

ITALIAN OREGANO

Origanum x majoricum

Family: Labiatae

Names: hardy marjoram, Sicilian oregano

Description: Italian Oregano is a hybrid resulting from crossing oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) and sweet marjoram (*Origanum majorana*). It combines the pungency of Greek oregano with the sweetness of marjoram. It is a sterile hybrid, meaning it can only be grown from cuttings. Spreads to form a clump 2-4 feet in diameter. Has tall white flowers in early summer.

Cultivation: Division in March or October. Very easy, larger divisions can be planted out direct into their permanent positions. It is better to pot up the smaller divisions and grow them on in light shade in a cold frame until they are well established before planting them out in late spring or early summer. Basal cuttings of young barren shoots in June. Very easy. Harvest the shoots with plenty of underground stem when they are about 8 - 10cm above the ground. Pot them up into individual pots and keep them in light shade in a cold frame or greenhouse until they are rooting well. Plant them out in the summer. It is hardy to zone 7. It is in flower from June to September. It may occasionally set seeds that germinate in sandy soil. The plant is harvested as flowering begins and can be used fresh or dried. Cut back after flowering and new growth will come from the base.

Properties: Antiseptic; Antispasmodic; Aromatherapy; Carminative; Cholagogue; Diaphoretic; Emmenagogue; Expectorant; Stimulant; Stomachic; Tonic.

Constituents: The oil has 17% cis-sabinene hydrate and 15% terpinen-4-ol, which supply the sweet marjoram scent; 12% carvacrol gives a hint of oregano

Medicinal Uses: Similar properties to other oreganos. *Origanum x majoricum*, has a slightly higher antioxidant activity than Greek mountain oregano (with an ORAC of 71.64).

Culinary Uses: Because it's a cross, Italian oregano tastes sweet and savory at the same time and is thus a versatile herb that can be used to season meats, eggs, soups and vegetables. It blends well with other savory herbs like basil and tarragon. Can be used like any either oregano or marjoram.

Recipes:

Pasta with Large Spicy Meatballs

Serves 8- 10

Tomato Sauce

5 tbs.. olive oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped

3 cans Italian Tomatoes, 1 lb. 12 oz. each

1 small can tomato paste

2 bay leaves

2 Tbs.. Italian oregano

3 Tbs.. Parsley

1 tsp. sugar

2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

Combine Olive oil, onion and garlic in a preheated pan on medium heat. Sauté until the onion is translucent. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer for 2 hours. Stir occasionally.

Meat Balls

2 lb. lean ground beef

1/2 lbs. ground veal
1/2 hot or mild Italian sausage, as to your taste
1 large onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 eggs
8 slices white bread
3/4 parmesan or romano cheese finely grated
1/2 cup parsley
3 tbs.. sweet basil finely chopped
1 tsp. pepper

Sauté the onion and garlic in a medium heat, preheated pan with a covering of olive oil until translucent. Cut the crust from the bread and dice into cubes. Wet the diced bread with water and maintain enough moisture to hold a ball shape. Place the bread in a large bowl. Add eggs and mix until most of the bread is not lumpy. Add cheese, parsley, basil, and pepper. Mix well. Add the meat and prepare to get messy. Mix the meat with the rest of the ingredients. Mix until the result is consistent. Now roll enough meat mix to make an 1 oval ball about the size of 2 golf balls. Continue until all the balls are rolled. Makes about 30 meatballs. Preheat a frying pan or skillet on medium heat, and cover the pan with olive oil. Once the pan is at max heat add the meat balls. Brown each side almost to a dark brown color. Don't burn. Turn and repeat the browning. Set aside. If you want to add some or all to the sauce. Wait until the last 1/2 hour that the sauce is cooking before adding the meat balls.

Use your favorite pasta and follow the directions, about a 1/4 lb. per person. Cooks in about 10 min from a boil. Less if the pasta is fresh.

