in basil leaves, mint and ginger. Set aside to cool slightly. Meanwhile, cut honeydew and cantaloupe in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Cut each honeydew half into 6 wedges. Cut off and discard rind. Place melon pieces in a 9×13-inch dish or pan. Pour the warm syrup over melon; cover and chill 4 to 6 hours. Drain; discard liquid, leaves and ginger. Serve, or cover and chill up to overnight. Arrange equal portions of both melons on each of 4 dinner plates; garnish with basil sprigs. Spoon yogurt onto individual portions.

## **borage**

Borage is a Mediterranean herb that is grown for both its leaves and its flowers. It is also known as bee bread because it attracts bees. Borage is used throughout the world. In Asia Minor it plays an important role as food and is used in soups or cooked as a green vegetable like spinach. In Genoa, chopped borage seasons ravioli stuffing while the leaves are served in fritters. In India it is cultivated by Europeans to give beer a pleasant flavor.



Borage leaves taste like cucumber and can be added to salads (chop fine and sprinkle like parsley or use whole young leaves), soups and cream cheese spreads.

Leaves can also be cooked as a vegetable, though they become moist and sticky. When cooked, they lose their bristles and become like dark green spinach. Boil with only a little water, then chop fine and serve with butter.

The leaves also enhance the flavor of iced tea and fruit drinks and can be served as a garnish. Steep the leaves in boiling water to make a tea that stimulates the circulation and soothes the throat. May be served hot or cold.

Borage flowers also have a cucumberlike flavor and are edible. The brilliant blue color makes them particularly decorative in the salad bowl, floated in cider, punch or lemonade, and as a decoration on cakes and ice cream. They can also be candied: Dip them in pasteurized egg white, then sugar and dry.

### **Herbed Cucumber Dip with Borage Blossoms**

*Adapted from deliciousliving.com*

1 medium cucumber, peeled and seeded  
1 scant teaspoon white wine vinegar  
½ teaspoon soy sauce  
3 dashes Angostura bitters  
pinch sugar  
salt and freshly ground white pepper  
1 clove garlic, pressed  
2 teaspoons each finely chopped parsley and basil  
1 tablespoon finely chopped dill  
1½ cups sour cream  
¾ cup yogurt  
about 20 borage blossoms

Finely chop the cucumber. Combine cucumber, vinegar, soy sauce, bitters and sugar, and season with salt and freshly

ground pepper. Blend well and let stand while preparing the garlic and herbs.

Add the garlic and herbs; toss well and add sour cream and yogurt. Combine well, cover and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. Transfer to a pretty bowl and garnish with a circle of borage blossoms just before serving.

### **Cold Cucumber Soup with Borage Flowers**

1½ cups peeled and diced cucumber  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon dill seed  
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed  
1 teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon white pepper  
½ cup yogurt  
1 cup sour cream  
¼ cup toasted chopped walnuts  
cleaned borage flowers

In a large bowl, combine cucumber, olive oil, dill seed, garlic, salt and white pepper. Let stand 3 hours.

Puree half the mixture in blender and add to remainder. Stir in yogurt, sour cream and toasted walnuts. Chill for 8 hours before serving. Decorate with flowers.

### **Borage and Yogurt Drink**

3 cups plain yogurt  
2 tablespoons fresh, coarsely chopped borage leaves  
1 teaspoon finely minced fresh chives  
club soda  
4 borage blossoms

In a blender, whirl together yogurt, borage, chives, and ½ cup club soda. Pour into a glass pitcher and add enough of the club soda to make a drink the consistency of light cream. Float borage blossoms on top.

## calendula

Calendula, with its bright yellow flowers, is also known as pot marigold and marigold. The best varieties for culinary purposes are the small, flowered, signet marigolds ('Tangerine' or 'Lemon Gem'), orange calendulas (Kablouna) or Mexican marigold (*Tagetes lucida*), which has an anise-licorice flavor.

The culinary uses of fresh petals are primarily in salads and dried petals in broths and soups. Also try adding them chopped fine to your favorite bread pudding recipe, pasta, biscuits, salad dressing or scrambled eggs.

Fresh, dried or frozen calendula petals can be used in any way you would use saffron, but more generously, since they are milder and their color fades more than saffron does in cooking. The finely crumbled petals may be used to color butter, rice, stews, noodles, cream soups and broths during cooking. They give foods a deep yellow color, as if many eggs are added. They are also used in tea for flavor and color.

The petals have no taste before they are cooked and after cooking taste a little bitter, but when mixed with cream cheese and other ingredients they have an unusual and savory flavor. The deepest orange flowers are said to have the strongest taste.

### Marigold Rice

Add dried marigold petals, onion sautéed in butter and some rosemary to chicken or beef bouillon when cooking rice.

### Marigold Fish Chowder

Add dried marigold petals to your favorite fish chowder recipe or add marigold petals to canned fish chowder and prepare according to the directions on the can.

### Eggs Marigold

Add dried and crushed marigold petals to yolks of hard-cooked eggs, along with mayonnaise, before filling the white halves. Remove petals from fresh marigolds and tuck them into the centers of the stuffed eggs, arranging them to look like a flower garnishing each egg half.

### Marigold Cauliflower

Add 2 teaspoons crushed, dried marigold petals to cauliflower during the last 10 minutes of cooking, making sure the cauliflower is completely immersed and becomes colored an even saffron yellow. Pour melted butter with chopped parsley over the cauliflower and decorate with fresh marigold flowers.

### Marigold Cheese Dip

- 1 large package cream cheese
- ½ pint sour cream
- 1 teaspoon sherry
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon fresh summer savory, chopped fine
- 1 tablespoon fresh marigold petals, chopped fine

Blend cheese, cream and sherry until smooth. Add chives, savory and marigold petals (if dried ones are used, soak in water for half an hour before using and drain thoroughly). Season with salt and freshly ground pepper, if desired. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Serve with chips, crackers, tacos or small, hot biscuits. Serves 6 to 12.

## chervil

Chervil's name comes from the Latin *chaerephylum*, "a joy-giving leaf." It is also called beaked parsley and French parsley. Though it is referred to as the gourmet's parsley, it



tastes more like tarragon or anise than parsley.

Flowers are edible, with a flavor like parsley with hints of tarragon and citrus.

Chervil brings out the best in other herbs and foods with which it is combined.

Chervil tastes best when not cooked or cooked very little, so add it at the last moment to soups or sauces.

Chervil is a fine flavoring for cold drinks such as tomato juice cocktail as well as fruit juices, omelets, deviled and scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, appetizers, sandwiches, and oysters or mussels.

Chervil can be used in any kind of salad (green, vegetable, potato or seafood), in butter to enhance chicken, fish or cooked vegetables, and in soups, especially cream of carrot or potato. Sprinkle it lavishly on chops, fish and steak and use as a garnish for meatloaf or over slices of cantaloupe, honeydew or crenshaw melons. It is indispensable for béarnaise sauce and fine herb combinations and makes a lovely platter garnish if added at the last moment to meats, salads or vegetables. Black bread is delicious with ripe avocado and sprinkled with chopped fresh chervil.

### **Chervil and Potato Salad**

- 10 unpeeled new potatoes
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 small onions
- 1 cup beef broth
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon-type mustard



- 1 cup chervil, chopped
- salt and pepper, to taste

Cook the potatoes in water to cover until they are tender but still firm. Peel the potatoes while they are hot. With a heated knife, slice them into a warm bowl set in a bowl of hot water. Moisten the slices with the olive oil and let them stand for 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Chop finely the onions and add them to the potatoes in the bowl. Combine the beef broth with the white wine vinegar and mustard.

Pour the dressing over the potatoes and sprinkle with the chopped fresh chervil. Toss the potatoes and the dressing by shaking the bowl. Do not blend with a spoon. Serve the salad in the bowl.

### **Leek and Chervil Soup**

- 3 tablespoons leeks, washed and chopped
- 2 tablespoons carrots, minced
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons potatoes, diced
- 4 tablespoons fresh chervil, chopped
- 5 cups chicken stock
- ½ cup light cream
- pepper to taste

Melt 4 tablespoons butter in a large saucepan. Add vegetables and sauté for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add chicken stock, pepper and chervil, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 40 minutes. Puree in a blender until smooth. Return puree to a clean pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, simmer for 5 minutes; add cream and remaining butter. Simmer until butter melts.



### **Chervil Butter**

- ½ cup butter or margarine, room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1½ tablespoons fresh (or 2 teaspoons dried) chervil
- 2 drops hot pepper sauce

In a small bowl, cream butter or margarine and lemon peel until fluffy. Add chervil and pepper sauce. Beat until light and blended. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate. Remove from refrigerator about 20 minutes before serving. Makes ½ cup.

## **chives**

Though chives are a member of the onion family, they do not impart the strong, hot flavor typical of onions. Chives are compatible with virtually every kind of food except sweet. They have a light, delicate but unmistakable onion flavor, but lack the strong fragrance and aftertaste of onions. Chives can be used as a mild onion substitute in almost any recipe calling for a touch of raw onion as a flavoring ingredient.

Use them finely snipped or in long strips. Always use a scissors to cut them since chopping with a knife crushes out the juice. Use chives to perk up soups and stews, omelets, scrambled eggs, hors d'oeuvres, fish sauces, salads and cooked vegetables. They can be used in jellied soups in summer, particularly vichyssoise, added to Hollandaise sauce and used to flavor biscuit and bread dough.

Cut the leaves into cream cheese for use as a spread, cottage cheese as a low calorie salad and sour cream as a topping on baked potato. They can be used as a garnish on salads, casseroles or meat platters. The

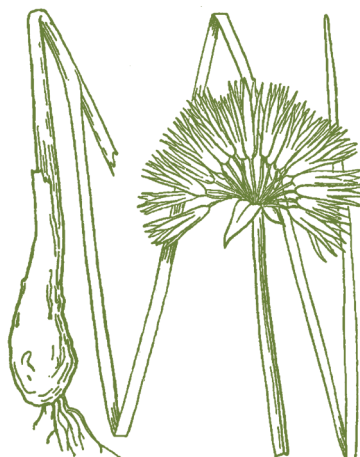
flowers are similar in flavor to the leaves and can be used in salads, as a garnish, or in vinegars.

Some simple ways to use chives are to dip the flowers in light batter and deep fry until light brown as an accompaniment to fish; add finely snipped chives, along with an equal amount of minced parsley, to rice; or add to grainy mustard on grilled fish or chicken. Try wrapping whole leaves around bundles of carrot strips, beans or asparagus.

