

The Herb and Spice Club

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BASIL

Basil is a popular herb that has been used for culinary and medicinal purposes for thousands of years. Here's a brief history:

- **Ancient Times:** Basil originated in tropical regions of Central Africa and Southeast Asia. It was highly valued in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome for its fragrance, flavor, and medicinal properties.
- **Middle Ages:** Basil was introduced to Europe by the Arabs and became a staple herb in Mediterranean cuisine.
- **Traditional Medicine:** In Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicine, basil was used to treat various ailments, including digestive issues, stress, and respiratory problems.
- **Culinary Uses:** Today, basil is a fundamental herb in many cuisines, particularly in Italian, Thai, and Vietnamese cooking. It's prized for its sweet, slightly spicy flavor and aroma.
- **Varieties:** There are many varieties of basil, including sweet basil, Thai basil, lemon basil, and holy basil, each with its unique flavor and fragrance profile.

Throughout history, basil has been revered for its versatility, flavor, and medicinal properties, making it a beloved herb in many cultures around the world.



DID YOU KNOW?

BASIL IS KNOWN TO REPEL PESTS LIKE MOSQUITOES AND FLIES DUE TO ITS STRONG SCENT. SOME PEOPLE PLANT BASIL IN THEIR GARDENS OR KEEP IT NEAR OUTDOOR SEATING AREAS TO NATURALLY DETER THESE PESKY INSECTS!?



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WHERE TO FIND IT !!

You can find dried everywhere. You can fresh at Perry County Market Place & at Walmart in Du Quoin.



Lavender is a versatile herb used in various ways across cultures. Here's a glimpse into how lavender is used in French, Mexican, Russian, and Chinese traditions:

French

1. "Culinary": Lavender is used in French cuisine, particularly in desserts like lavender honey ice cream and lavender shortbread cookies.
2. "Perfumery": France is famous for its lavender perfumes and fragrances, often used in aromatherapy and skincare products.
3. "Herbal remedies": Lavender is used in traditional French herbal medicine for its calming and antiseptic properties.

Mexican

1. "Traditional medicine": In Mexican folk medicine, lavender is used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and digestive issues.
2. "Culinary": Lavender is sometimes used in Mexican cooking, particularly in desserts like lavender-infused chocolate or lavender-scented cookies.
3. "Ceremonial": Lavender is used in some Mexican ceremonies and rituals for its purifying and protective properties.

Russian

1. "Herbal remedies": Lavender is used in traditional Russian medicine for its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties.
2. "Tea": Lavender tea is a popular herbal remedy in Russia, often consumed for its calming effects.
3. "Cosmetics": Lavender is used in Russian cosmetics and skincare products for its soothing and anti-aging properties.

Chinese

1. "Traditional medicine": Lavender is used in traditional Chinese medicine for its calming and sedative properties.
2. "Culinary": Lavender is sometimes used in Chinese cooking, particularly in desserts like lavender-infused tea or lavender-scented pastries.
3. "Aromatherapy": Lavender essential oil is used in Chinese aromatherapy for its relaxing and stress-relieving properties.

These are just a few examples of how lavender is used in different cultures. The herb's versatility and calming properties make it a popular ingredient in various traditions.

SWEET TOMATO BASIL PASTA SAUCE

- 2 lbs fresh or canned crushed tomatoes
- 1-2 tsp dried basil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tsp dried oregano (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add the garlic and sauté for 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the crushed tomatoes, salt, pepper, dried basil, and oregano (if using). Stir well.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Stir in the balsamic vinegar (if using).
6. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.
7. Serve the sauce over cooked pasta, topped with grated Parmesan cheese.

Using dried basil allows the flavors to meld together nicely during the simmering process. You can adjust the amount of dried basil to your taste, starting with 1 tsp and adding more if desired.