



MONTEREY BAY CERTIFIED FARMERS MARKETS

EDIBLE PARADISE

COOKING SEASONALLY FROM THE FARMERS MARKETS



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Start with What You Have

You do not need a large herb garden or a complicated recipe to make fresh herbs part of everyday cooking.

Begin with one bunch from the farmers market. Use some fresh, turn some into a butter or pesto, and preserve the rest in a finishing salt or freezer cubes.

A handful of herbs can become several different preparations—and make simple food taste entirely new.

FRESH HERBS, BIG FLAVOR

Fresh herbs can do far more than garnish a plate. They can brighten simple food, add fragrance and color, and turn familiar ingredients into something memorable.

Sprinkle them into finishing salts. Stir them into syrups and sauces. Spread

them in compound butter. Spoon pesto or infused honey over everyday dishes.

Use this guide to explore the flavors of fresh herbs, finishing salts or herb butter, and discover easy ways to make them part of your cooking.

HERB FLAVOR GUIDE

BASIL

Flavor: Sweet, peppery, and gently clove-like

Pairs well with: Tomatoes, stone fruit, berries, mozzarella, Parmesan, garlic, lemon, olive oil, chicken, fish, and eggs. Try it in pesto, salads, sandwiches, compound butter, infused honey, syrups, pasta, and tomato dishes.

DILL

Flavor: Fresh, grassy, slightly tangy, and faintly anise-like

Pairs well with: Cucumbers, potatoes, salmon, eggs, yogurt, sour cream, lemon, mustard, beets, and peas. Try it in potato salad, cucumber salad, dips, dressings, egg dishes, compound butter, seafood, and pickles.

PARSLEY

Flavor: Fresh, clean, grassy, and mildly peppery

Pairs well with: Lemon, garlic, olive oil, beans, grains, potatoes, seafood, chicken, mushrooms, and nearly every other herb. Try it in pesto, finishing salt, salads, sauces, soups, grain dishes, compound butter, and marinades.

ROSEMARY

Flavor: Piney, woody, resinous, and intensely aromatic

Pairs well with: Potatoes, bread, beans, mushrooms, lamb, chicken, pork, citrus, garlic, olive oil, and roasted vegetables. Try it in finishing salt, focaccia, roasted potatoes, compound butter, marinades, syrups, and infused honey. Use lightly, rosemary can easily overpower more delicate ingredients.

HERB FLAVOR GUIDE

THYME

Flavor: Earthy, woody, gently floral, and slightly minty

Pairs well with: Mushrooms, chicken, fish, beans, tomatoes, carrots, potatoes, onions, lemon, and cheese. Try it in soups, roasted vegetables, sauces, compound butter, finishing salt, marinades, and vinaigrettes.

SAGE

Flavor: Earthy, savory, peppery, and slightly eucalyptus-like

Pairs well with: Butter, squash, pumpkin, beans, pork, poultry, apples, onions, potatoes, and brown butter. Try it in compound butter, finishing salt, stuffing, pasta, beans, roasted vegetables, and fried herb garnishes. Use lightly: Sage becomes stronger as it cooks.

MINT

Flavor: Cool, sweet, refreshing, and gently peppery

Pairs well with: Peas, cucumbers, watermelon, berries, citrus, yogurt, lamb, feta, chocolate, tea, and sparkling water. Try it in syrups, pesto, fruit salad, iced tea, yogurt sauces, grain salads, desserts, and drinks.

OREGANO

Flavor: Bold, earthy, peppery, and slightly bitter

Pairs well with: Tomatoes, olives, feta, eggplant, zucchini, beans, lamb, chicken, garlic, lemon, and olive oil. Try it in pesto, tomato sauce, marinades, salad dressings, roasted vegetables, finishing salt, and grilled meats. Use lightly, fresh oregano can be surprisingly assertive.

TARRAGON

Flavor: Delicate, sweet, and distinctly anise-like

Pairs well with: Chicken, fish, eggs, asparagus, mushrooms, mustard, cream, butter, citrus, and vinegar. Try it in compound butter, vinaigrettes, chicken salad, egg dishes, sauces, and herb vinegar.

CHIVES

Flavor: Mild, fresh, and gently onion-like

Pairs well with: Eggs, potatoes, cheese, sour cream, yogurt, fish, chicken, cucumbers, and butter. Try them in compound butter, finishing salt, dips, egg dishes, salads, baked potatoes, and soft cheese. Add chives near the end of cooking to preserve their fresh flavor.

MARJORAM

Flavor: Soft, sweet, floral, and milder than oregano

Pairs well with: Chicken, pork, beans, mushrooms, tomatoes, potatoes, squash, eggs, and cheese. Try it in soups, tomato dishes, sausages, roasted vegetables, marinades, compound butter, and herb salt.

TUSCAN HERB SALT

This aromatic all-purpose salt is delicious on eggs, tomatoes, roasted vegetables, potatoes, chicken, fish, and warm bread with butter.

¼ cup chopped fresh rosemary

¼ cup chopped fresh sage

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme

1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano

2 garlic cloves

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

2 cups fine sea salt, divided

Preheat the oven to 200°F. Pulse the herbs with ¼ cup salt in a food processor until finely chopped. Add the garlic and pulse again. Spread the mixture on a sheet pan, then stir in the remaining salt and black pepper.