### **Chive Avocado Soup**

- 2 ripe avocados
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken stock, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon fresh snipped chives
- ½ tablespoon salt
- freshly ground white pepper to taste

Peel and remove the seeds from the avocados. Puree the avocados with the sour cream. Blend the avocado puree with the stock, chives, salt and pepper. Chill. Thirty minutes before serving, bring to a cool room temperature. Garnish with fresh chives and/or chive blossoms. Serves 4.



### **Low-Calorie “Sour Cream” with Chives**

- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 cup whole curd cottage cheese
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped chives

Place buttermilk, cottage cheese and lemon juice in a blender or processor. Blend at highest speed until very smooth. Fold in chives and refrigerate at least 3 hours before serving; it thickens as it chills. Use as a substitute for regular sour cream on potatoes.

### **Alaska Salmon in the Snow**

- 4 salmon fillets
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1¼ cups heavy cream
- 5 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons snipped chives
- 1¼ teaspoons grated lemon rind
- garnish: very thin slivers of lemon rind and several very small red radish “flowers”\*

Sprinkle salmon with ½ teaspoon salt. Arrange salmon in a well-greased shallow baking dish. Mix well the cream, lemon juice, chives, grated lemon rind and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt; pour over the fish.

Bake uncovered in a preheated 400°F oven, basting with the cream sauce once or twice, until flesh barely separates when tested with a knife, about 15 minutes. To serve, spoon sauce over salmon and garnish with a few slivers of lemon rind and the radish roses on the side.

\*To create radish flowers, trim off the root end and stem. Then make several parallel cuts from the root end nearly to the stem end. Turning the radish 90 degrees, make a second set of parallel cuts at right angles to the first cuts — again, nearly to the stem

end. Place in ice water to chill until the cut radish opens into a flower-like shape.

## **cilantro/coriander**

All parts of the cilantro plant are edible, although it is most often used in the leaf form (cilantro) or as dried seeds (coriander). It is one of the first herbs and spices ever used in cookery.



There is no substitute for the fresh leaves. When the leaves are cooked, the strong flavor is somewhat tamed, giving a deeper more expansive flavor rather than a sharp, contrasting accent. Because its flavor changes with cooking, it is usually added to cooked dishes just before serving.

Use cilantro much the same way you do parsley, but less generously, unless you like a predominately licorice flavor. The flavor combines well with sage and lemon and complements flavors such as garlic and chives. Cilantro goes well with beans, corn, pork and poultry and enlivens sausages and eggs, cheese, pasta and marinades for barbecued meats. Use the leaves in dishes with many flavors and with spicy foods such as curries and tempura; chop onto fish; add to cream cheese for a dip; stuff inside chicken before roasting; and warm with butter for a piquant sauce for vegetables such as garbanzos and corn.

The seed is called coriander and comes from the Greek word *korios*, meaning bed-bug. It is used by the Chinese in seafood, chicken and pork dishes; by Japanese as a

garnish; by Middle Easterners in lamb and vegetable dishes; by Portuguese in meat and fish stews; and by Russians in a tasty sauce that combines fresh coriander, walnuts, yogurt, red pepper and garlic.

Use seeds in curry and chili powder, pickling spices, sausages and many baked goods. Add them to salads and fish, peaches and apple cobbles, breads, and chicken or beef stock. Chew on seeds to aid digestion and keep the breath fresh. Use flowers as a garnish and in bouquets.

### **Classic Gazpacho**

- 2 large tomatoes (about 1 pound)
- 1 large cucumber, peeled, halved lengthwise, seeded
- 1 medium onion
- 1 large roasted red bell pepper
- 3 cups tomato juice
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ⅓ cup red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ⅛ teaspoon hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco)

Cut 1 tomato, ½ cucumber and ½ onion into 1-inch pieces and transfer to a food processor. Add bell pepper and puree. Transfer to a bowl. Add tomato juice, cilantro, vinegar, oil and hot pepper sauce. Seed remaining tomato. Dice tomato, cucumber and onion halves and add to the soup. Season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate. Serve well chilled. Serves 6.

### **Moroccan Lamb Stew**

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 3½ pounds boneless lamb, cut in 1-inch cubes

- 1 cup moist dried apricots
- 12 large sprigs fresh cilantro
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 3 sticks whole cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- salt and black pepper to taste

In a heavy Dutch oven, heat olive oil. Add onion, ginger and ground coriander. Sauté for 2 minutes. Add lamb and stir to coat with the onion mixture. Cover and cook over low heat for about 1 hour, adding a little water if necessary to prevent sticking. Stir in apricots. Tie 6 sprigs of fresh coriander, bay leaves, thyme and cinnamon together with kitchen string. Place on top of meat; cover and simmer until apricots are tender, about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and discard coriander-cinnamon bouquet. With a slotted spoon, remove lamb and apricots to a heavy serving platter. Keep warm. Stir honey into pan juices; boil to reduce and thicken the sauce. Stir in lemon juice and season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour the heated sauce over the lamb. Coarsely chop remaining fresh coriander and sprinkle over lamb. Serves 6.

### **Stir-Fried Snow Peas with Cilantro**

- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 4 cups snow peas
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- ½ cup finely chopped cilantro
- soy sauce (optional)
- sugar (optional)

Heat oil in a wok or large skillet until it is almost smoking hot. Add the scallions and snow peas and toss them quickly, just until

they are coated with oil. Add chicken broth, cover skillet and cook for 3 minutes while you mix cornstarch with 2 tablespoons water and the cilantro. Stir mixture quickly into peas and cook, stirring, until sauce thickens. Taste and add a little soy sauce and/or sugar if you like. Serves 4.

## dill

Dill is the perfect seasoning for most vegetables. The principal difference between seed and weed is the degree of pungency — seed has a robust flavor while weed is subtle and has a delicate bouquet.

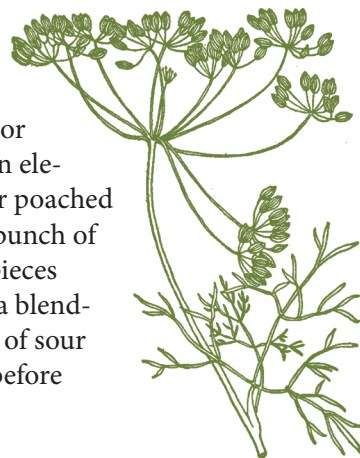
Use dill for flavoring salads, soups and sauces. Add it as a seasoning for beet, potato or seafood salads, cabbage or tomato soups, scrambled eggs or egg salads, pot roast, cream sauce poured over boiled or baked potatoes, breads or butters, or sprinkle it over lamb chops. Dill can be used alone or in combination with other herbs. Use seeds for flavoring breads and rolls and coleslaw. Put sprigs or seeds on cheese sandwiches.

New England cooks add a few seeds to water, wine or stock in which they poach Fourth of July salmon. There are countless recipes for dill pickles made with cucumbers as well as carrots, beets, cauliflower and snap beans.

Either dill weed or dill seed heads can be used in flavoring vinegar. When seed heads are used, vinegar has a pinkish color. Dill vinegar is good on salads, in tomato juice and in marinades for vegetables. Dill weed from vinegar can be used as a garnish when making hors d'oeuvres.

Add dill to hot melted butter to serve with boiled lobster, crab or shrimp or to may-

onnaise to accompany cold poached fish or lobster. For an elegant sauce for poached fish, break a bunch of fresh dill in pieces and whirl in a blender with a cup of sour cream; chill before serving.



Dill gives a distinctive flavor to dozens of Scandinavian dishes. Gravlax is fresh salmon marinated in sugar and spice and bunches of fresh dill and is often served with a dill and mustard sauce. Sprigs and snippets of dill are strewn over herring dishes and on salads of cucumber and sour cream, and they often garnish the smorgasbord and provide the herbal taste of spring for boiled new potatoes. Dill seed in apple pie is un-American, but as Scandinavian as smorgasbord and a perfectly fine combination. In Finland, dill is used in buttermilk soup, and in France it is used to flavor cakes and pastries.

### Shrimp with Dill Sauce

- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1½ teaspoons fresh dill
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ teaspoon dry sherry
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 pound shrimp cleaned and deveined
- cooked rice

In a medium saucepan melt margarine over low heat. Blend in cornstarch, dill, salt and pepper; stir until smooth. Remove from

heat. Gradually stir in milk until smooth. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly, and boil 1 minute. Stir in sherry, lemon juice and shrimp. Reduce heat and simmer 3 minutes or until heated through. Serve over rice. Serves 4.

### **Cucumber Sour Cream Sauce**

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1½ cups finely chopped cucumbers
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- dash white pepper

Combine all ingredients. Let stand for flavors to blend. Serve over broiled or baked fish or salad greens or in potato salad.

## **lemon balm**

Lemon balm is the perfect tea herb. Its mild flavor allows it to blend with most other herbs. Leaves are best when used fresh, but leaves and stems can be dried for a mild, lemony tea. For a tea with more character, add it and other mints to a base of black tea. Flowers are fragrant yellow-white; use as you do leaves.



Add a little chopped lemon balm to any dish that calls for lemon juice. Add near the end of cooking since the aromatic oils are dissipated by heat. The fragrance keeps fairly well in baked goods as it is captured by the surrounding medium.

Lemon balm is good in soups or salads.

It enhances the flavor of vegetables, light grains, roast chicken, steamed vegetables and fruit salads. It also teams well with corn, broccoli, asparagus, lamb, shellfish, freshly ground black pepper, olives and beans. Use leaves and flowers for tempura, and use as a barbecue brush for fish or chicken.

Toss whole or chopped fresh leaves into green salads, fruit salads, marinated vegetables, chicken salads, poultry stuffing, marinades for fish and punch.

Simple ways to use lemon balm: Lay fish or chicken over a bed of lemon balm leaves before baking or stuff the body of a chicken with leaves before roasting. Add minced leaves to soft-cooked custard to pour over fruit or to the filling for lemon meringue pie. Candy leaves for garnishes.

Lemon balm can be used in jellies. Tuck a leaf in a jelly jar before pouring in jelly, or use an infusion for part of the liquid called for in the recipe.

Steep leaves in Chablis or iced tea, strain and served chilled with sprig of balm on top, or freeze a leaf in an ice cube.

As a tea, lemon balm is an effective nightcap; combine equal parts lemon balm, chamomile and catnip. It is also a satisfying breakfast brew with mint and anise hyssop.

### **Lemon Balm Mayonnaise**

- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 pasteurized egg yolk, room temperature, or 1 tablespoon egg product
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup corn oil



¼ cup freshly diced shallot  
3 tablespoons minced fresh lemon balm  
or sorrel  
2 tablespoons dry white wine

Combine lemon juice, yolk, mustard, salt and pepper in the bowl of an electric mixer. Slowly beat in both oils in a thin stream. Mix in shallot, lemon balm and wine. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled.

