

Culinary Herbs



Basil



Bay leaf



Chervil



Coriander



Dill



Lemon balm



Mint



Oregano



Parsley



Rocket



Rosemary



Sage



Thyme



Tarragon

| Common name (botanical name) | Plentiful season | Usual culinary use and part used |
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| Basil Many cultivars available, e.g. sweet basil, dark opal, Fino verde, lemon, lime, Thai. | summer | Leaves with tomato, eggplant, capsicum and potato dishes, with pizza, in pesto, and egg and cheese mixtures. Ingredient in herbs de Provence. |
| Bay leaf | all year | Leaves fresh or dried in marinades, braises, soups, stews, pickled vegetables, sauces, milk puddings, dried beans, peas and lentils. Ingredient of bouquet garni and garam masala. |
| Chervil | spring – autumn | Leaves in salads, egg dishes, sauces, herb butters, chicken and fish. Best used fresh or added at end of cooking. Ingredient of fines herbes. |
| Chives | all year | Leaves in salads, egg dishes, soft cheeses. Ingredient of fines herbes. Add at end of cooking. |
| Coriander Leaf also called cilantro, Chinese parsley. | all year | Leaves in Asian, Indian, Mexican and Thai dishes. |
| Cress 'Mustard and cress' and Land cress Watercress. | spring – summer all year | Young leaves used in salads, sandwiches, garnishes. Fresh leaves used in soups, salads, sandwiches, garnishes, stir fries. |
| Curry leaves | all year | Leaves, fresh or dried. The flavour and fragrance of fresh leaves is stronger than dried leaves. Store fresh leaves wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Store dried leaves in a dark, air-tight container. Use in Indian-style curries. |
| Dill | spring – autumn | Leaves with seafood especially salmon, in salads, with cucumber, potatoes, sauces, pickling and borscht. |
| Kaffir Lime Leaf | summer – autumn | A hallmark of South East Asian cuisine. Use in curries, marinades and cook with rice. Ingredient in Asian bouquet garni with lemongrass and ginger. Juice of the ripe fruit (lime) is used the same way. |
| Lemon balm | spring – autumn | Best not cooked. Add at end of cooking. Fresh leaves in vinegar, wine cups, fish dishes, soft cheese dishes, chicken dishes, salsa, and sautéed vegetables. |
| Lemon grass | spring – autumn | Slightly swollen, white leaf-stalk. Crush to add to marinades, chop for Thai curry pastes, finely slice for soups and stir fries, and infuse as a tea. |
| Lemon verbena | summer – autumn | Leaves, fresh or dried in fish or poultry dishes, in stuffings, sorbets, ice cream, herb teas. |
| Lovage | spring – autumn | Strongly flavoured leaves used sparingly in soups, stews, braises, stocks, with chicken, cheese, tomatoes. |
| Marjoram | spring – autumn | Leaves in soups, with cheese, eggs, meats and vegetables. Used in Italian dishes. |
| Mint Many cultivars, e.g. spearmint, apple mint, peppermint, chocolate mint. | all year | Fresh leaves in mint sauce with roast or grilled lamb, with fish and a staple in Asian cuisines, dried in Middle Eastern soups and stews, with peas, potatoes, cucumber, salads, yoghurt, tabbouleh, chocolate desserts, fruit cups, mint julep and mojitos. Leaves turn black if chopped and added to hot food. |
| Oregano | summer – autumn | Leaves in stuffings, sausage dishes, with grilled meats, fried vegetables, tomato sauces, pizzas, spaghetti, marinades, pickled olives and capers. Used in Italian dishes. Ingredient in herbs de Provence. |
| Parsley Curly parsley, Italian or flat-leaf parsley. | spring – autumn | Leaves and stalks in soups, stews, braises, tabbouleh, persillade, gremolata and salsa, garnishing. Ingredient in bouquet garni and fines herbes. |
| Perilla Red perilla, green perilla. Also called shiso (Japanese), tai to (Vietnamese). | summer | It has a spicy flavour. Use tiny seedlings finely chopped, or leaves or flowering shoots to garnish raw and cooked fish dishes, salads, cucumber, tempura, sushi, pickles. |
| Rocket Also called arugula. | all year | Leaves and flowers in salads, sandwiches, as a garnish. |
| Rosemary | all year | Finely chopped leaves with roast sheep meats, marinades, eggplant, beans, potatoes, barbecue foods, bread. Use stems as skewers. Ingredient in herbs de Provence. |
| Sage Common sage, purple sage, variegated sage. | spring – autumn | Leaves in sausages, stuffing, with onions, leeks, cheese and port. Ingredient in herbs de Provence. Panfry and serve with bacon. |
| Salad burnet | spring – summer | Fresh, young leaves in salads, soups, soft cheese, fruit drinks, as a garnish. |
| Savory Summer savory Winter savory | spring – autumn all year | Leaves. Called the 'bean herb'. Summer savory has a softer texture and more subtle flavour than winter savory. Use in bean dishes, summer savory in salads, both with onions, courgettes, fish and meat. |
| Sorrel Garden or common sorrel, has long arrow-shaped leaves. Buckler-leaved sorrel (French sorrel) is milder and has smaller shield-shaped leaves. | spring – summer | Leaves. Discard stalks. Use sparingly as it is high in oxalic acid. Young tender leaves in salads, and larger leaves in soups, braises, stews and sauces, goat cheese, eggs and poultry. |
| Sweet cicely | spring – autumn | Finely chopped young leaves in salads, dressings, and soups. Adds sweetness when cooked with tart fruits. |
| Tarragon – French | spring – autumn | Leaves with eggs, chicken, fish, mushrooms, vegetables, tomatoes, oranges, sauces, vinegars. Ingredient in fines herbes. |
| Tarragon – Russian | spring – autumn | More robust with a coarser texture and more inferior flavour than French tarragon. |
| Thyme Many cultivars e.g. common thyme, lemon thyme. | all year | Leaves and stems in braises, stews, soups, marinades, pâté, grilled vegetables, stuffings, beans. Ingredient of bouquet garni and herbs de Provence. |
| Vietnamese mint Also called rau ram, laksa leaf, Cambodian mint, hot mint, Vietnamese cilantro, pak pai. | spring – autumn | Use leaves in small amounts in Asian chicken and fish dishes, soups and stews, salads and spring rolls. |
| Bouquet garni | | Bay leaf, thyme and parsley tied together. Use in stews, soups, braises. |
| Fines herbes | | Equal parts of finely chopped fresh chervil, chives, parsley and tarragon. Use in salads, egg dishes. |
| Herbs de Provence | | A mixture of dried herbs – rosemary, sage, thyme, marjoram, basil, oregano, mint. Use on onion tart, pizza and meat dishes. |

Herb cookery: Add 'hard' herbs such as bay, rosemary or thyme at the beginning of cooking and 'soft' herbs such as chives, parsley and coriander, at the end of cooking. Variations in supply may occur depending on region, season and weather.

For more information and recipes visit

