

## BASIL



### *Ocimum basilicum*

[OSS-ih-mum bass-IL-ee-kum]

**Names:** Sweet basil, St Josephwort, Basilienkraut (German); basilic (French); basilico (Italian); Albahaca (Spanish); Basilkört (Swedish); Raihan (Arabic); Basilicum (Dutch); Manjericao (Portuguese); Bazilik (Russian); Meboki (Japanese); Lo-le, luole (Chinese); American Dittany, Alabahaca; Witches' Herb; Our Herb; Bazylija pospolita (Polish)

**Family:** Labiatae

**History:** The specific and common names are derived from the Greek *basileus*, king, and the herb, by reason of its special properties was given regal status; the generic name may also come from the Greek *okimon*, fragrant-lipped. The ancient Egyptians burned a mixture of basil and myrrh to appease their gods and embalmed their dead with it. In Persia and Malaysia Basil is planted on graves, and in Egypt women scatter the flowers on the resting places of those belonging to them. To the ancient Greeks and Romans, the herb was a symbol of hostility and insanity. They painted poverty as a ragged woman with a Basil at her

side. They believed that to grow truly fragrant basil, one had to shout and swear angrily while sowing its seeds. In French "sowing basil" (*semer le basilic*) means "ranting". Other folk traditions have associated the herb with love. During recent centuries, when an Italian woman placed a potted basil plant on her balcony, it signaled that she was ready to receive her lover. The French were introduced to it by Catherine de Medici in 1533 when she married King Henry II and brought with her Italian chefs and a taste for food well seasoned with basil. They dubbed it *Herbe Royale*. And in northern Europe, lovers exchanged basil sprigs as signs of faithfulness. Haitians believe in basil's protective powers. Shopkeepers in Haiti sprinkle basil water around their stores to ward off evil spirits and bring prosperity.

Its old association with the basilisk explains sweet basil's contemporary correspondences with such creatures as salamanders and dragons. As a consequence of this association, the plant became associated with scorpions. Grieve writes that the "superstition went so far as to affirm that even smelling the plant might bring a scorpion into the brain." It is believed that Solomon chose sweet basil when making his ritual aspurger to use in his temple.

**Description:** There is a wide variety of basil. From Tom DeBaggio's book comes the following list: African Blue, Anise, Bush Green, Camphor, Cinnamon, Clove, Cuban, Dark Opal, Dwarf Bouquet, East Indian, Genoa Green Improved, Genoa profumatissima, Green, Green Bouquet, Green Ruffles, Holy Basil (Indian Tulsi), Holly's Painted, Italian Dwarf, Karamanos, Lemon, Mrs. Burns' Lemon, Lesbos, Lettuce Leaf, Mexican Spice, Miniature, Miniature Puerto Rican, Miniature Purple Well-Sweep, Napletano, New Guinea,

Osmin, Peruvian, Piccolo, Puerto Rican, Purple Ruffles, Red Rubin, Sacred, Spice, Spicy Bush, Spicy Globe, Sweet Basil, Sweet Fine, Thai Purple, True Thai, West African. Since the descriptions of these varieties covers 24 pages in the book, my recommendation is that you read up on ones that appeal to you. Tastes vary as do growth habits.

**Cultivation:** The basic information for production is that unless you live in a southern climate with a long growing season, it's not advisable to sow basil directly into the herb garden. Start indoors and move outside when night temperatures stay above 50 degrees. Seed germinates in 5-14 days. Seeds may rot in a cold, damp soil. Sow to a depth of one-fourth to one-half inch. Expected germination rates should be between 80-95%. The seed will remain viable for over a decade if refrigerated. About six pounds of seed will plant an acre. In 4-6 weeks the plants should be large enough for you to begin harvesting leaves. Fertilize the plants at this time and at 3-4 week intervals thereafter. To encourage basil to grow in a bush, periodically pinch the center stem 1 inch from the top. This will also prevent the plant from flowering and going to seed, thus reducing leaf production. Harvest basil totally when the possibility of low temperatures is approaching. After you've harvested the crop, strip the leaves from the stems, cleaning them if necessary and freeze in plastic bags in recipe size portions. Or, to dry, hand in small bunches in a dark place. Once the leaves become brittle, strip them and store them in an opaque jar. Another harvesting method is to chop basil in a food processor, adding a little olive oil and freeze in small jars....pesto waiting to happen.