### **Avgolemono (Greek Lemon Soup)**

4 cups chicken stock  
¼ cup long-grain rice  
3 eggs  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
salt and white pepper  
2 tablespoons finely chopped lemon balm  
leaves

Bring stock to a boil, add rice, cover and simmer until rice is soft, 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, beat eggs until frothy, then slowly beat in lemon juice.

Just before serving, heat stock to a simmer. Add about a cup of stock very slowly to the egg mixture, beating constantly until well mixed. Slowly stir this mixture into the simmering stock and keep stirring while it simmers for a few minutes and thickens to a thin custard. Don't let it boil — it will curdle.

Taste soup, add salt and pepper if you think it needs seasoning, and stir in lemon balm. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

### **Balmy Sunset**

1½ cups unsweetened pineapple juice  
1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice  
¾ cup light rum  
1½ teaspoons grenadine  
4 or 5 (5-inch) lemon balm sprigs  
garnish: lemon balm leaves

Mix juices, rum and grenadine in a glass pitcher. Add lemon balm sprigs, bruising them slightly. Steep the punch in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours, preferably all day.

Remove the lemon balm sprigs. Rub the rims of 4 chilled glasses with a lemon balm leaf. Serve the punch on the rocks or over crushed ice. Serves 4.

## **lemon verbena**

Lemon verbena is the most authentic lemon scent of all lemon-scented herbs. To use, strip leaves from stems and use whole or chopped. Fresh leaves are tough, so be sure to remove them from marinades, beverages and salad dressings before serving. The blossoms make a lovely garnish. They are white to pale lilac and share the lemon fragrance of the leaves.

Lemon verbena combines well with basil, chives, mint, parsley and tarragon. It can be used in place of lemon zest in desserts, soups, salads, fruit dishes, summer coolers, vegetables and custards. Use in beverages such as teas, summer coolers and straight-up martinis and like mint as a garnish in iced drinks. In jelly, use it as part of the infusion or place a sprig in the jar and pour hot jelly over it. Chopped leaves can be added to a fish sauce, sprinkled over a tomato salad, a seasonal fruit salad, a fruit cup or on cooked rice just before serving. Add dried leaves to batter when baking carrot, banana or zucchini bread. Place sprigs in drawers to give a lemony scent, or put a handful of leaves in your bath. If substituting lemon balm for lemon verbena, use twice the amount.

### **Lemon Verbena Ricotta Pancakes**

⅔ cup ricotta cheese  
2 large eggs

- ¼ cup low-fat milk
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon julienned lemon rind, chopped
- 1 teaspoon finely minced lemon verbena leaves
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

The night before, put the cheese in a paper coffee filter in a strainer over a bowl; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. In the morning, discard the whey collected in the bowl.

Process egg yolks and ricotta cheese in a food processor or blender until smooth. Add milk, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt and process until completely blended. Fold in lemon rind and lemon verbena.

Beat egg whites in a mixing bowl until just stiff but still moist. Fold gently into batter. Heat 2 teaspoons vegetable oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Drop batter by ¼ cupfuls onto skillet and cook until tops are bubbly and look dry. Turn and cook the second side until golden brown. Repeat with remaining batter. Serve immediately with Raspberry Sauce.

### **Raspberry Sauce**

- 2 cups raspberries, fresh or frozen
- ¾ cup sugar

Heat and simmer berries until sauce coats the back of a spoon. Strain sauce through a fine mesh sieve and discard pulp. Cool, cover and refrigerate sauce. Keeps for a couple of weeks in the refrigerator. Can be frozen.

### **An Elegant Appetizer**

Place lemon verbena leaves on a crystal plate. Set honeydew wedge on leaves and top with a paper-thin slice of pink ham.

## **lovage**

Garden lovage is one of the old English herbs and is also known as “love parsley.” It tastes sharply of celery and parsley with a spicy depth. The flavor is stronger than celery and should be used with a lighter touch. The roots and seeds add a taste of yeast to soups and stews. The whole plant may be used as a vegetable. Braise young stalks as you would celery. If it goes to seed, use the seeds for making breads, herb butters, chicken salads, meatloaf and candy.

Add leaves and stalks to soups, stews, casseroles, roasts and gravy as well as salads, dressings, marinades and sauces. Chop and sprinkle on cooked vegetables, stews and broiled meats. Lovage is traditionally used on potatoes in all forms. Mix with sour cream to spoon on baked potatoes, add with marjoram to potato soup, add to mashed potatoes and put it in white sauce with parsley and dill for boiled potatoes.

Simple ways to use lovage: Make a cup of bouillon soup, add a few lovage leaves, sprinkle with some grated cheese. Fold a combination of chopped lovage, tarragon and parsley into cooked brown or white rice along with a few gratings of lemon rind. Use in flavored vinegar. Candy stems and leaves for decorating cakes and cookies. Place broiled or roast meats on a bed of lovage on a serving platter and you’ll get a beautiful garnish, a delicate seasoning and a wonderful aroma. Crush leaves and put them in bath water.



The hollow stems are used by the Pennsylvania Germans as tubes through which to drink water or milk when they have a sore mouth or throat. The stem also makes a nice straw for sipping tomato juice cocktails or Bloody Marys.

### **Herbed Gougeres**

- 8 tablespoons butter
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup coarsely grated Gruyere cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh lovage
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill

In a saucepan, combine the butter, salt and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the flour all at once; beat well with a wooden spoon until it is incorporated. Return the saucepan to moderate heat and cook until the dough becomes quite stiff and pulls away from the sides of the pan.

Remove from the heat and beat in the eggs, one at a time. Stir in ⅔ cup of the cheese and all the chopped herbs.

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Drop the dough by tablespoonfuls onto an ungreased baking sheet to make individual puffs or to form a ring. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until puffed and golden brown.

### **Cauliflower in Lemon Cream**

- 1 head cauliflower or 2 packages (10 ounces each) frozen cauliflower
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3 to 5 tablespoons oil
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- ½ cup sour cream

- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh lovage, divided
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon peel

Separate cauliflower into florets; cook until tender and drain. Or thaw and drain frozen cauliflower. Do not cook.

In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, oil and garlic. Pour over cauliflower while still slightly warm. Chill. Mix sour cream, lemon juice, mustard and 1 tablespoon lovage; set aside. Drain any unabsorbed dressing from cauliflower. Toss cauliflower gently with sour cream sauce so florets don't break. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon lovage and the lemon peel. Makes about 6 servings.

## **marjoram**

Marjoram is one of the most frequently used culinary herbs. It goes with almost any food or herb and tastes like a mild oregano with hint of balsam. Some describe the flavor as piney and sweet. This sweetness complements the spiciness of oregano, bay, garlic, onion, coriander, parsley, rosemary, savory, thyme and basil.

It is especially good with beef, veal, lamb, roast poultry, fish, pâtés, green vegetables, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, eggs, mushrooms, parsnips, potatoes, squash and tomatoes. Add it to stews, sautés, marinades, dressings, herb butters, flavored vinegars and oils, cheese spread, soups and stuffings. It goes well with beans and can be used in white bean salads, over steamed green beans and in bean, split pea or lentil soups.

Stir generous amount of marjoram into batter for cornbread and corn muffins, add

to pie crust for meat and fruit pies, and use as a garnish for salad or as a salad green. In barbecuing, it is a smoke producer and can be used as an herbal basting brush.

Toss cooked spaghetti with finely minced sweet marjoram, olive oil and a sprinkling of red pepper flakes. Coat seedless grapes with cream cheese smoothed with heavy cream and roll in minced, fresh sweet marjoram. Chill until ready to serve.

### **Sweet Potato and Marjoram Salad**

6 cooked sweet potatoes  
1 small onion  
1 medium celery rib  
½ cup olive oil  
juice of 1 lemon  
2 teaspoons soy sauce  
½ cup coarsely chopped parsley  
4 to 5 sprigs of marjoram or 1 teaspoon dried marjoram  
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
garnish: ½ cup cashew nuts, freshly toasted

Peel sweet potatoes and cut them into ½-inch dice. Finely dice the onion and celery. Put the vegetables in a large bowl.

Mix the olive oil, lemon juice and soy sauce in a small bowl. Stir in the chopped parsley. Stem and chop the fresh marjoram or crumble the dried leaves. Add to the olive oil and season the dressing lightly. Toss the dressing with the vegetables. Just before serving, sprinkle the salad with the cashews. The salad can be served warm or at room temperature. Serves 6.

### **Barb's Boosha's Polish Sausage**

10 pounds pork shoulder, cut into 1-inch pieces  
2 onions, coarsely chopped

1 pint water  
salt  
freshly ground black pepper  
marjoram

Put pork and onions through the coarse disk of a meat grinder. (If there was a bone in the pork shoulder, cover it with water and simmer while you are grinding the meat. Use the resulting broth in place of the water.) Add water (or broth) and the salt, pepper and marjoram to taste (about 3 tablespoons salt, 1 teaspoon pepper and 1 ounce of marjoram). Knead the mixture with both hands.

Form into sausage patties. Fry or grill until the meat is cooked through. Or stuff into sausage casings and cook or freeze.

To cook, prick sausages in several places. Put in frying pan with about 1 inch of water and simmer for 20 minutes. Cook away any remaining water and carefully brown sausages in the fat left in the pan.

## **mexican mint marigold**

This fine culinary substitute for tarragon is also known as cloud plant (Mexico), sweet mace, Mexican or winter tarragon, sweet or mint-scented marigold, root beer plant, Mexican marigold mint and yerba anise. The flavor is indistinguishable from that of tarragon. Because mint marigold breaks down more quickly if heated, it is best added at the end of cooking. Substitute it for tarragon in equal portions in salads.

Chop fresh leaves and use them to season chicken and tossed green salads. Stuff chicken with fresh branches before baking. Brew into sweet, anise-flavored tea. Sprinkle petals in salads and float them in summer drinks.

While stems of the plant are still green and pliable, weave them together in groups of 6 or 9 as you would braid hair, then tie the 2 ends of each group together to form a circle. Dried leaves can be removed as needed for cooking. If the wreaths are made small and interwoven with other herbs, they can be tossed whole into a soup or stew as a bouquet garni.

### **Foiled Baked Fish**

Place 1 pound of fresh fish fillets on a piece of buttered aluminum foil or parchment. Slash the fillets at 2-inch intervals and insert a thin slice of lemon into each cut. Dot the fish with butter, salt and pepper to taste, then sprinkle with a cup of chopped Mexican mint marigold leaves. Double fold the edges of the foil to seal; fold parchment around the fish letter style, then turn the ends under. Bake the packet no more than 20 minutes in an oven preheated to 350°F. The fish is done when it flakes easily. Avoid overcooking.