Bake for 30 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave the salt inside for 30 to 60 minutes, or until completely dry. Cool, break up any clumps, and store in an airtight jar.

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FRESH MINT SYRUP

Use this refreshing syrup in lemonade, iced tea, sparkling water, fruit salad, mocktails, and desserts.

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

1 cup fresh mint leaves

Combine the water and sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat.

Stir until the sugar has dissolved.

Remove from the heat and add the mint leaves. Cover and steep for 20 to 30 minutes. Strain into a clean jar and cool completely. Refrigerate.

LEMON-BASIL HONEY BUTTER

This delicately sweet and fragrant butter is delicious on biscuits, toast, pancakes, waffles, cornbread, roasted carrots, and grilled fish.

½ cup unsalted butter, softened
Zest of ½ lemon
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil
1 to 2 tablespoons honey
Pinch of salt

Mix all the ingredients until thoroughly combined. Transfer to a covered container or shape into a log using parchment paper. Refrigerate until firm. Bring to room temperature before serving.

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ARUGULA-BASIL PESTO

Peppery arugula and sweet basil make a bright, versatile pesto for pasta, sandwiches, grilled vegetables, chicken, fish, and soup.

4 cups loosely packed baby arugula
2 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves
2 garlic cloves
¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan
Juice of 1 large lemon
1 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine the arugula, basil, garlic, Parmesan, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a food processor. Pulse while gradually adding the olive oil until the pesto reaches the desired consistency. Adjust seasoning, then serve or refrigerate with a thin layer of olive oil on top.

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BASIL-INFUSED HONEY

Drizzle this simple herbal honey over yogurt, fruit, biscuits, ricotta, goat cheese, toast, or pancakes.

½ cup honey
1 generous handful fresh basil leaves

Place the honey and basil in the top of a double boiler. Warm gently without boiling. Remove from the heat and allow the basil to steep as the honey cools. Strain, if desired, and transfer to a clean jar. Refrigerate and use promptly.

Freeze Pesto

Spoon pesto into small containers or ice cube trays. Once frozen, transfer the portions to a freezer container so you can thaw only what you need.



ORANGE-TARRAGON BUTTER

½ cup salted butter, softened
1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, finely chopped

Mix all ingredients until evenly combined. Shape into a log and chill until firm.

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LEMON-DILL BUTTER

1 cup unsalted butter, softened
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon salt

Mix all ingredients until evenly combined. Shape into a log and chill until firm.

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HONEY-MUSTARD CHIVE BUTTER

½ cup salted butter, softened
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons whole-grain Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh chives

Mix all ingredients until smooth and evenly blended. Shape into a log and chill.

LEMON BASIL BUTTER

*½ cup salted butter, softened
1/2 cup lemon basil leaves,
loosely packed*
1 tablespoon lemon zest
Pinch of sea salt*

Mix all ingredients until smooth and evenly blended. Shape into a log and chill.

**Lemon basil is available at KT Farms.*

ZHOUG

*4 garlic cloves, peeled
2 bunches cilantro, thick stems
removed (about 2 packed cups)
½ cup (packed) fresh parsley
2 to 4 jalapeños, seeds removed if you
prefer a milder sauce
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
¾ cup olive oil, plus more to taste*

Combine garlic, herbs, jalapeños, salt, and spices in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. With the processor running, slowly add the olive oil and blend until combined but still slightly textured. Taste and adjust salt, heat, or olive oil as needed. Refrigerate in an airtight container until ready to use.



HOW TO USE COMPOUND BUTTER

Place a slice on hot grilled meat or fish just before serving and allow it to melt over the surface. Add a pat to steamed green beans, roasted carrots, grilled zucchini, baked potatoes, or freshly cooked corn.

Compound butter is also wonderful:

- Tossed with hot pasta or rice
- Topping a baked potato
- Melted over grilled bread
- Spread inside a sandwich
- Stirred into mashed potatoes
- Added to scrambled eggs
- Served with radishes or crackers
- Brushed over vegetables before roasting
- Slipped beneath the skin of chicken before cooking

For an effortless summer appetizer, set out a small dish of herb butter with warm bread, sliced tomatoes, radishes, and vegetables from the farmers market.

Try these classic pairings:

- Parsley, chives, garlic, and lemon zest with grilled steak or chicken
- Dill, lemon zest, and capers with salmon or other grilled fish
- Basil, garlic, and Parmesan with tomatoes, zucchini, corn, or warm bread
- Rosemary, thyme, and black pepper with lamb, potatoes, or mushrooms
- Cilantro, lime zest, and minced jalapeño with grilled corn, shrimp, or chicken
- Sage, garlic, and a touch of honey with roasted squash or sweet potatoes

Compound butter will generally keep in the refrigerator for about one week when tightly wrapped.

For longer storage, freeze the log whole or slice it into individual rounds and place them in an airtight container. Frozen compound butter keeps well for several months and can be added directly to hot foods without thawing.

Making several small batches while herbs are abundant is a wonderful way to preserve a little of summer's flavor for meals later in the season.

Visit EDIBLE PARADISE for delicious, seasonal recipes!

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