**Constituents:** volatile oil (including estragol), tannins, borneone, cineole, methylchavicol, eugenol, ocimene, pinene, sylvestrene, basil camphor; eugenol, methyl cinnamate, others depending on species. The oil is 40-45% methyl linalol, 23.8% methyl chavicol and small amounts of limonene and citronellol

**Nutritional Profile:** one ounce of fresh basil leaves has 12 calories. It provides 0.9 g protein, 0.3 g fat, 2 g carbohydrates, 91 mg calcium, 0.3 mg iron, approximately 12,380 IU vitamin A and 8 mg vitamin C. One teaspoon ground basil has 4 calories. It provides 0.2 g protein, a trace of fat, 0.9 g carbohydrates, 30 mg calcium, 0.6 mg iron, 131 IU vitamin A and 0.9 mg vitamin C.

**Character:** sweet, pungent, slightly bitter, very warm, dry. The oil is a colorless or pale yellow liquid with a light fresh sweet-spicy and balsamic undertone. The taste is pungent. Energy is heating, neutral

**Meridians/Organs affected:** lungs, stomach

**Actions:** antidepressant, antiseptic, stimulates the adrenal cortex, prevents vomiting, tonic, carminative, febrifuge, expectorant, soothes itching.

**Dosha effect:** VK-, P+ in excess

**Blends Well with:** bergamot, black pepper, lavender, marjoram, melissa, neroli, sandalwood, verbena, clary sage, lime, opopanax, oakmoss, citronella, geranium, hyssop and other 'green' notes, camphor, rosemary, juniper, lemon, eucalyptus, myrtle, lavender, bergamot,

**Extraction Method for Oil:** steam distillation from the flowering herb

**Aromatherapy Use:** Top Note. The essential oil is used in soaps, toothpastes, mouthwashes, and perfumes. It is also a basic ingredient for the manufacture of Chartreuse-type liqueurs. Basil also helps to restore the sense of smell lost from sinus congestion. Aromatherapists massage oils scented with basil into overworked muscles and use the fragrance to decrease mental fatigue and to clear the head.

**SKIN CARE:** insect bites; insect repellent, refreshing and tonic action benefits sluggish and congested skins and may help to control acne.

**CIRCULATION, MUSCLES AND JOINTS:** gout, muscular aches and pains, rheumatism

**RESPIRATORY SYSTEM:** bronchitis, coughs, earache, sinusitis

**DIGESTIVE SYSTEM:** dyspepsia, flatulence, nausea

**GENITO-URINARY SYSTEM:** cramps, scanty periods

**IMMUNE SYSTEM:** colds, fever, flu, infectious disease

**NERVOUS SYSTEM:** anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia, migraine, nervous tension.

Good tonic for the nerves when feeling fragile, sharpening the senses and encouraging concentration.

#### **BLENDS:**

Alertness: 80 drops lime, 60 drops rosemary, 20 drops ginger, 15 drops sweet basil combined in 4 oz of pure water

Restful sleep: 4 drops Peru balsam, 4 drops celery, 4 drops orange, 3 drops sweet basil in 1 Tbsp carrier oil

Digestive: 5 drops basil, 3 drops peppermint, 3 drops Roman Chamomile

Respiratory: 6 drops basil, 3 drops pine, 3 drops benzoin

Reproductive: 5 drops basil, 4 drops lavender, 3 drops jasmine

**Medicinal Uses:** The Chinese used it to treat stomach, kidney and blood ailments. During the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Hildegard of Bingen used basil in a complicated mixture to treat cancerous tumors. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, basil was widely used in Europe to treat colds, warts, and intestinal worms. In Ayurvedic medicine, the juice is recommended for snakebites, as a general tonic, for chills, coughs, skin problems and earaches. It is called tulsi. The oil kill intestinal parasites confirming its traditional use in Malaya and as a stomach soother and treatment for a broad range of intestinal ailments. Indian researchers have reported that basil kills bacteria when applied to the skin and have used basil oil successfully to treat acne. One animal study shows basil stimulates the immune system by increasing production of disease-fighting antibodies by up to 20%. In