## **mint**

Mint is one of the most common herbs, and in the garden, it grows like a weed. It is an aggressive plant that can quickly take over, so it is important to contain it. Some mints overwinter during milder Alaska winters. Ginger mint is one of the hardy varieties.

Mint's flavor is very delicate, so it should be added close to the end of cooking time, or it should be sprinkled over the dish after it is plated. It can also discolor if chopped and left for any length of time.

There are over 600 different mint varieties around the world, providing an amazing array of minty flavors. In greenhouses or

nursery catalogs you may find spearmint, ginger mint, chocolate mint, mojito mint, pineapple mint, apple mint, orange mint and more. Each one has its own taste and might not be easily substituted in a recipe for regular fresh mint. It is fun to experiment, however.

Mint can be stored fresh or dried for future use. If you are keeping it fresh, wrap it in a damp paper towel and store it in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Or take fresh stems of mint and stand them upright in a jar of water and keep in a cool place. This will keep it fresh for as long as 2 to 3 weeks and it will be ready to use at a moment's notice. It is easy to dry and is great as tea, either by itself or as part of a tea blend.

Mint has many beneficial qualities. It can calm an upset stomach, help you be more alert and even stimulate digestive enzymes.

Mint complements many foods, especially summer foods like tomatoes, eggplant, squash, cucumbers, watermelon, melons and peppers. It goes well with other summery herbs such as parsley, cilantro, basil and dill and also with citrus flavors such as lemon and lime and spices such as cumin, ginger, garlic, and curry powders or pastes. It is used liberally in many Thai and Middle Eastern dishes. Many ethnic groups, including Armenians, Greeks, Persians, Spanish, Indians, Brazilians, Africans, and Latin and Caribbean people, make use of the fresh taste of mint.



### **Minted Fruit Salad**

- 1 cantaloupe, rind and seeds removed, cut into small pieces with a knife or melon baller
- 1 apple, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- ½ pound grapes, halved
- 2 kiwis, peeled, quartered and sliced
- ⅓ cup fresh mint, chopped, plus additional for garnish

Combine fruit and chill. Right before serving, add mint; toss and serve.

### **Strawberry Smoothie**

- 1 cup unsweetened frozen or fresh strawberries
- 1 teaspoon coarsely chopped mint leaves
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup low-fat vanilla yogurt

Place the strawberries, mint leaves, orange juice and yogurt in a blender jar. Whip until thick and smooth. The mint adds a refreshing flavor note to the smoothie.

### **Orange Mint Rice Salad**

*Recipe courtesy of USA Rice Federation at [www.usarice.com](http://www.usarice.com)*

- 3 oranges
- 3 cups cooked rice
- ⅓ cup golden raisins
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- Salt and pepper to taste

Peel and segment two oranges; set aside. Squeeze juice from remaining orange; set aside. In a large bowl, combine rice, orange segments, raisins, mint and walnuts. Add orange juice; toss well. Salt and pepper to taste.

## **nasturtium**

Nasturtiums are grown for their blossoms and the peppery flavor of their leaves. They are called “Indian cress” because when they were first introduced, they were used as a salad green.

The blossoms add peppery flavor to lettuce or vegetable salads, particularly cabbage and green bean salads. They can be used as a garnish for fruit salads, on hot fish, in sandwiches, as a garnish for meat or as an addition to vinegar. Try floating a flower in a bowl of vichyssoise or cold cream of asparagus soup.

Simple ways to use nasturtiums: For an unusual spread, mince and blend the flowers with butter. Make rice with consommé and fold in chopped blossoms. For a colorful salad dressing, whirl about 2 dozen blossoms into ½ pint of mayonnaise. To use as a cocktail hors d'oeuvre, carefully stuff blossoms with small amounts of a spread, such as cream cheese and chives, cream cheese and pineapple, ham salad, fresh crab meat salad, egg salad, tuna salad, salmon or red caviar mixed with softened cream cheese.

A handful of chopped leaves enlivens a salad of milder flavored greens. When mixed with chives, nasturtiums make a piquant omelet filling. Leaves can be added to soup and used to wrap rice and seafood for cooking. Mix equal parts chopped nasturtium leaves and butter for a spicy spread for hot fish.

Buds and seed pods can be substituted for capers, used chopped or whole in a salad, or added to a sauce for lamb or fish. During World War II, when pepper was very expensive and at times unobtainable, nasturtium seeds were gathered and ground as a substitute.

### **Pickled Nasturtium Pod**

In a large-mouthed, 1-quart jar combine:

- 1 tablespoon salt
- 6 peppercorns
- 2 cups wine vinegar

Add enough green nasturtium buds or seed pods to fill the bottle. If you do not have enough pods to fill the bottle, cork what you have and add new pods each day until the jar is full. Seal it and store it for 3 to 4 weeks. If desired, a garlic clove may be added to the pickle before sealing.

### **Caponata**

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3½ cups diced (¼-inch pieces) eggplant
- ¾ cup finely chopped onion
- ¾ cup finely chopped celery
- ½ cup chopped, pitted Kalamata olives
- 3 tablespoons chopped, drained nasturtium capers
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar or to taste
- 3 tablespoons golden raisins
- 3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted lightly
- 3 plum tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch dice (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons cocoa powder
- ¼ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- French bread slices

Salt and set diced eggplant in a colander to drain for approximately 2 to 3 hours.

In a heavy skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over moderately high heat until it is hot but not smoking. Cook the drained eggplant, stirring for 3 to 5 minutes or until it is tender, and transfer it to a bowl. To the skillet add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and cook the onion and the celery over moderate heat, stirring, for 5 minutes. Add the olives,

## **Herb Mixes**

Below are some traditional herb mixes often used in cooking.

### **Herbes de Provence**

Used in French cooking and characterized by rosemary and a hint of lavender.

- 2 teaspoons dried rosemary
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried savory
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 1 teaspoon cracked fennel seed

Herbes de Provence are used to season roasts of all sorts; add them to bouillabaisse or cioppino, and include them in quiches, savory tarts and other similar dishes.

### **Fines Herbes**

Fines herbes refers to a combination of herbs that are used in Mediterranean cooking.

- 1 tablespoon tarragon
- 1 tablespoon chervil
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- 1 tablespoon chives

Use with eggs (e.g., omelets and soufflés), add to homemade chicken soup, sprinkle on a chicken before roasting or use on broiled fish such as tilapia and flounder.

Because dried parsley and dried chives don't have much flavor, it is best to use fresh herbs in the mixture.

### **Bouquet Garni**

This is a bundle of herbs tied together with a string or put in a mesh bag. There is no generic recipe for bouquet garni, but most recipes include thyme and bay leaf. Depending on the recipe, a bouquet garni may also include parsley, basil, chervil, rosemary, peppercorns, savory and tarragon.

Bouquet garni is used to prepare soup, stock and various stews; it is cooked with the other ingredients but is removed before the dish is served.

capers, vinegar, sugar, raisins, pine nuts, tomatoes, tomato paste and cocoa. Cook the mixture, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 10 minutes or until it is cooked through and the celery is tender. Add the eggplant to the skillet and heat through. Stir in the parsley; let the caponata cook. Chill it, covered, overnight. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve the caponata on French bread slices brushed with olive oil and grilled or fried.

### **Grilled Turkey Cutlets Piccata**

- 1½ tablespoons nasturtium capers with liquid
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound boned, skinned turkey breast lemon wedges

Cut turkey breast across the grain into slices ¼ inch thick. Rinse and pat dry. Drain caper liquid into a shallow 8- or 9-inch-wide pan. Stir in lemon juice, oil and pepper. Turn turkey slices in liquid to coat; cover and chill at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours. Turn slices over once.

Place slices on a grill 4 to 6 inches above a solid bed of hot coals. Cook, turning once, until meat turns white in center, about 45 seconds per side; brush often with marinade. Transfer meat and sprinkle with capers; garnish with lemon wedges and nasturtium blossoms.

### **Nasturtium Aspic**

- 1 package lemon-flavored gelatin
- 1 cup finely shredded green cabbage
- 1 dozen nasturtium blossoms

Pinch out stamens of washed nasturtium blossoms and reserve blossoms. Prepare gelatin according to package directions and refrigerate until cooled to a thick, syrupy

stage. Rinse a 1-quart ring mold in cold water and pour in gelatin to a depth of ½ inch. Chill until firm. Arrange blossoms face down on the layer of chilled gelatin. Pour enough gelatin over to cover; chill till firm. Add shredded cabbage and pour remaining gelatin into mold. Chill till firm. Unmold and garnish with additional nasturtium blossoms and/or leaves. Serves 4 to 6.

### **President Eisenhower's Nasturtium Vegetable Soup**

- 1 soup bone
- 1 pound beef soup meat
- 1 teaspoon salt
- pinch of pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 onions
- ½ cup barley
- 1 2-pound can tomatoes
- ½ cup fresh peas
- ½ cup canned corn
- ½ cup shredded cabbage
- 2 potatoes
- 2 stalks celery
- 3 carrots
- 1 turnip
- ½ teaspoon each onion, garlic and celery salt
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup chopped nasturtium stems

Add to pot: the soup bone, soup meat, water to cover, salt, pepper, garlic and 1 onion. Simmer 6 hours, adding water to cover meat. Strain; reserve meat. Cool; remove fat. Reheat; add barley. Cook, stirring, 15 minutes. Add meat pieces, tomatoes, peas, corn and cabbage. Dice and add potatoes, celery, 1 onion, carrots and turnip. Cook until tender. Add the onion, garlic and celery salts, Worcestershire sauce and the nasturtium stems; cook 5 minutes more. Serves 6 to 8.



## oregano

Oregano is a robust, strong herb and is best used sparingly and with strongly flavored foods and long-cooking dishes.

Flavor combines well with garlic, thyme, parsley and olive oil. Oregano is commonly used in tomato sauce, where it exhibits a hot, peppery flavor. It also enhances cheese and egg combinations, including omelets, frittatas, quiches and savory flans.

A traditional Mexican and Middle Eastern technique is to toast oregano in a dry skillet before using. Toasting yields a rich flavor and releases the true taste.

Oregano adds dimension to yeast breads, marinated vegetables, roasted bell peppers, mushrooms, roasted and stewed beef, pork, poultry and game, onions, black beans, zucchini, eggplant and shellfish. By itself, it adds zip to almost any buttered vegetable.

Simple ways to use oregano: Pair with cilantro in guacamole; use in cooked or uncooked salsas or in stuffing for large squashes. It is excellent in vegetable salads of squash, corn and jicama. Add to meatloaf and sprinkle generously over beef, lamb or pork before roasting. Use in the barbecue as a smoke producer, as a barbecue brush and in marinades.