Italian Two Chunk Chile

1/8 cup oil - olive or your preference
2 lbs Italian Sausage - chunked (mild or hot)
10 cloves garlic - crushed, finely chopped
2 white onions - chopped
2 green peppers - chopped
2 red peppers - chopped
3 20oz can Plum Tomatoes - coarsely chopped w/liquid
3 lbs - kidney beans (canned)
3 lbs - Great Northern beans or Cannelloni beans (canned)

1 lbs Garbanzo beans (canned)
1 - 3 oz. Chopped green chilies
1 cup Chili Powder
1/4 cup Italian oregano or Italian Seasonings
Salt and Pepper to Taste

In a large skillet combine oil, sausage, onions, and garlic. Sautee. Just before completed - add the variety of peppers and cook slightly until tender. Set aside. In a large stockpot, add with 8 cups of water. Add tomatoes, bean variety, gr. chilies, and the sauteed mix. Season with chili, Italian seasoning and salt and pepper to taste. Stir well and bring mixture to a boil. Cover and reduce heat. Allow the mix to simmer for 2 hours. Stirring occasionally. Serve and enjoy plain or with your favorite topping.

Veal Scaloppine with Lemon

6 oz veal scaloppine
2 tablespoons Italian oregano
2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley
1/2 cup dry white wine
5 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon paprika
2 lemons
salt & pepper
flour for dusting

Prepare scaloppine by cutting away gristle around edges of each piece. Flatten each piece with a meat mallet just enough to make tender, not tearing the flesh. Prepare flour with and add 1 tablespoon oregano, salt and pepper, paprika and 1 tablespoon parsley. Dip each piece in seasoned flour shaking off any excess. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan. Add scaloppine and fry over med/high heat for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, press each piece down to be sure scaloppine is flat while cooking on each side. Remove each piece from the pan and keep warm in the oven in a glass dish. Add wine and the lemon juice (from one lemon) to the frying pan, stir the remaining sediment left from the veal all together and let it come to a boil for 3 minutes. Stir in 1 tablespoon parsley and 1 tablespoon Italian oregano and pour over the veal scaloppine. Keep veal scaloppine in oven until

ready to serve. When ready to server garnish with parsley and lemon wedges.

Tomato and Eggplant Parmigiana

1 large eggplant
1 lb ripe red plum tomatoes
1 Tbsp Italian oregano
3 oz fresh parmesan cheese (grated)
2 tablespoon olive oil
salt & pepper
fresh chopped parsley

Cut the eggplant into 1/8 inch slices and place into colander and rinse with water and drain fro 30 minutes. Take eggplant out of colander and place on paper towels and pat dry. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and fry the eggplant in batches until golden brown. As eggplant is ready to take out of frying pan place on paper towels to drain off olive oil. Take the plum tomatoes and cut them into wedges and arrange with the eggplant into alternate layers in a shallow ovenproof dish, sprinkle each layer with Italian oregano, salt & pepper and parmesan cheese. Bake in a preheated oven at 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until golden brown and bubbling. Garnish with fresh chopped parsley and parmesan cheese.

Italian Red Russet Potato Salad

8-10 red russet potatoes
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic (finely minced)
1 large white scallion- (diced)
1 celery stalk with leaves-(diced)
½ cup gaeta olives
½ tsp. Italian oregano
½ tsp. dry basil flakes
½ tsp. dry parsley flakes
¼ cup white balsamic vinegar
½ cup of hot cherry vinegar pepper slices
½ tsp. salt

Bring water to boil and cook potatoes for 40-45 minutes. Set aside to cool. Begin to slice round shape 1/8 inch thick and place into large platter. Add extra virgin olive oil, salt, basil and parsley flakes. Add diced celery, scallion, minced garlic and olives. Splash with white

balsamic vinegar and garnish with hot cherry pepper slices.

References:

The Big Book of Herbs, Arthur O. Tucker and Thomas DeBaggio, Interweave Press, 2000; ISBN: 1-883010-86-1
Plants for a Future Database

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