the West it is considered a cooling herb and is used for rheumatic pain, irritable skin conditions and for those of a nervous disposition. Basil is one of many healing herbs containing both pro-and anti-cancer substances. On the prevention side, it contains Vitamin A & C, anti-oxidants that help prevent cell damage. But basil also contains a chemical, estragole, that produced liver tumors in mice, according to a report published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. However, the cancer risk, if any, remains unclear. It's on the FDA list of GRAS herbs.

#### **Applications:**

**Leaves:** Rub fresh leaves on insect bites to reduce itching and inflammation. As an infusion, combine with a little motherwort and drink immediately after childbirth to prevent a retained placenta. Combine the leaves with wood betony and skullcap in a tincture for nervous conditions or with elecampane and hyssop for coughs and bronchitis. Combine the juice of the leaves with an equal quantity of honey and use for ringworm and itching skin. Mix the juice with a decoction of cinnamon and cloves for chills. Combine the juice with an equal quantity of honey for coughs. Pour boiling water onto the leaves and inhale the steam for head colds.

**Essential Oil:** Add 5-10 drops to a bath for nervous exhaustion, mental fatigue, melancholy, or uneasiness. Dilute 5 drops basil oil in 10 ml almond or sunflower oil for asthma and bronchitis. Use the diluted oil in a massage oil for nervous weakness and can also be applied as an insect repellent.

*Sweet Basil Balm (for hard-to-heal blisters and minor burns):*

8 fresh sweet basil leaves

1/8 tsp apricot kernel oil

sterile cotton gauze

surgical tape

Rinse the sweet basil leaves under cold water. Pat dry. Mince the leaves. In a small glass bowl, combine the basil and the apricot kernel oil. Mash to form a smooth paste. Cut 2 rectangular strips of gauze large enough to cover the injury, plus an extra inch all around.

Spread an even layer of the basil paste on the surface of one of the gauze strips, leaving an inch around the edges free to accommodate the surgical tape. Place the clean strip of gauze on top. Fasten the poultice to the injured area with surgical tape. Keep the balm on the injury for at least 2 hours. Remove and discard. Rebandage with plain gauze for the next 24 hours to keep clean.

**Flower Essence:** An integration of sexuality and spirituality into a sacred wholeness. Good in relationships where there is a compulsive need to seek sexual liaisons outside the main partnership. Basil flower essence helps the soul to experience the world and the Self as truly sacred and whole.

**Caution:** Though no uterine stimulant has ever been identified, given its pervasive multicultural use as a menstruation promoter and labor inducer, pregnant women should probably limit their consumption to culinary amounts. Do not use the essential oil externally or internally in pregnancy.

**Cosmetic Uses:** Essential oil useful as hair conditioner.

#### *Spring-Green Summer Facial*

1 cucumber, peeled and seeded

1 cup lemon basil, leaves only

2 egg whites, whipped to soft peaks

Place cucumber and lemon basil in a blender or food processor. Puree until smooth. Quickly fold in egg whites. Apply to the face, avoiding the eyes, for 5-8 minutes. Lie down, put your feet up. Wash off the facial with tepid water. Apply skin cream or moisturizer.

