

Cilantro

By Kami McBride

Whenever you go to a restaurant that has a salsa bar, heap on an extra tablespoon of cilantro. This delicious green herb is nothing short of a healing ally.

Cilantro is also called Italian parsley or coriander. When cilantro goes to seed, the seeds are the spice known as coriander. Cilantro goes well with garlic, oregano, mints and ginger. Chopped cilantro is easily added as a garnish to tacos, salads, soups, rice dishes, stir fries and baked fish.

Many spices are very warming and heating to the body. Often people are already overheated with stress and toxic foods and an addition of hot spices in food can be aggravating. Cilantro helps to balance out spicy dishes. What is nice about cilantro is that it is balancing to all body types, whether you are hot or cold, cilantro is good for you. Usually you find it in salsa or as a condiment sauce in Thai and Indian food because it helps to temper out the harshness of the spiciness of these foods.

Cilantro is also the perfect herb to eat throughout the summer; it helps to cool the body down a bit on really hot days.

Cilantro is rich in calcium and iron. It aids digestion; calms excess 'fire' in the body and can relieve nausea. This tender leafy herb can help you with a headache, gas, bloating, and an upset stomach. Cilantro also helps with coughs and you can even apply fresh cilantro pulp to heal conjunctivitis on the eyelids!

The pungent flavor of cilantro fades quickly with heat. It is really best added raw as a garnish or in sauces to foods that have already been cooked. I love minced cilantro in salads. We also use cilantro pesto instead of mayonnaise on our sandwiches. You really don't need basil for your pesto if you have cilantro. When you want to put it into soups, wait until you serve the soup and then add it just before eating.

Cilantro Pesto

1 cup olive oil or combination of olive oil and flax seed oil
1 packed cup of chopped cilantro
1 clove garlic
½ cup walnuts, pecans or almonds
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Sea salt to taste

Cilantro Leaf Tea

2 cups water
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaf

Put cilantro and water in sauce pan with the lid on. Cook on the lowest heat setting for ten minutes. Strain out the cilantro and drink the tea to aid digestion. This is a great after meal tea in the summer time

Guacamole Cilantro Salad Dressing

2 avocados

3 tablespoons minced cilantro

2 tablespoons water (add more water for a runnier dressing)

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon whole yogurt

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Mash the avocados and then mix in remaining ingredients

Quinoa with Cilantro Sauce

1 cup dry quinoa

2 cups water

First rinse the quinoa in a colander and then put it in a saucepan with 2 cups water bring it to a boil, cover with a lid, reduce the heat to low and cook for about 20 minutes.

1/2 cup chopped cilantro

1/2 cup olive oil

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons agave nectar or honey

1/4 teaspoon sea salt

1 clove garlic

Mix together in a blender and pour over quinoa

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