

# Herbs

Once you discover (or rediscover) the sheer joy of using fresh, fragrant herbs in your cooking, you may never want to do without them.

## STORAGE

Generally, except for basil, set unwashed bunches of fresh herbs (with stems) upright into small jars filled with 1 to 2 inches of water, cover loosely with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for up to two weeks. To store fresh basil, strip the lower leaves from the stems, place the stems in a jar of water, and keep at room temperature.

## CONVERTING BETWEEN FRESH AND DRIED HERBS

To substitute fresh herbs in recipes calling for dried herbs, use this ratio: 1/4 teaspoon dried ground herbs: 1 teaspoon dried crumbled leaves: 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs.

## Cilantro Spread — Two Versions

Both versions of this terrific spread are easy and fantastically flavorful. Try one with a platter of grilled vegetables or thickly sliced ripe tomatoes. Both are great on rice noodles or rice, and you might like to try the peanut version with grilled eggplant. Remember to keep your hands away from your face when you are handling hot chile peppers. *Angelic Organics Kitchen.*

Makes 1 cup

2 packed cups very finely chopped fresh cilantro  
2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 teaspoon)  
finely grated zest of 1 lime

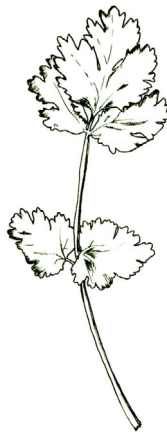
### Cilantro-Ginger Version

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice  
1 teaspoon finely chopped or grated fresh ginger

### Spicy Cilantro-Peanut Version

freshly squeezed juice of 2 limes  
(3 to 4 tablespoons)  
1 to 2 chile peppers, stems and seeds removed, coarsely chopped  
1 tablespoon peanuts  
salt  
freshly ground black pepper

Put the cilantro, garlic, and lime zest in a bowl. Add the next three ingredients for the version you are making (either oil, lime juice, and ginger; or lemon juice, peppers, and peanuts). Mix well with a fork or whisk until well combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.



## HANDLING

Rinse fresh herbs right before use. To release their scents and flavors, rub them between your hands before mincing or chopping.

## Creamy Tarragon Dressing

Tarragon and creamy things really like each other—and most people really like what happens when they get together. Here's a fantastic, creamy-rich tarragon dressing for a green salad, potato salad, or egg salad. It's great over sliced tomatoes on a bed of alfalfa sprouts or spooned onto a fluffy baked potato. You can also use this like a tartar sauce. *Friend of the Farm.*

Makes about 3/4 cup

1/2 cup mayonnaise  
1/4 cup milk  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 1/2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh tarragon  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed (about 1/2 teaspoon)  
1/8 teaspoon curry powder (or more, to taste)  
salt



1. Stir the mayonnaise, milk, and olive oil in a medium bowl until smooth. Add the tarragon, apple cider vinegar, garlic, and curry powder; whisk until thoroughly combined.

2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours to let the flavors develop. Season with salt to taste. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

## Basil-Garlic Cream Cheese

The possibilities for this classic, creamy dip-spread-sauce are endless. You can even stir it into warm tomato soup. Vary the texture and flavor by changing the amount of olive oil or by using the oil from preserved sun-dried tomatoes or anchovies, or experiment with using cottage cheese, ricotta, or yogurt cheese in place of the cream cheese. It's fresh basil—you can't go wrong. *Angelic Organics Kitchen.*

Makes 1 1/3 cups

8 ounces cream cheese, softened  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil  
1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh chives  
2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 teaspoon)  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
freshly ground black pepper

Stir all the ingredients in a medium bowl with a wooden spoon until smooth. (You can also do this in your food processor.) Transfer the herbed cheese to a small dish and put it in the refrigerator to let the flavors develop for about 1 hour.

Excerpted from *Farmer John's Cookbook: The Real Dirt On Vegetables: Seasonal Recipes and Stories from a Community Supported Farm* by Farmer John Peterson & Angelic Organics (Gibbs Smith Publisher). Check with your local farm or bookstore for availability. Additional recipes, charts, individual copies of this book, and quantity discounts available at [www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook](http://www.AngelicOrganics.com/cookbook).