#### *Psoriasis Relief Treatment*

1 anise bulb, cut into pieces

3 cups water

1 Tbsp basil

1 Tbsp parsley

1 cup steeped black tea

In a blender, mix anise on medium speed until smooth. In a small saucepan, heat water, basil,

and parsley until boiling; then reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Remove from heat and cool. Mix liquid with anise and tea in small mixing bowl. If you don't want herbs in the final mixture, filter them out before using liquid. Apply mixture with a clean cloth to psoriasis-affected areas every 30 minutes for 2 hours every night. Makes 2 cups. Cover and refrigerate. Discard after 5 days. (Blended Beauty)

**Ritual Use:** Planet: Mars. Element: Fire; Associated Dieties: Krishna, Vishnu; Gender: hot. . Basil is used in rites of exorcism and to bring happiness to the home. Burn it as incense, sew it into sachets, weave it into wreaths, or sprinkle the powder in the corners of rooms. An open bowl of basil placed in a room dispels melancholy. Basil brings joy to the user. It creates an aura of understanding between people. Use in tea and in the ritual bath. It is used to mend lovers' quarrels and in love spells. Basil attracts money and brings good luck to a new home. Sprinkle the powder over the area of your heart to promote fidelity. The scent brings happiness to the home and will protect you in crowds. Any person in need of courage should use basil. It brings strength and helps one move forward in a positive manner no matter how perilous the dangers. Birthday flower of July 12.

**Spiritual Properties:** Basil will help develop, reveal, and use the enthusiastic fire element within. It supports idealism and keeps inner vision clear. Basil's medicine is courage in the face of initiatory change and growth. It is an herb of fluid movement on many levels.

#### **Culinary Use:**

The key ingredient in pesto. It is the essential ingredient of many Italian, French, Greek and Southeast Asian dishes. One of the most wonderful summer dishes is slices of ripe tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella cheese, and handfuls of chopped basil. Stuff sweet red or yellow peppers with cooked rice combined with chopped fresh basil, minced scallions, minced Italian plum tomatoes and crumbled feta cheese. Bake at 350F until tender about 40

minutes. This is one case where more is always better than less if you're using fresh basil.

### **Recipes:**

#### **Sweet Basil Thai Style Relish**

16 fresh sweet basil leaves  
1 medium cucumber, peeled  
1 tsp salt  
1 fresh jalapeno pepper  
2 Tbsp unsalted peanuts  
2 Tbsp sesame oil  
2 Tbsp honey  
3 Tbsp minced red onion  
2 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
1 Tbsp rice vinegar

Rinse the basil under cold water. Pat dry. Coarsely chop. Slice the cucumber in half, lengthwise. Remove the seeds and coarsely chop. Place in a medium bowl and sprinkle with salt. Set aside to dehydrate for 30 minutes. Seed and dice the jalapeno pepper. Coarsely chop the peanuts. In a small bowl, combine the sesame oil and honey. Whisk to blend thoroughly. Drain the cucumber. Discard the liquid. Add all of the ingredients to the bowl of cucumber, except the sesame-honey mixture. Toss. Drizzle the honeyed sesame oil over all. Toss to coat. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving. Stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator, the relish stays fresh for 3-4 days. (The Healing Kitchen)

#### **Chilled Pink Consommé**

3 large ripe tomatoes, skinned and chopped  
2 large basil leaves, torn into pieces  
5 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
salt and pepper  
4 Tbsp heavy cream  
basil and sorrel flowers, to decorate

Simmer the chopped tomatoes and basil leaves in the stock for 25 minutes. Season to taste, then strain through a sieve and leave to cool. Serve the soup well chilled in individual bowls. Decorate each with a swirl of cream and a sprinkling of basil and sorrel flowers. (Cooking with Flowers)

#### **Grilled Salmon with Lavender & Basil**

4 fresh salmon steaks or fillets

Marinade:

1 tsp dried lavender  
5 large basil leaves, chopped  
2 Tbsp tamari  
2 Tbsp fresh squeezed lemon juice  
1/3 cup olive oil

Combine all marinade ingredients to use as a baste for grilling. Place salmon on a hot, lightly oiled grill or barbeque, skin side down. Baste frequently with the marinade. When salmon is done, baste with the remaining marinade, serve. (From Purple Haze Lavender Farm)

#### **Herbed Chicken Skillet Dinner**

4 chicken quarters (legs & thighs)  
4 medium red potatoes  
1 red bell pepper  
1 medium zucchini  
1/2 sweet onion  
1 Tbsp canola oil  
1 cup chicken broth  
2/3 cup white wine  
1 Tbsp chopped fresh basil  
1 Tbsp chopped fresh sage  
paprika  
seasoned salt & ground black pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the chicken and sprinkle with seasoned salt and paprika. Lightly brown the chicken on both sides. Add the broth and white wine. Cover the skillet tightly and simmer for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, chop the vegetables into 1 inch pieces. Turn the chicken, add the diced potatoes. Sprinkle with half of the herbs. Cover the skillet tightly and cook another 20 minutes.

