

Did You Know?



Chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*

- Commonly known as garden chives, *Allium schoenoprasum*, has purple blooms in spring to early summer and leaves that are cylindrical-shaped and hollow. Garlic Chives, *Allium tuberosum*, have white flowers in summer and flat, lance-shaped leaves.
- Both the leaves and the flowers of the hardy chive plant are edible.
- Chives have been used since 3000 BC and can be found growing wild in Asia, Europe, Australia, and North America.
- The ancient Romans correlated the strong-tasting chive to physical strength and fed them to racehorses, wrestlers, and workers to make them strong.
- Many people believed that stronger tasting herbs had greater healing power, so chives were believed to improve appetite, kidney function and blood pressure. In addition, it was used to relieve sunburn and sore throat pain.
- Chives were also thought to be a poison antidote.
- Marco Polo brought chives to Europe from China in the late 13th century.
- Chives hung from the rafters were said to prevent bad luck.
- An old British tradition suggests using chives to border one's garden or hang over the doorway of the home to prevent evil spirits from entering.
- Dutch settlers in America obtained chive scented milk for cheese by planting chives in their cow pastures.
- Use chives fresh or add towards the end of the cooking time for the best flavor.
- The edible flowers can be added to salads and other dishes. Select flowers early in the season, before the seeds begin to form.
- Chive blossoms make a beautiful pink, chive flavored vinegar when steeped for a few weeks in white wine vinegar.
- The delicate onion flavor of chives is often paired with potatoes, eggs, vegetables, and breads. Chives can be the focus of flavored butters and salad dressings.
- An old saying states "The chef whose potato salad lacks chives is a chef who himself lacks soul."

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