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Supplement



## Rosemary Lemonade

Rosemary adds a lovely herbal note to homemade lemonade. For an extra summery kick, garnish each serving with a sprig of fresh lemon balm or mint. *Friend of the Farm*.

Serves 2 to 4

- 4 cups water
- 6 sprigs (each about 5 inches long) fresh rosemary
- 3/4 cup sugar (or more, to taste)
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 3 large lemons)

1. Bring the water to a boil in a medium pot, and then reduce the heat so that the water barely simmers. Add the rosemary sprigs; cover and steep the rosemary for 45 minutes. Remove the pot from heat and remove the rosemary sprigs. (If necessary, strain the mixture to remove loose leaves.) Add the sugar; stir until dissolved. Set aside to cool.

2. Put the lemon juice into a large plastic or glass container and add the cooled rosemary syrup; stir until well combined. Taste the lemonade and sweeten it with additional sugar if desired. Refrigerate until cold.

## Fresh Sage in Polenta

In this version of polenta, the assertive flavor of fresh sage adds a savory accent to cornmeal's gentle sweetness. *Angelic Organics Kitchen*. Serves 8

- 6 1/2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- salt
- 2 cups coarse-grained cornmeal (polenta)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3/4 ounce) (optional)



1. Bring the stock to a boil in a large pot over high heat. Add salt to taste. (The amount you use will depend on the saltiness of your stock. The seasonings will concentrate as the polenta cooks, so if you are in doubt, use less.) Reduce to a simmer.

2. Slowly pour the cornmeal into the simmering stock, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Continue to cook the cornmeal, stirring constantly to prevent sticking on the bottom, until it pulls away from the sides of the pot and is thick enough for the spoon to stand upright, 5 to 7 minutes.

3. Stir in the sage and butter. Season generously with salt and pepper. Stir in the Parmesan cheese. Serve warm.

## Creamy Dill Sauce

This versatile dill sauce is wonderful in egg salad, or tossed with cucumbers, or as a sauce for fish or crab cakes. It also makes a delicious salad dressing. We like it on just about anything. *Friend of the Farm* (adapted from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*). Makes about 3/4 cup

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar or sherry wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon minced shallot
- 1/4 teaspoon prepared Dijon mustard
- pinch salt plus more to taste
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg yolk
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- lemon juice

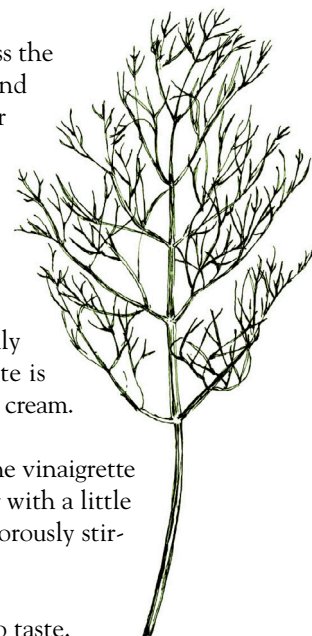
1. Combine the oil, vinegar, shallot, mustard, pinch of salt, and pepper to taste in a large jar. Cover tightly and shake the jar vigorously until the oil and vinegar have thickened.

2. Beat the egg yolk with the sour cream in a separate bowl until well combined.

3. If you're using a food processor: Process the yolk and sour cream for 30 seconds and then, with the machine still running, pour in the vinaigrette in a very thin stream in about three additions, letting the sauce thicken before each addition. If you're making the dressing by hand: Using a good whisk, beat the yolk and sour cream; then add the vinaigrette a scant tablespoon at a time, whisking thoroughly after each addition, until the vinaigrette is fully combined with the egg yolk and sour cream.

4. Once you've incorporated the last of the vinaigrette and the sauce is very thick, thin it either with a little lemon juice (1 to 2 teaspoons) or by vigorously stirring in 1 tablespoon boiling water.

5. Stir in the dill. Add salt and pepper to taste.



## A Shareholder

I'm a new shareholder and I just picked up my first box of the season. I spent forty-five minutes deliriously sniffing and tasting and generally admiring my greens and herbs—until I had to put them in the refrigerator.

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