Add the remaining vegetables. Sprinkle the remaining herbs over the vegetables. Add freshly ground black pepper to taste. Simmer another 10 minutes or until the vegetables are tender crisp. Spoon the sauce over the chicken and vegetables to serve. Serves 4. Copyright 2001 Sandie Shores

### **Basil Corn Chowder**

1 medium Walla Walla onion, coarsely chopped  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
½ cup basil flowers  
8 medium red potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes  
kernels from 8 ears corn, divided  
6 cups vegetable stock (or chicken stock)  
salt and pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, sauté onion in olive oil until translucent. Add basil flowers, potatoes and half the corn. Continue to cook for 3 minutes. Pour in the vegetable stock, and bring to a boil. Lower heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool for 15 to 20 minutes. Pour half of the soup into a blender or food processor. Process until smooth. Pour back into saucepan. Reheat and add remaining corn. For a smoother soup, purée all of the soup, for a chunkier soup, process for less time. If you like soup thinner, add more vegetable stock. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. The secret is pureeing part of the soup. (Edible Flowers from Garden to Palate)

### **Sweet Basil Soup**

4 Tbsp butter  
1 1/3 cups chopped scallions, including the tops  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
6 cups chicken stock or broth  
1½ cups peeled, seeded and chopped tomato  
½ cup long grain rice  
5 cups chopped fresh basil  
1 Tbsp minced fresh chervil (optional)

In a Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the scallions and the garlic and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the chicken stock, tomato and rice and cook, covered, for 20 minutes, or until the rice is tender. Add the basil and the chervil, lower the temperature and simmer the soup for 10 minutes. Serve immediately, garnished with a good homemade bread and herb butter. (Special Request Herbal Recipes)

### **City Grill's Gulf Redfish with Spicy Szechuan Sauce**

6 redfish fillets or use swordfish, tuna, Mahi Mahi or shark  
Garnish 6 Thai basil sprigs, lime wedges, and slivered scallion

#### **SZECHUAN MARINADE**

1 8-oz can Szechuan chile paste  
1 cup dark honey  
2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar  
3 Tbsp Oriental sesame oil  
3 Tbsp peanut oil  
juice of 1-2 fresh limes

#### **SPICY SZECHUAN SAUCE**

1 cup mayonnaise  
2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar  
1 Tbsp Oriental sesame oil  
¼ cup Szechuan marinade  
3-4 Tbsp Thai basil, chopped

Prepare the marinade by mixing all of the ingredients, blending well. Mix together the ingredients for the Spicy Szechuan Sauce and chill. Dip the fillets in the marinade, and place presentation-side down on the grill over red-hot coals. Grill until well marked by the grill, turning once (approximately 8 minutes per inch of thickness of fish). Serve with a generous dollop of Spicy Szechuan Sauce, either on the side or melted on the fish, and garnished with a sprig of Thai basil, several lime wedges, and slivered scallion. (The Herb Garden Cookbook)

### **Salad with Purple and Lettuce Leaf Basils**

About 12 cups mixed lettuces and salad greens such as red or green leaf, Boston, bibb, deer tongue, oak leaf or limestone lettuces, spinach, chicory, endive or frisé  
About 3 cups lettuce leaf basil leaves  
About 1 cup purple basil leaves  
1 pint basket of baby pear tomatoes  
about ¼ cup basil, balsamic, or red wine vinegar  
about ½ tsp salt  
about 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
1 large clove garlic, finely minced  
freshly ground pepper