Oregano is an excellent salt replacement for vegetables, chicken, eggplant, summer squash, peas, baked russet potatoes or sweet potatoes, and tomatoes.

Tender whole stems can be used to stuff the cavity of a chicken, turkey or duck before



roasting or a whole fish along with lemon or lime slices and onion. Stir chopped, fresh oregano into steamed cabbage with some fresh lemon juice and unsalted butter. For moist and tasty pork chops, coat with wheat germ, sprinkle with oregano and bake.

### **Baked Kasseri Cheese**

- 1 pound plus 2 ounces Kasseri cheese
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano or ¾ teaspoons dried
- 4 teaspoons clarified butter
- buttered toast as an accompaniment

Chop the Kasseri cheese coarsely and divide among 4 individual gratin dishes, about 6 inches wide. Top it with the lemon juice, garlic, oregano and butter, and bake it in a preheated 400°F oven for 7 to 10 minutes or until it is melted and bubbling. Serve the cheese with the buttered toast. Serves 4 as a first course.

### **Black Beans with Roasted Red Peppers and Oregano**

- 1 cup dried black beans
- 3 whole cloves
- 1 large onion, peeled
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 carrot
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 2 stalks celery
- 5 to 6 sprigs fresh parsley, tied with string
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh oregano, divided
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 large, sweet red pepper, roasted and cut into ½-inch strips



Soak beans in 3 to 4 cups water overnight, then drain and rinse. Put beans into a 5-quart Dutch oven. Insert cloves into onion and add to beans along with garlic, carrot, bay leaf, celery and parsley. Add chicken stock and bring to a boil; cover, lower heat and simmer for 1½ hours or until tender. During the last 20 minutes of cooking, remove cover and check on the amount of liquid. If there is too much, keep the cover off for the remainder of the cooking time. If there is too little, add a bit of boiling water. When beans are cooked, most of the liquid should be absorbed.

Remove all the vegetables and the bay leaf and discard. Add olive oil and vinegar and stir well. Add 1 tablespoon of the oregano. Spoon beans onto a warm serving platter and add 2 dollops of sour cream; sprinkle with remaining oregano and lay strips of roasted pepper over the top.

The Cubans add a few tablespoons of dark rum to the black beans.

The Brazilians mash half the beans with the garlic to form a sauce for the rest.

## **parsley**

Parsley will in some way grace every meal of the day and every course except dessert. It has a positive and intense flavor and it is delicious when used in large quantities as a pronounced seasoning and for added nutrition, flavor and color. For example, blend 2 cups of roughly chopped parsley into 4 cups of your favorite potato soup.

Parsley is one of the fines herbes. Use it in a bouquet garni, court bouillon, mirepoix, stuffings and marinades, as a barbecue brush or an addition to salads and soups, in fresh herb pasta and butter, on vegetables,

fish, potatoes and breads, in Hollandaise and béarnaise sauces and as a garnish — tuck in, sprinkle on, roll in. When using in long-cooking soups and stews, add stems first and chopped leaves last. If parsley is left in a sauce too long, the sauce will turn green.

### **Ricotta and Parsley Puffs**

8 ounces puff pastry  
1 cup ricotta cheese  
1 cup minced parsley  
1 clove garlic, minced  
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese  
black pepper

Combine all the ingredients for the filling. Cut into 3-inch circles. Place a teaspoon of the filling on half the circle and moisten the edges with a pastry brush dipped in water. Fold over the other half of the pastry to form a semicircle. Press the edges to seal and brush with an egg wash if desired. Bake in a preheated oven at 425°F for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden.

### **Tabbouleh (Parsley and Mint Salad)**

1 cup cracked wheat  
boiling water  
½ cup finely chopped, fresh mint  
1½ cups finely chopped parsley  
1 cup finely chopped onion or scallion  
¾ cup peeled, chopped tomatoes  
¾ cup olive oil  
1 cup lemon juice  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place the cracked wheat in a mixing bowl and add boiling water to barely cover. Let stand 30 minutes or until all the liquid is absorbed. The wheat should become tender yet still be somewhat firm to the bite. If the wheat is too dry, add a little more boiling

water. If excessive water is added, it may be necessary to drain the wheat and press it.

Let the wheat become thoroughly cool, then mix with the remaining ingredients. If desired, garnish with additional chopped tomatoes. Serve with romaine leaves.

### **Sauce Persillade**

Thicken a simple oil and lemon juice dressing with mashed, hard-boiled egg and plenty of minced parsley. Serve with cold meats or mild vegetables, or spoon into soups.

### **Baked Halibut**

Place 1½ pounds halibut in baking dish with ¼ inch water. Scatter over it onion salt or chopped onions. Salt to taste. Spread a thin layer of softened butter over fish. Cover with ½ cup chopped parsley. On top of this, sprinkle 1 tablespoon each cornmeal and fine, dry bread crumbs. Bake in preheated 350°F oven 30 to 40 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Baked this way, fish will never dry out.

### **Gremolata**

2 cups chopped flat-leaf parsley  
2 tablespoons grated lemon peel  
6 garlic cloves, minced

Combine all ingredients.

Gremolata is used by Italian chefs for stuffing fish, stirring into soups and stews and for topping osso bucco; French chefs use it for coating a rack of lamb or topping a cassoulet. Try tucking it under the skin of a whole chicken before roasting.

## **rosemary**

Rosemary is one of the more potent herbs, so it should be used with restraint for best effect. The leaves are tough to chew,

even when cooked. Rub leaves on roast beef, lamb, pork, veal and chicken before cooking or lay branches or sprigs on top of roasts and vegetables while they cook, or cut slits in meat and insert garlic and rosemary slivers before roasting. Be sure to remove rosemary before serving.

If used in cooking, fresh rosemary should be minced; dried rosemary should be crumbled or ground to a powder.

For barbecuing, rosemary may be used as a basting brush or a smoke producer or in marinades. It is good in bean, pea and mushroom soups, sauces or marinades, stuffing, meatballs, meatloaf, casseroles, sausage, baked goods and dumplings, vinegars, vinaigrettes and sorbets. Finely minced rosemary mixed with butter can be used on grilled fish or chicken, vegetables, new potatoes, beans, peas, spinach and zucchini.

Rosemary improves the flavor of fruits by enhancing sweetness without sugar. It can be a substitute for mint in mint jelly recipes and used on roast meat and poultry. Rosemary plants make a charming bonsai or topiary.

### **Pizza with Grapes**

pizza dough  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cups (about 11 ounces) red seedless grapes, rinsed and patted dry  
2 tablespoons fresh or 1 tablespoon dry rosemary leaves  
2 tablespoons sugar  
salt (optional)

Rub a 10- by 15-inch pan with 1 tablespoon olive oil. On a floured board, roll dough into a rectangle about ½ inch thick. Fold

rectangle over to support, and transfer to pan. If dough is too elastic, let it rest about 5 minutes, then continue. Brush dough with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Let stand, uncovered, in a warm place until slightly puffy, about 15 minutes. Evenly sprinkle grapes, rosemary and sugar over dough. Lightly sprinkle with salt if desired.

Bake on the bottom rack of a 450°F oven until well browned and crusty, 25 to 35 minutes. Serve warm or cool. Makes 12 to 16 servings.

*Pizza dough:* In a large bowl, sprinkle 1 package active dry yeast over 1½ cups warm water (110°F) and let stand for 5 minutes to soften. Stir in ½ teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add 2½ cups all-purpose flour; mix to blend. Beat with an electric mixer until dough is elastic and stretchy, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in 1⅓ cups more flour. Scrape dough onto a floured board and knead until smooth and springy, 5 to 10 minutes. Place dough in an oiled bowl; turn over to oil top. Cover bowl with plastic wrap. Let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 45 minutes. Punch dough down and knead lightly on a floured board.

### **Rosemary Roasted Walnuts**

- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary, crumbled
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 cups walnut halves (8 ounces)

Position rack in center of oven and preheat oven to 400°F. Combine butter, rosemary, salt and cayenne and heat until butter is melted. Add walnuts and toss to coat. Spread out on a foil-lined jelly roll pan and bake until walnuts are lightly roasted, stirring every 3 minutes for 6 to 9 minutes.

Cool completely before serving. Store in an airtight container. Recrisp in a 400°F oven for 5 minutes. Any leftover nuts will add a delicious touch to tossed green salads.

### **Pork Loin with Roasted Bell Peppers and Tomatoes**

- 1 pound red, green and/or yellow bell peppers, seeded and cut into 1-inch-wide strips
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes
- 14 large garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary or 1 teaspoon dried, crumbled rosemary
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 (1¾-pound) boneless pork loin roast, trimmed and tied
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- toasted French bread slices

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine bell peppers, tomatoes and garlic in large bowl. Add 1½ tablespoons olive oil, 1½ teaspoons rosemary, 1 teaspoon lemon peel, ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper. Toss well.

Set pork in a large, heavy roasting pan. Rub with remaining 1½ teaspoons rosemary, 1 teaspoon lemon peel, ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper. Drizzle with remaining ½ teaspoon oil. Spoon vegetables around pork. Roast 30 minutes. Turn pork and gently stir vegetables. Cook pork 30 minutes more for medium. Sprinkle lemon juice over pork and vegetables. Let stand 5 minutes. Cut pork into ⅛-inch-thick slices. Overlap down center of platter. Spoon vegetables and juices around and over pork. Serve, passing French bread separately. Spread bread with roasted garlic. Serves 6.

### **Rosemary Squares**

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 cup candied fruit and raisins
- ⅔ cup chopped pecans or sunflower seeds

Beat eggs vigorously. Add sugar gradually. Add the vanilla. Mix flour, salt, baking powder and rosemary. Fold in nuts and fruit. Bake in an 8-inch-square pan that has been greased and dusted with flour. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Remove from pan while still warm and cut into bars.

## **sage**

The flavor of sage is lemony, camphorlike and pleasantly bitter. Fresh sage is delicate, not as pungent as dried and more aromatic. Dried sage should be used discreetly, as it is strong and apt to override other flavorings. Add a little at a time — it is a flavor you can't subtract. Parsley added in large measure will take the edge off its pungency. Substitute ¼ teaspoon dried for 1 teaspoon fresh sage.

Sage adds flavor to broiled meats and fish, broiled or scalloped tomatoes, stews, soups and casseroles.

It is indispensable to good pork sausage and makes a delicious spread when combined with cheese. Combined with other herbs it is a fine addition to a bouquet garni for the court bouillon in which you cook shrimp or fish or the liquid you use to make stews and corned beef. Either dried or fresh, sage is good in stuffing.

