

MENASHA PUBLIC LIBRARY: SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB



WHAT IS MINT?

Mint (*Mentha*) is the genus of 25 different species, the most popular being peppermint and spearmint. These plants are perennial, with square leaves and fragrant foliage. Mint's flavor is most often described as refreshing and sweet, but with a cooling sensation. Its scent is comparable to that of eucalyptus. The mint plant can be very aggressive in gardens, quickly overtaking other species if left unchecked and it does best when grown from cuttings, rather than seeds.

Historians largely credit the Pilgrims for bringing mint to America, and it is also native to Australia and Africa. In ancient Greek culture, mint was seen as a symbol of hospitality. Ancient Romans used the herb as a flavoring in wines and sauces. According to Roman mythology, a jealous Persephone turned a naiad named *Mentha* into the first mint plant.

Mint is widely used in food and drink preparation throughout Europe, North Africa, and Asia. A number of species are also used as flavorings for items such as: gum, candy, liqueur and toothpaste.

JULY

MINT



8 TIPS FOR MINT

- Mint is similar in nutritional value to other leafy greens, with an ample amount of vitamin A and smaller amounts of calcium and potassium.
- Menthol, a chemical naturally found in mint plants, is a common ingredient in cold medicine. Chewing on one or two leaves of fresh peppermint can help alleviate congestion from a cold.
- The scent of mint repels aphids, whiteflies and ants, among other insects. In colonial times, mint leaves were kept near food, beds and wardrobes as natural pest control.
- Peppermint oil can function as both a local anesthetic and analgesic. It is often found in topical muscle relaxants.
- Mint is a very tasty accompaniment to tuna or chicken salad sandwiches. Try a few mint leaves, instead of lettuce, on your next sandwich.
- Fresh mint is best stored by placing stems in a tall glass or container filled with a few inches of water. Loosely covered and kept in the refrigerator, it should last for about one week. To preserve freshness, change the water every other day.
- Infuse green tea with mint, lemon, and a squeeze of honey. Drink warm or iced.
- Mix equal parts ground dried mint leaves, bread crumbs and parmesan cheese for a delicious topping on: spaghetti, spiral veggies or roasted Brussels sprouts.



Add Mint to:

-Cocktails/
Mocktails

-Fruit Salads

-Baked Goods



Note: This information is meant to supplement, not replace advice from your healthcare provider and is not meant to cover all possible uses, precautions, interactions or adverse effects.

Sources Consulted: Encyclopedia Britannica; Consumer Health Complete; spiceography.com; Gale Health and Wellness; MasterClass

Chocolate Mint Italian Soda

Courtesy of: alive.com



Each serving contains: 32 calories; 0 g protein; 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat, 0 g trans fat); 13 g total carbohydrates (8 g sugars, 0 g fiber); 11 mg sodium

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 mL) water
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) natural cane sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) chocolate mint sprigs, plus extra for garnish
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) chocolate extract (optional)
- Ice cubes
- Sparkling water or club soda
- Raspberries, for garnish

Yield:

8 Servings

Directions:

1. In small saucepan over medium heat, bring water and sugar to a simmer, stirring occasionally. When sugar has dissolved, add chocolate mint and continue to simmer for another 3 minutes.
2. Remove from heat, stir in chocolate extract, cover, and let cool completely.
3. Pour syrup through fine mesh sieve into reusable container with lid, cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
4. To make soda, fill glass with ice. Add about 2 to 3 tablespoons syrup and top with about 8 ounces sparkling water or club soda.
5. Stir, and garnish with a few fresh raspberries and extra chocolate mint leaves, if desired.

Greek Meatballs (Keftedes)

Courtesy of: recipetineats.com

Yield:

5 Servings

Directions:

1. Grate the onion straight into a large bowl, then add remaining Meatball ingredients. Use your hands to mix well for a few minutes until the mixture is quite smooth and very well combined.
2. Measure out heaped tablespoons and dollop onto a work surface - should make around 32 - 35. Then roll into balls.
3. Heat most of the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat (medium if you have a strong gas stove). Use enough oil to cover the surface of the skillet.
4. Cook in 2 to 3 batches: Dredge meatballs lightly in flour, shaking off excess, then place in the skillet. Roll them around and cook for 5 - 6 minutes, until nicely browned all over. Remove onto plate, cover to keep warm and repeat with remaining meatballs.

Ingredients:

- 1 red onion, grated
- 1 lb beef mince (ground beef) (or lamb)
- 6.5oz pork mince (ground pork), or more beef
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 6 large mint leaves, finely chopped (spearmint is authentic)
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3/4 tsp salt
- Black pepper
- 1/2 cup flour any white
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Finely chopped parsley, optional, for garnish
- Tzatziki (Note 5) or Greek yogurt