Wash the salad greens well and spin them dry. Tear the leaves into large pieces, if necessary. Rinse the basil leaves and spin them dry. Wash the tomatoes and halve them lengthwise. Pour the vinegar into a small bowl, add the salt, and stir well with a fork. Add the oil, garlic and pepper and stir until blended. Taste for seasoning; stir well before using. Arrange the greens on a large serving platter. Scatter the basil leaves over the greens. Scatter the tomatoes over the salad. Dress the salad just before serving, or serve the salad and pass the vinaigrette. (Basil: An Herb Lover's Guide)

### **Spiced Potato and Basil Gratin**

6 medium boiling potatoes  
2 cups loosely packed fresh sweet basil leaves  
2½ cups heavy cream  
1 Tbsp ground coriander seeds  
1 tsp each salt, black pepper, mace and allspice  
¼ pound fontina or domestic provolone cheese, grated.

Preheat oven to 375F

Cook the potatoes in a pot of salted boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain and cool to room temperature. When cool enough to handle, remove the skins and cut the potatoes into 1/4 inch slices. Arrange one-third of the potato slices in a thin layer on the bottom of a round 10-inch baking dish rubbed lightly with olive oil. Sprinkle one-third of the basil over the potatoes. Cover with half of the remaining potatoes and the remaining basil. Finally, top with the remaining potatoes. Combine the cream and spices in a small bowl. Slowly drizzle the mixture over the potatoes. Bake for 1 1/2 hours or until the cream is thick and the potatoes are very tender. Sprinkle the cheese over the top; bake for 5 minutes longer or until the cheese is melted. Remove from the oven and let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving (Basil)

### **Classic Basil Pesto**

2 cups fresh basil leaves  
2 large garlic cloves  
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
2 Tbsp freshly grated Pecorino Romano cheese

¼ cup pine nuts or walnuts  
½ cup olive oil  
salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine the basil, garlic cheeses and nuts in a food processor or blender. With the machine running, slowly add the olive oil. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper and process to the desired consistency. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. (Pestos! Cooking with Herb Pastes)

### **Basil-Lime Cookies**

2 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
1 ½ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp salt  
2/3 cup softened butter  
1 cup sugar  
1 egg  
1 tsp vanilla  
3 Tbsp fresh cinnamon basil, chopped  
1 Tbsp lime peel, finely chopped  
1 cup pistachios, chopped

Sift first three ingredients together and set aside. In a large bowl, beat butter at medium speed until light. Gradually beat in sugar. Add egg, vanilla, basil, and lime peel, beating until very light and fluffy. Mix in dry ingredients 1/3 at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in chopped pistachios. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Divide in halves. Shape each half into a 6-inch long roll. Roll in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm, at least 8 hours. Preheat oven to 375F. Cut dough into 1/8-inch slices and place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove immediately from baking sheet and place on a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container. Yield: 8 dozen cookies (An Herbal Collection)

### **Lavender-Basil Punch**

2 cups water  
one 3-inch cinnamon stick  
½ tsp whole cloves  
½ tsp whole allspice  
½ cup fresh cinnamon basil leaves  
¼ cu lavender flowers  
2 cups purple grape juice

½ cup lemon juice  
¾ cup sugar  
1 lemon, thinly sliced  
1 quart sparkling mineral water

Combine water, cinnamon, cloves and allspice in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in cinnamon basil and lavender flowers, cover and steep for 15 minutes. Strain into a pitcher, removing spices and lavender. Stir in grape juice, lemon juice and sugar. Cover and refrigerate. Just before serving, pour into a punch bowl or large pitcher; add lemon slices, ice, and sparkling water. Serve immediately. (The Herbal Palate)

### **Basil and Coconut Muffins**

2 eggs  
6 oz milk  
3 oz vegetable oil  
8 oz plain flour  
1 level Tbsp baking powder  
2 oz caster sugar  
1 tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp salt  
3 Tbsp basil leaves, chopped  
5 oz desiccated coconut  
2 oz chopped hazelnuts

