

SAGE



COMMON SAGE, or *Salvia officinalis*, is a bushy perennial, whose natural habitat is the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Its leaves are a velvety gray-green color and are used for seasoning in many dishes such as stuffing, pork, poultry, pasta, and pizza. In our culture, its most popular use is in stuffing for poultry. Sage has a strong odor and a warm, bitter taste with a savory finish. Available in the fall in the Northeast, sage is one of the few herbs hardy enough to withstand any ordinary winter.



STORAGE

- ◆ Store fresh sage by placing the stems upright in a jar of cold water on a refrigerator shelf. Try to change water regularly. Sage should last **2-3 weeks** this way.
- ◆ To dry, hang sprigs of sage upside down in a warm, dry place. Once the leaves are **fully dried**, store them whole and crush just before using. The best way to crush sage leaves is to rub them between your hands.
- ◆ To **freeze**, wash and dry thoroughly. Put in an airtight container or sealed plastic bag in the freezer. Whole leaves can be frozen **up to two months**.

PREPARATION

- ◆ **Wash** sage well in a basin of water by holding the stems and swishing the leaves around to dislodge dirt or sand. Shake off excess water.
- ◆ The **flavor of sage tends to intensify as it dries**, so when substituting dried for fresh sage, it's best to use less.
- ◆ Because of its strong flavor, sage, unlike the more delicate herbs, can be **added at the beginning of cooking** and pairs nicely with other strongly flavored herbs, such as rosemary, thyme, savory, and oregano as well as the lemon herbs.
- ◆ Sage adds good flavor to **stuffing** for poultry or pork: add about 1 tablespoon of minced sage leaves for each cup of stuffing,
- ◆ Try covering a pork roast with sage leaves before roasting.
- ◆ You can also use sage in your **flower arrangements**. Its wonderful scent and long-lasting leaves make it a nice addition.

Nutritional Information

Sage contains antioxidants such as flavonoids and phenolic acids. These antioxidants may help reduce the risk of cancer. Sage is also a good source of Calcium and vitamin A. Calcium can help maintain good bone health and may reduce risk of osteoporosis. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction.

Sage Recipes

Sage Butter Pasta

1 pound pasta of your choice
8-10 fresh sage leaves, minced
5 Tablespoons butter (you can also substitute olive oil)
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
Freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste
Parmesan cheese



Cook pasta as directed on package. While pasta is cooking, heat butter (or olive oil) in a skillet until it begins to bubble. Add garlic and sage leaves. Cook until garlic turns a golden color (not brown), remove from heat. Toss pasta with sage-butter sauce and top with fresh pepper, salt and Parmesan.

Recipe adapted from SunnyBoy Gardens, found at <http://sunnyboygardens.com/herb-information/herbs/sage.htm>.

Lentil Salad with Minced Vegetables (Serves 4)

2 whole (spice) cloves
1/2 onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup uncooked lentils, rinsed
fresh sage leaves, minced, or 1 Tablespoon crumbled dried sage
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 cups water
1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
2 leeks, white part only, washed and chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped, or 1/2 small fennel bulb, without leafy fronds, chopped



Stick the cloves into the onion half, place them in a heavy medium saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic, lentils, sage, vinegar, and water. Cover and bring to a simmer. Simmer until the lentils are tender, about 40 minutes. Meanwhile, in a skillet over medium heat, heat oil and sauté leeks, carrots, and celery or fennel until softened, about 10 minutes. Place a sieve over a bowl and strain the lentils, reserving the cooking broth. Place lentils on serving plate, and spoon the vegetables around them. Drizzle 2 Tablespoons of the cooking liquid over the top and serve warm or at room temperature. Refrigerate up to 2 days. Do not freeze.

Adapted from The Essential Vegetarian Cookbook, by Diana Shaw, copyright 1997 by Diana Shaw.

Breakfast Potatoes with Sage

3 Tablespoons chopped sage
2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 pounds red potatoes cut into about 6-8 wedges (do not peel)
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
a dash of paprika



Preheat oven to 450° F. In a large bowl, stir together oil, potatoes, salt, pepper, and 2 Tablespoons of the sage. Mix until thoroughly coated. Pour a small amount of water in a shallow pan or baking sheet and top with potatoes, spreading them out evenly. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Roast potatoes for 15 minutes. Remove foil and roast 15 minutes more. Turn potatoes. Roast 10 to 15 minutes more until crisp. Sprinkle with remaining tablespoon of sage and paprika and serve.

Recipe adapted from Gardens Ablaze, found at <http://www.gardensablaze.com/HerbSageRec.htm>