Sage is compatible with game, roast duck, goose, pork and veal and is useful in counteracting their richness; it aids in the digestibility of heavy, greasy meat, but too much sage can give people indigestion. Slip leaves under the skin of turkey or chicken before roasting. Lay fresh leaves on a pork roast before cooking, or make slits in a roast and insert fresh leaves. Mince leaves and use in breading for fried chicken. Deep fry sprigs and use as garnish for roast meats. Crumble into fish chowders. Try on hot vegetables, including beans, tomatoes, summer squash and cold, sliced tomatoes. Steep leaves for tea; a bit of lemon or orange rind adds to the flavor.

### **Sage After-Dinner Mints**

For a unique after-dinner mint, brush pasteurized egg white diluted with a bit of water over fresh sage leaves. Sprinkle powdered sugar lightly over the leaves; let dry. Because sage is a carminative herb, these mints will also relieve gas and other intestinal distress.

### **Brown Rice and Walnut Casserole**

- 4 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 cup whole grain bread crumbs
- 1 cup coarsely chopped parsley
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1½ cups chopped walnuts or other nuts
- 1 onion
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 cloves finely minced garlic
- ¼ cup vegetable stock or water
- 6–8 sage leaves, finely chopped or ½ teaspoon crumbled, dried sage
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground celery seed
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- salt to taste

topping: ¼ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese and ¼ cup whole grain bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine rice, bread crumbs, parsley, eggs and nuts in a large bowl. Finely chop the onion and soften it in the olive oil over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes. Mix the onion into the rice. Stir in the cheeses and the garlic. Toss the mixture with the stock, sage, celery seed and cayenne. Salt lightly and turn the mixture into an oiled casserole.

Mix the grated cheddar with bread crumbs and spread over the casserole. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until the casserole is a rich golden brown. Serves 4 as a main course or 8 as a side dish.

### **Sage and Cheddar Biscuits**

Follow a standard recipe for baking powder biscuits using 2 cups flour. Blend in ½ cup grated firm cheddar cheese and 2 tablespoons fresh sage leaves with the flour before cutting in the shortening.

### **Fresh Pasta with Two Tomato Sauces**

- ½ recipe of your favorite fresh pasta recipe/or store bought fresh pasta
- ½ cup butter
- 1 onion, minced
- 6 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- 1 cup cream

Melt butter and sauté onion in it for 5 minutes or until soft but not brown. Add tomatoes, sage, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer until tomatoes are soft but not disintegrated (about 15 minutes). Remove

half of the sauce and put in a blender. Add cream to blender and process until smooth. Put this mixture into another saucepan and simmer until it has thickened slightly (about 5 minutes). Keep remaining chunky tomato sauce warm.

Roll out the fresh pasta dough on a lightly floured surface as thin as possible, or use a machine. Cut into desired shape. Drop into boiling salted water and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until tender but still slightly firm.

Spoon the creamy sauce onto 4 serving plates. Drain pasta and place a single portion of fresh pasta on each plate. Divide chunky tomato sauce into 4 equal portions. Mound ¼ of the chunky tomato sauce in center of each individual serving of pasta. Garnish with fresh sage leaves. Serves 4.

### **Sage Potato Crepes**

- 5 large potatoes, peeled
- ½ cup onion, grated
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 8 tablespoons walnut oil
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Using a grater with large holes, grate potatoes into a basin of cold water. Drain the potatoes, add the onion and mix well. Squeeze any excess water from this mixture. Add salt, pepper and sage and mix all of the ingredients. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a nonstick, 6-inch crepe pan. When the oil is smoking slightly, add ¾ cup of the potato batter. Flatten the round if it is puffy and cook about 3 minutes or until lightly browned. Turn the crepe to the other side to brown it, then flip it a few more times to make certain it cooks through. Repeat with the remaining batter. Place the finished pancakes on a holding platter in a warm oven.

Decorate with a few random sage leaves and serve hot with homemade applesauce, chilled sour cream or Russian caviar.

## savory

Savory is related to rosemary and thyme.

There are 30 varieties of savory, of which summer and winter are the most popular. The savories are very good “blending herbs,” which enhance the flavors of other herbs. Summer savory is fruity with hints of basil and lavender and is most reminiscent of thyme and marjoram. Winter savory has a coarser aroma and the flavor is resinous and peppery.



Savory is a good salt substitute and acts on a dish as a seasoning agent much the same way salt does. It blends well with parsley, bay, basil, marjoram, oregano, rosemary and thyme without changing the nature of a bouquet garni. It can strengthen mild herbs and provide a softening effect on more robust herbs. Savory enhances a variety of vegetables: fresh green beans, potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, winter squash and broccoli, and it teams well with corn in soups, sautés, puddings and relishes. Mix with bread crumbs for coating fish, pork or veal.

Savory goes especially well with stone fruits. Cook pitted fruit for 15 minutes or so with a simple sugar syrup, some sprigs of savory and a few drops of balsamic vinegar. It also goes well with apples and in jelly, butter, applesauce and stewed apples.

Savory is known as the “bean herb.” It picks up the flavor especially well of lighter beans, such as fava beans, chick peas, navy beans and cannelli beans, but it is also effective with darker beans, such as black beans, lentils and pinto beans.

Savory is an excellent primary herb to use in forcemeats such as meatballs, meatloaf and stuffing made with any combination of pork, veal and beef. Use in vegetable soups and stews, bouquet garni, fines herbes, breading mixtures, butter and vinegars and in barbecue as a smoke producer, as a basting brush and in marinades. Add savory to mayonnaise and serve as an accompaniment to poached fish. Make a marinade for fish by combining fresh savory with garlic, bay and lemon juice.

Winter savory, because of its resinous and peppery bite, is good with roast duck and game. Fresh summer savory is good in salad dressings. The small pink flowers and tender leaves can garnish any number of salads from sliced tomatoes to potato salad.

### **Zucchini with Savory**

Cut zucchini lengthwise in ¼-inch slices; dip in beaten egg and bread crumbs mixed with savory. Sauté until golden in margarine or butter.

### **Black and White Bean Soup with Savory**

1 pound small, dried black beans  
1 pound small, dried white beans  
12 medium garlic cloves  
10–12 summer savory sprigs or 1½–2  
teaspoons crumbled, dried savory  
6 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
4 large fresh or canned jalapeno peppers  
½ cup virgin olive oil  
salt to taste



garnish: 6 to 8 nasturtium flowers (optional)

Rinse beans and soak separately overnight. Drain, rinse well and pick over. Put the beans in separate pots and cover with 3 inches of water. Simmer about 1½ hours or until they are very tender.

Mince garlic and add half to each pot. Stem savory, mince it and add 4 tablespoons (or the dried savory) to the white beans. Seed the jalapenos, mince them and add to the black beans, along with the red wine vinegar. Add ¼ cup olive oil to each pot and simmer the soups for about 10 minutes.

Puree each soup separately and return them to their separate pots. Cook over low heat for about 5 minutes. The soups should be rather thin; add a little water if necessary. Adjust the seasoning.

To serve, ladle about ½ cup black bean soup in a warm, shallow soup bowl. Carefully ladle ½ cup white bean soup into the center of the bowl. Fill 6 to 8 bowls and garnish each with a nasturtium blossom. Serves 6 to 8.

### **Tourtiere**

1¼ pounds ground lean, boneless pork butt or shoulder  
1¼ pounds ground veal or beef  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 teaspoon each dry savory leaves and dry thyme leaves  
¼ teaspoon each dry mustard and ground cinnamon  
⅛ teaspoon ground cloves  
1 tablespoon minced parsley  
1 cup regular-strength beef broth  
2 medium-sized cooked russet potatoes (about ½ pound each), peeled and mashed

salt and pepper  
tender pastry (recipe follows)

In a 12-inch frying pan or a 5- to 6-quart pan over medium-high heat, combine pork, veal or beef and onion. Stir often until meat begins to brown and sticks to the bottom of the pan. Add beef broth and cook for 18 to 20 minutes or until broth is reduced. Stir in mashed potatoes until blended thoroughly; season to taste with salt and pepper.

On a floured board, roll out 2 tender pastry pieces, each into an 11-inch round. Line each of 2 (9-inch) pie pans with a pastry round. Spoon meat mixture equally into the pans. Roll out remaining 2 pastry pieces, each into a 10-inch round. Cover each pie with a round of pastry, trim flush with rims and press edges with a fork to seal. Prick top in several places. Bake and serve as directed.

To store baked pies, wrap and freeze up to 1 month; thaw in the refrigerator, then reheat. Makes 2 pies; each serves 8.

*Tender pastry:* Stir together 4 cups all-purpose flour, ½ teaspoon salt and 2 teaspoons sugar. With your fingers, rub 1 cup solid shortening and ⅓ cup butter or margarine into flour until mixture forms coarse crumbs. With a fork, stir in 1 large egg (beaten), 1 teaspoon distilled vinegar and 3 tablespoons cold water until dough is evenly moistened and holds together. Gather into a ball and divide into 4 pieces; wrap each portion in plastic wrap and chill at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.

*To bake pies.* If desired, roll out remaining pastry scraps and cut into decorative shapes; lay on top of the pies. Gently brush each pie top with 1 teaspoon milk. Bake on lowest rack of a 425°F oven until tops are



golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Serve hot. Or cool, then cover and chill until next day. To reheat, place in a 350°F oven until pies are hot in center, 25 to 35 minutes.

## sorrel

Sorrel has been characterized as a sour-leaf version of spinach. Leaves have a mildly sour, lemony taste

Use as a substitute for spinach, cooking it the same way you would spinach. Combine and cook with spinach, cabbage, watercress, mustard greens and chard greens; the distinctive sour taste adds a different note.

It is a perfect foil for light and delicate foods, such as eggs, cream, fish, chicken and veal. Try adding a leaf to any cream soup during last few minutes of cooking for a unique flavor or stirring it into your favorite gazpacho before chilling. Small quantities may be included in tossed salads and coleslaw, but reduce vinegar or lemon juice in the dressing. Use on hot or cold meat and cheese sandwiches, hamburgers, tacos and tostadas.

Simple ways to use sorrel: Mince into cream cheese for bagels with lox or tuck it into a luncheon omelet with chopped green onion and sautéed mushrooms. Chop finely with lovage and add to sour cream or thick yogurt to dress baked potatoes. Wrap jumbo sea scallops with large sorrel leaves, steam cook and serve with a butter sauce.

Leaves can be frozen like greens or as sorrel soup. If adding egg yolks or cream, leave them out when freezing; add after the soup base is thawed. Since sorrel turns brownish when cooked, it looks more appetizing when mixed with greens that hold their color.