#### Topping

2 tsp demerara sugar

Preheat the oven to 400F. Combine the eggs, milk and vegetable oil. In a separate bowl, sift the flour and baking powder and add the sugar, cinnamon, salt, basil, coconut and hazelnuts. Mix together, then make a well in the center. Add all the liquids and mix briefly until combined. Do not overstir. Place paper muffin cases in bun tins and fill the cases with spoonfuls. Top with sugar. Bake in the preheated oven for about 20 minutes until well risen. Cool on a wire rack. (Feasting on Herbs)

### **Tomato and Cucumber Salad with Basil Flowers**

2 medium ripe tomatoes  
1 medium cucumber  
1 medium sweet onion such as Vidalia, Walla Walla, or Texas

8 oz mozzarella cheese  
about 3 Tbsp olive oil  
salt and freshly ground pepper  
1/3 cup basil flowers (cut the flower stems in between each whorl)

Core and chop the tomatoes into ¾ inch dice. Peel the cucumber, quarter it lengthwise, and then cut it into ½ inch pieces. Cut the onion into ½ inch dice. Combine all the vegetables in a bowl. Cut the cheese into ½ inch dice, or if using fresh mozzarella, shred it into bite-sized pieces. Add the cheese to the vegetables and toss. Drizzle the oil over the vegetable mixture and season with salt and pepper. Toss the vegetables with the basil flowers and taste for seasoning. Add a bit more olive oil if the salad is not moist enough. Let the salad marinate at least 30 minutes, and as long as a few hours, before serving. Refrigerate it in hot weather, allowing it to come to cool room temperature for serving. (Flowers in the Kitchen)

### **Chocolate Ice Cream with Basil**

2 cups milk  
2 cups whipping cream  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup packed whole basil leaves  
6 extra-large egg yolks  
2 oz unsweetened chocolate, broken into pieces  
6 oz good semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces

Combine the milk with 1 cup of the whipping cream, sugar, and basil in a 2-quart, heavy-bottomed nonreactive saucepan. Bruise the leaves against the side of the pan with a wooden spoon. Bring the contents of the pan to a simmer; remove from heat. Cover, and let the herbs steep in the liquid for 30 minutes. Strain the infused cream through a sieve, pressing on the herb leaves to extract their essence. Return the infused cream to the pan, reserving about 1 cup. Lightly whisk the eggs in a small bowl. Add about half of the reserved cup of cream to the eggs and whisk. Add the remaining cream and whisk again. Whisk the egg and cream mixture into the saucepan and gently reheat the infused cream over low heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the custard lightly coats a

metal spoon, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler or microwave. Whisk about a quarter of the melted chocolate into the custard. Add the rest of the chocolate to the custard in three parts. Strain the cream mixture into a bowl and cool it to room temperature. Putting the bowl into another, larger bowl full of ice will speed this step. Stir in the remaining 1 cup whipping cream. Pour into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Best served day it's made, but it will keep in the freezer for up to two weeks. For best flavor, do not serve it rock hard. Allow it to stand at room temperature for 5-10 minutes so that it softens slightly. (The Herb Companion, Feb/Mar 2001)

### **Fresh Basil Ale**

1 gallon water  
1 cup brown sugar  
1½ cups unhopped amber malt extract  
15-18 fresh Basil tops, about 3-4 inches each  
1 teaspoon ale yeast (SafAle or Danstar brand)  
1 gallon wide mouth glass jar  
1 plastic bag  
1 elastic band

Boil water, sugar, and malt extract, covered, for 30 minutes. Add Basil, boil 15 minutes more. This boil yields the "wort," the sweetened

herbal decoction which is the basis of every ale. Remove the wort from the heat and the Basil from the wort, cover, and set aside for 6-7 hours to cool to room temperature (70 degrees). While it cools, make an infusion of Sage or Yarrow. Wash the glass jar, plastic bag, and elastic band, and use the cooled infusion to rinse them all thoroughly. Pour the cooled wort into the clean, rinsed glass jar (the "fermenter"). Dissolve 1 teaspoon of brewer's yeast in ½ cup of water, then add it to the wort in the fermenter. Cover the fermenter's opening with the plastic bag, and secure it with the elastic band.

