

April 2026 : Dried Lavender



Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) is a fragrant herb known for its beautiful purple flowers and calming, floral scent. It is native to the Mediterranean region. When early travelers introduced lavender to other parts of the world, it quickly took hold — by the 1500s, it had become a beloved staple of English gardens.

The use of lavender dates back more than 2,500 years, It has long been valued for a wide range of purposes, though its early uses leaned heavily toward medicine. The plant appears in the Gospel of Luke under its ancient name, spikenard. In Egypt, it played a role in the mummification process, while the Romans used it to perfume their public baths. The name "lavender" itself comes from the Latin *lavare*, meaning "to wash."



Culinary Uses: Lavender has a distinctive floral taste with hints of mint and rosemary, which makes it a versatile ingredient in both sweet and savory dishes. It is commonly used in French cuisine, particularly in the spice blend *Herbes de Provence*, which is used to flavor roasted meats, vegetables, and stews. In baking, dried lavender buds can be added to cakes, cookies, and scones, or infused into sugar and syrups to bring a subtle floral note. It pairs well with ingredients like honey, lemon, and berries, adding an aromatic touch to desserts.



Medicinal Uses: In China, lavender is used in a cure-all medicinal oil called *White Flower Oil*. Historically, it was also prescribed for an impressive array of ailments, including headaches, palsy, toothaches, sore joints, apoplexy, and digestive complaints. Lavender oil is widely used in aromatherapy to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and improve sleep. The scent is believed to have a calming effect on the nervous system, making it a popular natural remedy for anxiety and insomnia.

Other historical uses include embalming corpses, curing animals of lice, taming lions and tigers, repelling mosquitoes, and snuff flavoring.



Fun Facts: During the Middle ages it was considered an herb of love and was used as an aphrodisiac. It was also believed that a sprinkle of lavender water on the head of a loved one would keep the wearer chaste.

The first to successfully grow and harvest lavender were the Shakers. They developed lavender farms and produced their own herbs to sell to markets around the globe.

GOAT CHEESE TOAST WITH LAVENDER HONEY & WALNUTS



Time: less than 30 minutes

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 4 slices whole grain, or any hearty bread
- 4 tbsp. goat cheese
- 4 tbsp. honey
- 2 tbsp. chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp. dried lavender
- Flaky salt

Directions:

1. Make lavender honey: Add honey and lavender to a small saucepan. Warm honey over the lowest heat, stirring frequently to make sure the honey doesn't boil. Let warm for 5-15 minutes, until desired flavor is achieved. Strain through a fine mesh sieve to remove lavender **(see note below)**.
2. Over low heat, toast walnuts in a pan, roughly 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. Lightly toast 4 slices of bread.
4. Spread 1 tbsp. of goat cheese on each slice of bread.
5. Drizzle 1 tbsp. honey over each piece of toast.
6. Sprinkle with walnuts. Finish with flaky sea salt.

Note: You can sprinkle a little bit of the steeped lavender over toast as a garnish, or stir it into a cup of hot water to make some lavender tea.

LAVENDER LEMONADE



Time: 40 minutes

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. dried lavender
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 ½ cups freshly squeezed meyer lemon juice (you can use regular lemons, but you may have to increase the amount of sugar you use)
- 2 cups cold water, plus more as needed
- Ice

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, combine the lavender and sugar. Use your fingers to gently rub the flowers into the sugar.
2. Pour 2 cups of boiling water over the sugar and stir with a spoon until the sugar has dissolved. Cover and let infuse for 30 minutes
3. Strain the lavender syrup into a pitcher
4. Stir in the lemon juice and add 2 cups of cold water. Taste and adjust for tartness. Add more lemon juice if too sweet. Add more sugar if too tart. Add ice and more water to your desired level of concentration.

THE NEW BEES KNEES



Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup hot water
- 1 tsp. dried lavender
- ¼ cup honey
- 6 tbsp. gin
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice

Directions:

1. Mix hot water and lavender blossoms in bowl. Let steep 5 minutes.
2. Whisk in ¼ cup honey. Strain into another bowl
3. Add 3 tbsp. of the honey syrup, 6 tbsp. gin, and 2 tbsp. lemon juice to a cocktail shaker. Add ice.
4. Shake well and strain into 2 chilled martini glasses.

LAVENDER SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 1 hr 35 min., plus chill time

Yield: 24 cookies

Ingredients

- 2 tsp. dried lavender
- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb salted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 17.5 oz./3.5 cups all purpose flour



Instructions:

1. Grind the lavender up very finely using a mortar and pestle, until it is almost a powder. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, chop the lavender as finely as possible with a knife.
2. In a stand mixer* fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter, sugar, and lavender powder.
3. Add the vanilla and mix just until it disappears.
4. Add flour to the bowl, and mix together until a dough ball forms.
5. Roll the dough out on a baking mat about 1/2" thick, then cut desired shapes. Squares, rectangles, and circles all work well.
6. Place the cookies on a sheet tray, and refrigerate for 1 hour, until cold and firm to the touch.
7. Preheat oven to 350F.
8. Bake the cookies for 20-25 minutes, until the cookies are lightly golden brown on the edges.
9. Let the cookies cool to room temperature, and enjoy!

Note:

*You can use a hand mixer as well, but you'll need to do more kneading and shaping at the end so the dough can be rolled out.

Check Out These Cookbooks!

These cookbooks all contain recipes with herbs from this month's kit. Did you know that we have over 350 cookbooks in our collection? Explore recipes from many different countries and cuisines!



The Perfect Pie: Your Ultimate Guide to Classic and Modern Pies, Tarts, Galettes, and More

America's Test Kitchen

Location in Library:
641.865 PER



Spiced: Unlock the Power of Spices to Transform your Cooking

America's Test Kitchen

Location in Library:
641.638 SPI