

# MINT

## QUICK INFO

- Mint is a perennial in USDA hardiness zones 5b and 6a.
- Mint comes in many varieties – sweet mint, peppermint, spearmint, chocolate mint, strawberry mint, mojito mint – and each has a unique taste.
- Mint is a prolific grower and is best contained in a pot or it may take over a garden space.

## COOKING TIPS

- Fresh mint leaves are better than dried for cooking.
- Mint leaves are delicious sprinkled over a fruit salad, and it pairs well with lamb or zucchini.
- Mint should be added at the last minute to cooked dishes as heat turns leaves brown.

## OTHER USES

- Fresh or dried mint leaves make an excellent tea when steeped in boiling water. Try different varieties for different flavors of mint tea.
- Mint can be used to deter pests, such as mice and some insects, by scattering leaves or keeping branches in a jar with a little water in the kitchen.
- Mint is an aromatic and tasty garnish to many cocktails and mocktails – mint julep, mojito, sparkling water.

## STORAGE AND PRESERVATION

- Small branches of mint can be stored in the refrigerator in a glass jar with a small amount of water. Add water as needed to keep the mint fresh.
- To dry, wash the mint and either tie groups of branches upside down and let them air dry or remove individual leaves and dry them in a single layer on clean towels or a metal baking rack. When leaves are completely dry, store in an airtight container out of direct sunlight.

## GROWING TIPS

- Mint will grow well in partial or full sun.
- Since the roots spread rapidly, plant mint in a pot or it may take over your garden bed.
- Harvest mint regularly to keep it growing nicely and prevent it from flowering, which can affect taste.

## QUICK & EASY RECIPE

- **Sauteed zucchini with mint (fresh):** Grate or spiralize 2 medium unpeeled zucchini; sauté the zucchini in a pan with 2 tablespoons butter; sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste; transfer sauteed zucchini to a serving dish and sprinkle with a generous handful of chopped fresh mint; {variation – also sprinkle with grated parmesan or 2 tablespoons of pine nuts}. Works best with sweet mint, spearmint, or mojito mint.
- **Tabbouleh with mint (fresh):** Add 1 cup bulgur to 3 cups boiling water; remove from heat and let stand 30 minutes; in a bowl, mix  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped parsley,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup chopped mint, 1 chopped tomato, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped scallions; when bulgur has absorbed the water, mix in herbs and vegetables; toss with a dressing of 5 teaspoons olive oil and  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of lemon juice; salt and pepper to taste. This can be served warm or at room temperature.

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