Label, date, and leave undisturbed to ferment for a week or until bubbles subside. Make another disinfectant infusion to rinse your

bottles. Funnel the ale into clean bottles (recycled Grolsch beer bottles come with reusable flip tops) and store in a cool place for at least 2 weeks and up to 4 months. Improves with age. (From Radical Weeds)

### **Using Lemon Basil**

#### **Basil Brandy**

3 large handfuls of lemon basil leaves, soft stems and flowers

1 handful of sweet woodruff

1 angelica leaf

6 sprigs French tarragon

½ handful Roman wormwood

1 fifth brandy.

Twist and cram all of the herbs into a quart canning jar. Pour in the brandy. Stir to release air bubbles. Seal, shake, expel air bubbles. Seal and store in a cool, dark place for four months. Decant quickly to remove herbage and minimize exposure to air. Rebottle suitably and label. (The Basil Book)

#### **Lemon Basil Cheesecake**

2 lbs cream cheese, at room temperature

¾ cup sugar

1 cup sour cream

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

½ cup lemon basil leaves, stems removed, finely chopped

2 Tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp vanilla

2 Tbsp cornstarch

1 cup crushed vanilla wafers

2 Tbsp butter, softened

Add sour cream, sugar, basil, cornstarch, and lemon juice to lightly beaten eggs. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Add cream cheese, 8 oz at a time, mixing well after each addition. Spread softened butter on the bottom and halfway up the sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Press vanilla wafer crumbs into butter. Pour in batter. Bake in a preheated 450F oven for 35-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Run a knife around the edges as soon as the cheesecake is removed from the oven. Let cool for 5-10 minutes, then remove sides of the pan. (An Herbal Collection)

### **Lemon Basil Chicken**

1/3 cup minced lemon basil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
sea salt and white pepper to taste  
¼ cup tarragon or rosemary vinegar  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
2 chicken breasts, skinned and boned

Combine the first 5 ingredients and whisk well until thoroughly blended. Add chicken breasts and marinate for 4-5 hours in the refrigerator. Chicken may be oven broiled, pan broiled or grilled, using the marinade mixture as a baste. Cook approximately 15 minutes or until a fork inserted into the thickest part releases a clear white fluid when withdrawn. (Can also use opal basil or anise basil). (The Herb Cookery)

### **Lemon Basil Salad**

4 cups cooked angel hair pasta  
¾ cup chopped lemon basil  
2 Tbsp chopped chives  
1 Tbsp Italian parsley  
1 cup sour cream  
parmesan cheese

Prepare pasta, add herbs and sour cream. Stir until combined. Refrigerate and add Parmesan cheese before serving. (Herbs in a Minnesota Kitchen)

### **Lemon Basil Spinach Souffle**

2 Tbsp butter  
2 Tbsp flour  
¾ cups milk  
1 tsp chopped onion  
1 Tbsp chopped Italian parsley  
½ cup chopped lemon basil  
1 ½ cup grated cheddar cheese  
3 eggs, separated  
1 ½ cups chopped, cooked spinach

Make cream sauce with butter, flour, and milk. When smooth add onion, herbs, and cheese. Stir in beaten egg yolks and spinach. Fold in stiffly-beaten egg whites. Pour into greased 1-quart casserole. Bake in preheated 350F oven until knife comes out clean

(approximately 55 minutes) (Herbs in a Minnesota Kitchen)

### **Using Opal Basil**

#### **Tomato, Opal Basil and Mozzarella Salad**

5 Tbsp olive oil  
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar  
2 Tbsp fresh opal basil, chopped  
1 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped  
1 tsp lemon juice  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
salt  
pepper  
leaf lettuce leaves  
4 large tomatoes, cut into ¼ inch slices  
8 oz Mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced (Buffalo Mozzarella is perfect)  
1 red onion, thinly sliced  
opal basil sprigs

Place first 6 ingredients in blender container or food processor with metal blade. Cover and process until well blended. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Line large serving dish with lettuce leaves. Arrange alternating slices of tomato and Mozzarella cheese in rows, overlapping slices. Spoon dressing over salad. Top with onion rings and garnish with opal basil sprigs. (The Windowsill Herb Garden)

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