

DILL



DILL, botanically known as *Anethum graveolens*, is a member of the parsley family and is native to the eastern Mediterranean region and western Asia. The word dill comes from the old Norse word “dylla”, meaning to soothe or lull. Dill contains carvone, a chemical that is thought to calm and aid in digestion. Romans considered it good luck and also used it as a tonic. The thin feathery leaves, the flowers, and the oval flat seeds are all edible. Dill's flavor is similar to caraway seeds and fennel leaves, which are sometimes mistaken for dill. Dill is harvested from spring to fall in the Northeast region.

STORAGE

- ◆ Store dill **wrapped loosely in a damp paper or cloth towel** in the refrigerator drawer. Or, trim the stems and place them upright in a glass of cold water. Loosely wrap the leaves with a damp towel and store on a shelf in the refrigerator.
- ◆ Dill will **keep for up to a week** or longer.
- ◆ This herb is **best eaten fresh, but can also be dried**. To dry dill, wash in cold water, drain, and dry thoroughly. Place in a brown paper bag and hang upside down by stems in a dark, dry place until herb crumbles easily, usually 2-3 weeks. When thoroughly dried, strip leaves from their stems and store in airtight containers. Dried dill will last up to a year stored this way.
- ◆ **Dill can be frozen** for up to two months, but will darken in color. No need to thaw it before using. Frozen dill weed will still have more flavor than dried dill.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Wash fresh dill well by holding stems and gently swishing leaves around in a basin of water. Cut dill leaves from stem with knife or kitchen scissors. The flavor of dill weed diminishes greatly the longer it is cooked so **add it at the last minute for full flavor and aroma**.
- ◆ Dill leaves are a **refreshing addition to pasta, green, and potato salads**. This herb also goes well with fish and in various dips, soups, dressings, breads and sauces.
- ◆ Seeds should be toasted in a hot frying pan before use. Dill seeds can substitute for caraway seeds in bread and cabbage stews.
- ◆ Try making a **quick dill butter** by adding minced dill weed to softened butter. Use on broiled seafood or with your favorite whole wheat bread.

Nutritional Information

Dill contains vitamins A, C, and folate. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. A healthy diet with enough folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with certain birth defects of the brain or spinal chord.

Dill Recipes

Dill Potato Salad

- 4 pounds all purpose potatoes (smooth-skinned, not russet)
- 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise (store bought, low-fat works too)
- Juice from one lemon
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill
- 3 scallions (both white and green) finely chopped



Scrub potatoes and boil with skins until largest potato is fork tender. Drain and let cool. Meanwhile, in large bowl, mix together mayonnaise, lemon juice, paprika, salt and pepper to taste, fresh dill, and chopped scallions. When potatoes are cooled, cut into large dice and add to mayonnaise. Using a wooden spoon stir gently to combine. Chill for at least an hour or overnight to help flavors mingle. Serve garnished with paprika.

Recipe adapted from <http://homecooking.about.com/library/archive/blv6.htm>.

Yogurt Cucumber Sauce

- 1 1/4 cups plain yogurt
- 1 1/4 cups cucumber diced
- 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried
- 2 Tablespoons fresh mint or 1 teaspoon dried
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



In a medium-size bowl, mix all ingredients. Taste for salt and pepper. Serve at once. Yields 2 cups.

Recipe adapted from *The Complete Meat Cookbook* by Bruce Aidells and Denis Kelly (Houghton Mifflin Company) found on <http://homecooking.about.com/library/archive/blsauce11.htm>

Nonfat Gazpacho Dressing

- 1 cup tomato juice
- 1 cup diced cucumber (peeled and seeded)
- 2 minced scallions
- 1 clove garlic
- 5 or 6 fresh basil leaves (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)
- 1 to 2 Tablespoons fresh (or 1 to 2 teaspoons dried) dill
- a small handful of fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon or lime juice
- salt and pepper, to taste



Puree everything together in a blender or food processor. Cover tightly and chill.

Recipe adapted from *Moosewood Cookbook* by Mollie Katzen, Ten Speed Press: 1992.