### Sorrel Sauce

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 4 shallots
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dry white wine
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vermouth
- 16 young sorrel leaves, cut in very thin strips
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup crème fraîche

Melt butter in a skillet and sauté shallots. Add wine to deglaze the pan. Add vermouth, sorrel and crème fraîche. Cook until sauce thickens slightly. Serve with grilled fish or chicken.

### Quick Sorrel Soup

- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced
- 2 (14-ounce) cans regular-strength chicken broth
- 4 cups finely shredded sorrel
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup whipping cream
- salt and pepper to taste
- nutmeg
- sour cream

Melt the butter or margarine in a 4-quart pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring often, until it is limp. Stir in the potato and the 2 cans of chicken broth. Cover and simmer 20 minutes or until potato mashes easily. Stir in the finely shredded sorrel and cook 2 minutes longer. In a blender, whirl the mixture, a small amount at a time, until smooth. Return to heat, stir in the whipping cream and salt and pepper to taste; heat through. Ladle into small bowls; dust with ground nutmeg. (Or cover and chill well; serve cold with a dollop of sour cream.) Makes about 5 cups.

### **Even Quicker Sorrel Soup**

Sauté a handful of shredded sorrel in butter until limp and add to a cup of cream of chicken instant soup.

### **Sorrel Puree**

- 1 pound fresh sorrel leaves
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten

Carefully wash and dry sorrel. Remove and discard the stems and the rib. Over medium heat, without additional liquid, heat the sorrel just until it wilts. Remove, drain off any liquid and chop finely. In a medium-sized saucepan, combine the butter, the wilted sorrel, the cream and the eggs, cooking just until the mixture thickens. Do not overcook or the sorrel will lose its sharp, fresh flavor. Use as is, warm or cold, as a bed of green for fillet of sole or salmon or as a sauce over poached or hard-cooked eggs or veal scallops. The puree is also a fine filling for an omelet or tart, or it can be folded into any soufflé base. With a touch of French tarragon mustard, it takes on even more of a tang.

## **sweet cicely**

Sweet cicely has been used for centuries in the kitchen. It is said to contain as much as 40 percent sugar, so use it in recipes where a sweet touch is needed. Add to your favorite rhubarb pie, using ¼ cup finely minced leaves for a 9-inch pie.

When cooking with fruit, sweet cicely cuts the natural acidity, and the amount of sugar can be reduced.

Use it fresh as a garnish for salads or mince with basil, lovage and parsley to sprinkle

over a salad. It goes well with carrots, parsnips, potatoes, turnips, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cream soups and sauces, fish, fruit soups, stewed fruit, fruit salads, pies and tarts. Mix with mint and lemon balm for citrus-sweet herb tea.

Use the unripe, spicy, green seeds of sweet cicely in cookies, candy, syrups, cakes, liqueurs and herb mixtures. Mature seeds can be used as substitute for caraway in baking.

Steam or simmer roots and puree like a parsnip. The roots can also be eaten raw.

## **sweet woodruff**

The name is derived from the French word for wheel and is descriptive of the way the leaves radiate from the stem like the spokes of the wheel from an axle. Sweet woodruff is a plant of almost overpowering sweetness and therefore has limited uses. The FDA considers sweet woodruff safe only for use in alcoholic beverages. CAUTION! Large quantities have been reported to cause vomiting and dizziness.

Both fresh and dried leaves and flowers can be used to flavor wines and brandy. To lend a subtle, grassy, vanilla bouquet to white wine, place fresh sprigs in the bottle for a day or so. To make sweet woodruff brandy, put branches of sweet woodruff into a bottle and fill with brandy. Allow it to steep for at least 1 month to develop flavor.

To greet the spring at May Day celebrations, Germans put sprigs of sweet woodruff into new wine and drink it as a tonic. To make the traditional German May bowl, allow fresh sprigs of the herb to stand in Rhine wine overnight, then float fresh strawberries in the bowl before serving.

Adding the herb to a young wine has another purpose — it improves the taste of an otherwise thin and harsh-tasting wine.

Put the dried leaves in sachets to hang in closets and put among linens and clothing to keep moths away and to give them a fresh smell.

### **Sweet Woodruff Banana Cream Pie**

Use your favorite banana cream pie recipe. Marinate the bananas in  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sweet woodruff brandy while you make the custard for the pie. Make the custard using  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup less cream. Drain the bananas and stir the liquid into the custard. Follow your recipe directions for assembling the pie.

## **tarragon**

Tarragon is one of the most widely used herbs. It does not conceal but helps to bring out the flavor of the dish to which it is added. Don't add with a heavy hand; less is better. Avoid bringing out its bitter side by cooking too long. It tastes best on its own or with classic fines herbes. Strong aromatics (rosemary, sage and thyme) do not harmonize well with it.

Fresh tarragon is more subtle than dried, so you may need to use much larger quantities. It is best known for use in seafood and chicken. When used with fish, it seems to remove most of the fishy taste. Try it with mayonnaise on cold salmon.



An omelet with chopped tarragon is special, as are scrambled eggs, and it is wonderful snipped over buttered new potatoes. Blended with melted butter, it adds zest to bland vegetables, broiled meats, poultry or fish. It enhances salads made of crabmeat, shrimp, lobster or potatoes, and stuffed mushrooms, and it is tasty with leafy salads and most vegetables. Tarragon makes flavorful cream sauces and is indispensable to tartar sauce and béarnaise sauce.

Use a sprig to garnish aspics or sprinkle chopped tarragon on canapés, hors d'oeuvres and open-faced sandwiches.

When making tarragon vinegar, use a delicate flavored vinegar so as not to stifle tarragon's relatively light flavor. Leaves from vinegar can be used as fresh tarragon or as garnishes.

### **Tarragon Beets**

- 3 pounds beets without tops
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup tarragon vinegar
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh tarragon or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons dried
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 2 tablespoons drained capers
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Place the beets in a large saucepan with water to cover and bring to a boil over moderately high heat. Cook until tender when pierced with a fork, 30 to 40 minutes (depending on the size of the beets). Alternatively, wrap the beets in aluminum foil and bake in a 400°F oven for about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours, until tender. Peel the beets and cut into 1-inch pieces.

In a large saucepan, combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water with the vinegar and tarragon and bring

to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to moderate and simmer for 3 minutes. Add the butter and stir until melted. Add the beets and cook, stirring, until heated through, about 8 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the capers and season to taste with salt and pepper. Toss and transfer to a warmed serving dish; serve hot.

### **No-Cholesterol Hollandaise Sauce**

- 1/3 cup egg substitute
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- dash ground red pepper
- 1/2 cup butter-flavored margarine
- crushed dried or fresh tarragon, minced finely (to taste)

Heat margarine and tarragon in a small saucepan until hot.

In an electric blender, combine egg substitute, lemon juice and red pepper. Blend at medium speed just until mixed. Without turning off blender, pour in hot margarine in a steady stream. Continue blending until oil is completely incorporated and mixture is smooth and thick. Mixture may be held in the top of a double boiler over hot (not boiling) water for up to 10 minutes before serving. Serve with vegetables, chicken, fish or seafood.

### **Frozen Tarragon Mousse with Strawberries**

- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon or 1 1/2 tablespoons dry tarragon
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 egg yolks
- 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 pint strawberries, halved and sweetened to taste

Combine wine and tarragon in a 1- to 2-quart pan. (If using dry tarragon leaves, heat to steaming; let stand 30 minutes.) Add sugar and gently boil mixture until it reaches 220°F on a candy thermometer.

Place egg yolks in the top of a double boiler. Gradually pour hot syrup into yolks, beating constantly with a portable mixer or rotary beater. Set over simmering water and continue cooking and beating constantly until mixture holds soft peaks, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat; beat over cold water until cool. Stir in lemon peel and juice.

Whip cream until stiff peaks form; fold into egg yolk mixture just until blended. Cover and freeze until firm, at least 6 hours or as long as 1 month.

Serve the mousse in small scoops with sweetened strawberries. Serves 6 to 10.

### **Tarragon Wafers**

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup crushed pecans
- 1 1/2 teaspoons finely minced tarragon or crushed, dry tarragon
- 3/4 cup sifted all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Cream butter, sugar and vanilla. Beat in egg and stir in sesame seeds, pecans and tarragon. Stir dry ingredients together and add to mixture. Mix well. Drop in small mounds about 3 inches apart on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 375°F for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool a minute before removing from sheet. Makes 4 dozen crisp wafers.

## thyme

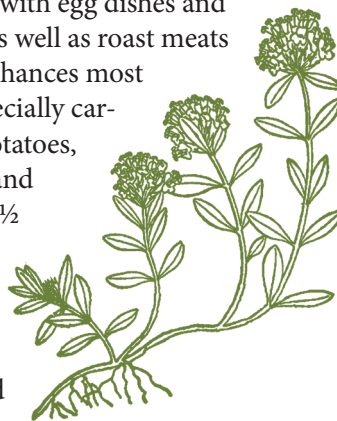
Thyme has a strong flavor and should be used sparingly for best flavor. “Pinch of thyme” is good phrase to remember. It retains its flavor during cooking and its potent flavor and aroma when dried. It comes in a multitude of flavors and is most often used as a background flavor. More and more cooks are discovering that it is wonderful used alone when preparing stews, roasts or vegetables. Include thyme in a bouquet garni for soups, stews, sauces or gravies.

Thyme has a place in many international cuisines. In Mediterranean cuisine it is a natural seasoning for feta cheese and is used in olive oil, tomatoes and garlic; in Provençal cuisine, it is used in sauces; in European kitchens, it is part of a classic

bouquet garni; in Spanish cooking it is used in soups, pork dishes and tapas; and in Mexican, Creole and Cajun cooking it balances incendiary spices.

Use thyme in butter over vegetables, including potatoes, and on broiled meats and fish to add a warm, spicy flavor.

Thyme is good with egg dishes and cheese sauces as well as roast meats and game. It enhances most vegetables, especially carrots, squash, potatoes, onions, celery and tomatoes. Add ½ teaspoon of thyme to each cup of hot milk used for beating mashed



### Using herbs to season vegetables

Asparagus	tarragon
Lima beans	marjoram, oregano, sage, savory or tarragon
Snap beans	basil, dill, marjoram, oregano or thyme
Beets	allspice, bay leaves, cloves, dill, ginger or thyme
Broccoli	dill or tarragon
Brussels sprouts	basil, dill or tarragon
Cabbage	dill, nutmeg
Carrots	allspice, bay leaves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg or thyme
Cucumbers	basil, dill or tarragon
Eggplant	marjoram or oregano
Onions	nutmeg, oregano, sage or thyme
Peas	basil, dill, oregano, rosemary or sage
Potatoes	basil, bay leaves, dill, chives, oregano or thyme
Spinach	basil, marjoram, nutmeg or oregano
Squash	allspice, basil, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, mustard, nutmeg or rosemary
Sweet potatoes	allspice, cinnamon, cloves or nutmeg
Tomatoes	basil, bay leaves, oregano, sage or thyme
Green salads	basil, chives or dill

potatoes. Keep milk warm for 15 minutes to brew the herb, then strain into potatoes and beat. It gives a plumlike fragrance and subtle flavor to rice and wheat. Chopped fresh leaves can be sprinkled on hot, thick soups.

