

Chives

By Kami McBride

Chives have been used as a food for more than 5,000 years. We find them in Chinese cooking first and by the 15th century they had become a common European garden herb. Old European lore talks about hanging bundles of chives in the home to ward off evil spirits! Well, chives do chase away colds.

Many people reserve chives for that special place on top of the sour cream and butter in the baked potato. I love chives on potatoes and they are also good in many other dishes. I add chives to my salad dressings, pestos, steamed vegetables and marinades. Their peppery-onion flavor adds a zing to just about any savory type dish.

Chives are a great herb to use in the fall because like their relatives; onion and garlic, chives contain sulfur compounds that have anti-biotic properties. Chives are an anti-cold and flu remedy that can easily be included in every day meals. Their high vitamin C content is another reason to just use them as the universal condiment this time of year.

Chives are anti-oxidant and anti-bacterial and when everyone is coughing and sneezing, we smile and eat chives! Chives are also a very nutritious food; they contain high amounts of iron, calcium, potassium, folic acid and magnesium.

Chinese research shows that eating garlic, chives or onions on a daily basis promotes prostate health. Chives also contain allicin which research shows is helpful in reducing cholesterol and high blood pressure. The secret to getting the highest nutritive value from your chives is to not cook them. The best way to eat them is to cut them into small pieces with kitchen scissors and sprinkle onto food just before serving.

Chives lend themselves well to eggs, omelettes, steamed asparagus, cauliflower and broccoli. Chives go well with salmon and they are great on any potato dish, especially potato and leek soup. We add chives to the mayonnaise on sandwiches and sprinkle them in soups, salads, rice and even corn on the cob. Often a little bit of chives can take the place of salting your food.

Chives are a great addition to holiday dips and cheese spreads. They help aid in digesting all of the rich holiday foods and help to keep everyone at the party healthy. Roll some soft goat cheese in chopped chives and cracked black pepper and serve with crackers.

Chive Butter Spread

½ cup organic butter

¼ cup flax oil

½ bunch chopped chives

¼ cup chopped garden herb of choice (rosemary, thyme, basil and parsley are good choices)

Mix well and spread on fish and potato dishes or warmed bread. You can also put some of this spread into a plastic bag and freeze it. This way you can cut off a pat of chive butter spread to top off any chicken or fish dinner

Rosemary Chive Potato Souffle

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated cheddar cheese
2 cups hot mashed potatoes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary
3 eggs
4 tablespoon chopped chives

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine cheese, potatoes, sour cream and rosemary. Separate the eggs and beat the yolks until smooth and add them to the potato mixture. Fold in fluffy whipped egg whites. Pour into buttered casserole pan. Bake 45 minutes and top with 4 tablespoons chopped chives

Remember as you sprinkle your food with chives you are helping to fight off colds, coughs and flu for your family and guests.

Kami McBride has taught herbal medicine since 1988. Through her classes and personal wellness consultations she helps people understand how whole foods and herbal medicine are an important aspect of everyone's preventive health care plan. Kami has helped thousands of people learn to use herbs in their daily lives in ways that are healthy, safe and fun and she teaches classes in herbal medicine and women's health at her school and herb gardens in Vacaville, California. She can be reached at 707-446-1290 or www.livingawareness.com