

GARLIC

About Garlic History

Garlic has been highly prized as a vegetable, herb, and medicine by many cultures for thousands of years. Garlic is mentioned in Sanskrit writings as far back as 5000 B.C. Slaves building the great pyramids of Egypt refused to work without their daily ration of garlic.

The Plant

Garlic is the edible bulb from a plant in the Amaryllis family, which makes it closely related to leeks, onions, and shallots. Most recipes refer to a clove of garlic, which is one of the small sections making up the garlic bulb. The medical benefits of garlic have been studied extensively in the past several decades. Discuss the medicinal use of garlic with your healthcare provider. While garlic appears to be safe for most adults, some side effects such as breath odor are more common with raw garlic. Chewing a small amount of raw parsley is said to counteract the garlic odor.

How to Buy

Select garlic bulbs that are firm and tight-skinned. Great-headed or elephant garlic is the least pungent, followed by early and late *Allium sativum*.

How to Prepare

One clove of raw garlic finely minced or chopped is as flavorful as a whole bulb cooked. One clove of garlic equals approximately one teaspoon minced.

- Sauté garlic at a low temperature only until translucent. Garlic will burn quickly, which produces a bitter flavor.
- To take advantage of the pungent flavor of garlic, cut or chop the garlic just before using. Add it at the end of the cooking process.
- For a milder flavor, cook garlic for a longer time.

How to Store

WARNING: Research by the National Center for Home Food Preservation confirmed that mixtures of garlic in oil stored at room temperature are at risk for the development of a toxin that results in botulism, a potentially deadly foodborne illness.

- Garlic stores well in a cool, dry, dark, well-ventilated place in well-ventilated containers such as mesh bags.
- Garlic-in-oil can be made fresh and stored in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or lower for no more than seven days. It may be frozen for long-term storage for up to several months. Package in glass freezer jars or plastic freezer boxes, leaving ½-inch headspace. Label, date, and freeze. Store in refrigerator after removing from the freezer.
- Freezing plain garlic is not recommended as the flavor becomes strong and bitter.

Garlic Butter Roasted Garlic

- Use ½ cup of softened butter mashed with 4 cloves of garlic, finely minced.
- Cut tops off garlic bulbs to expose cloves or cut larger bulbs in half. Put cut side up in a baking dish or wrap in aluminum foil. Sprinkle with olive oil and season with salt, pepper, or other herbs. Bake at 350 degrees F until soft and tender or about 45 to 60 minutes. Remove garlic pulp and spread on bread or use in dips or dressing. Example: Mix with Parmesan cheese and olive oil for a spread for crackers or bread.

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