The traditional flavor of clam and fish chowders comes from thyme. It is also good in other seafood dishes.

Thyme is an ingredient in stuffing for poultry or breast of lamb. For variation, use lemon thyme in chicken dressing.

Thyme is also used as a remedy for headache: steep 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves in a cup of boiling water. For a hangover, add a teaspoon of honey and a pinch of salt; for an exotic bath, toss a handful of fresh leaves into your tub.

### **Baby Lettuces with Ginger-Thyme Vinaigrette**

*For the salad:*

Fresh garden mesclun or a mixture of different baby lettuces

*For the vinaigrette:*

- 1-inch cube fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh lemon thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1 teaspoon chopped parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon minced shallot
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Wash and pat dry baby lettuces, being careful not to crush leaves. Refrigerate until ready to assemble salad.

Make vinaigrette: Combine ingredients in the jar of a blender and whirl until creamy. In a large bowl combine lettuce greens. Add half of vinaigrette and toss to coat. Add more dressing as needed. Serve on individual chilled plates. Makes 6 servings.

### **Thyme Carrot Soup**

- 6 cups chicken stock or canned chicken broth
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 onion, minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$  stick unsalted butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons fresh thyme, minced, or
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons dried thyme
- nutmeg, freshly grated
- salt and pepper to taste

In a large sauce pan combine the chicken stock or canned chicken broth and the carrots; bring the stock to a boil and simmer the carrots, covered, for 20 minutes or until they are tender. In a food processor fitted with the steel blade or in a blender, puree the mixture in batches. In a small skillet, cook the onion in the unsalted butter over moderate heat, stirring, for 3 minutes or until softened. Add the onion to the saucepan along with the heavy cream, the thyme and nutmeg; salt and pepper to taste. Bring the soup to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Let the soup stand, covered, for 5 minutes to let the flavors blend. Ladle it into heated bowls and garnish each serving with minced fresh thyme. Serves 4 to 6.



# recipe index

## appetizers

An Elegant Appetizer	46
Baked Kasseri Cheese	53
Caponata	51
Rosemary Roasted Walnuts	56

## beverages

Balmy Sunset	45
Borage and Yogurt Drink	37
Herbfarm Haymaker's Switchel	25
Strawberry Smoothie	50

## bread/pancakes/pastries

Herbed Gougeres	47
Lemon Verbena Ricotta Pancakes	45
Pizza with Grapes	55
Ricotta and Parsley Puffs	54
Sage and Cheddar Biscuits	58
Sage Potato Crepes	58

## condiments

Basic Basil Pesto	23
Gremolata	55
Lemon Balm Mayonnaise	44
Lemon-Dill Mustard	27
Quick Herb Mustard	27
Tarragon and Green Peppercorn Mustard	26

## cookies

Anise Hyssop and Almond Butter Cookies	31
Rosemary Squares	57
Tarragon Wafers	64

## desserts

Frozen Tarragon Mousse with Strawberries	64
Sage After-Dinner Mints	57

## dips/butters

Herbed Cucumber Dip with Borage Blossoms	37
Marigold Cheese Dip	38
Chervil Butter	40

## eggs

Eggs Marigold	38
---------------	----

## fish/seafood

Alaska Salmon in the Snow	41
Baked Halibut	55
Foiled Baked Fish	49
Shrimp with Dill Sauce	43

## fruit

Melon Steeped in Basil and Mint	36
---------------------------------	----

## honeys/syrups

Basic Herb Honey	27
Basic Herb Syrup	27

## lamb

Moroccan Lamb Stew	42
--------------------	----



## pasta/grains/legumes

Black Beans with Roasted Red Peppers and Oregano	53
Brown Rice and Walnut Casserole	57
Fresh Pasta with Two Tomato Sauces	58
Marigold Rice	38

## pickles/relishes

Pickled Nasturtium Pod	51
------------------------	----

## pies/tarts

Anise Hyssop Pear Tart	31
Sweet Woodruff Banana Cream Pie	63

## pork

Barb's Boosha's Polish Sausage	48
Pork Loin with Roasted Bell Peppers and Tomatoes	56
Tourtiere	60

## poultry

Grilled Turkey Cutlets Piccata	52
Lemon Basil Chicken	35

## salads

Arugula Salad with Orange Vinaigrette	33
Orange Mint Rice Salad	50
Baby Lettuces with Ginger-Thyme Vinaigrette	66
Minted Fruit Salad	50
Nasturtium Aspic	52
Sweet Potato and Marjoram Salad	48
Tabbouleh (Parsley and Mint Salad)	54
Tomato Basil Sorbet	36

## saucés

Basil, Garlic and Cheese Sauce	34
Cucumber Sour Cream Sauce	44
Lime Basil Sauce	35
Low-Calorie "Sour Cream" with Chives	41
No-Cholesterol Hollandaise Sauce	64
Raspberry Sauce	46
Sauce Persillade	55
Sorrel Sauce	61

## soups

Avoglemono (Greek Lemon Soup)	45
Black and White Bean Soup with Savory	59
Chive Avocado Soup	40
Classic Gazpacho	42
Cold Cucumber Soup with Borage Flowers	37
Even Quicker Sorrel Soup	62
Leek and Chervil Soup	39
Marigold Fish Chowder	38
President Eisenhower's Nasturtium Vegetable Soup	52
Quick Sorrel Soup	61
Thyme Carrot Soup	66

## vegetables

Braised Leeks with Lime Basil Sauce	35
Cauliflower in Lemon Cream	47
Chervil and Potato Salad	39
Marigold Cauliflower	38
New Potatoes with Creamy Arugula Sauce	32
Sorrel Puree	62
Stir-Fried Snow Peas with Cilantro	42
Tarragon Beets	63
Tomatoes Stuffed with Lime Basil Sauce	35
Zucchini with Savory	59

# recipe index (herbs)

## anise hyssop

Anise Hyssop and Almond Butter	
Cookies	31
Anise Hyssop Pear Tart	31

## arugula

Arugula Salad with Orange Vinaigrette	33
New Potatoes with Creamy Arugula Sauce	32

## basil

Basic Basil Pesto	23
Basil, Garlic and Cheese Sauce	34
Braised Leeks with Lime Basil Sauce	35
Lemon Basil Chicken	35
Lime Basil Sauce	35
Melon Steeped in Basil and Mint	36
Tomato Basil Sorbet	36
Tomatoes Stuffed with Lime Basil Sauce	35

## borage

Borage and Yogurt Drink	37
Cold Cucumber Soup with Borage Flowers	37
Herbed Cucumber Dip with Borage Blossoms	37

## calendula

Eggs Marigold	38
Marigold Cauliflower	38
Marigold Cheese Dip	38
Marigold Fish Chowder	38
Marigold Rice	38

## chervil

Chervil and Potato Salad	39
Chervil Butter	40
Leek and Chervil Soup	39

## chives

Alaska Salmon in the Snow	41
Chive Avocado Soup	40
Low-Calorie "Sour Cream" with Chives	41

## cilantro

Classic Gazpacho	42
Moroccan Lamb Stew	42
Stir-Fried Snow Peas with Cilantro	42

## dill

Cucumber Sour Cream Sauce	44
Lemon-Dill Mustard	27
Shrimp with Dill Sauce	43

## lemon balm

Avgolemono (Greek Lemon Soup)	45
Balmy Sunset	45
Lemon Balm Mayonnaise	44

## lemon verbena

An Elegant Appetizer	46
Lemon Verbena Ricotta Pancakes	45
Raspberry Sauce	46

## lovage

Cauliflower in Lemon Cream	47
Herbed Gougeres	47

## marjoram

Barb's Boosha's Polish Sausage	48
Sweet Potato and Marjoram Salad	48

## mexican mint marigold

Foiled Baked Fish	49
-------------------	----

## mint

Minted Fruit Salad	50
Orange Mint Rice Salad	50
Strawberry Smoothie	50

## nasturtium

Caponata	51
Grilled Turkey Cutlets Piccata	52
Nasturtium Aspic	52
Pickled Nasturtium Pod	51
President Eisenhower's Nasturtium Vegetable Soup	52

## oregano

Baked Kasseri Cheese	53
Black Beans with Roasted Red Peppers and Oregano	53

## parsley

Baked Halibut	55
Gremolata	55
Ricotta and Parsley Puffs	54
Sauce Persillade	55
Tabbouleh (Parsley and Mint Salad)	54

## rosemary

Pizza with Grapes	55
Pork Loin with Roasted Bell Peppers and Tomatoes	56
Rosemary Roasted Walnuts	56
Rosemary Squares	57

## sage

Brown Rice and Walnut Casserole	57
Fresh Pasta with Two Tomato Sauces	58
Sage After-Dinner Mints	57
Sage and Cheddar Biscuits	58
Sage Potato Crepes	58

## savory

Black and White Bean Soup with Savory	59
Tourtiere	60
Zucchini with Savory	59

## sorrel

Even Quicker Sorrel Soup	62
Quick Sorrel Soup	61
Sorrel Puree	62
Sorrel Sauce	61

## sweet woodruff

Sweet Woodruff Banana Cream Pie	63
---------------------------------	----

## tarragon

Frozen Tarragon Mousse with Strawberries	64
No-Cholesterol Hollandaise Sauce	64
Tarragon Beets	63
Tarragon and Green Peppercorn Mustard	26
Tarragon Wafers	64

## thyme

Baby Lettuces with Ginger-Thyme Vinaigrette	66
Thyme Carrot Soup	66

## notes

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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marjoram



mexican mint marigold



mint



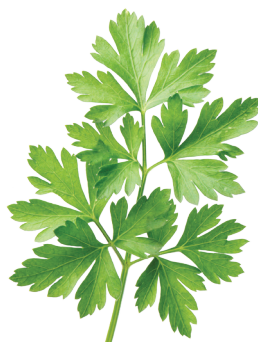
nasturtium



oregano



parsley, curly



parsley, flat-leaf



rosemary



sage



summer savory



winter savory



sorrel



sweet cicily



sweet woodruff



tarragon



thyme