

## MINTS



*Mentha niliaca* [MEN-thuh nil-ee-AK-uh]  
Syn *Mentha sylvestris*

*Mentha viridis*; (*Mentha aquatica* v. *crispa*:  
curly mint);

*Mentha rotundifolia* (Pineapple mint) [MEN-  
thuh swah-vee-OH-lens]

**Family:** Labiatae

**Names:** Spearmint: Garden Mint, Lamb Mint, Green Spine, Spire Mint, Our Lady's Mint, Mackerel Mint, Brown Mint; green mint; German: Krauseminzblatter; French: Feuilles de menthe crepue.

**Description:** Spearmint was the original medicinal mint. Peppermint appeared later, a natural hybrid of spearmint species. All the mints were considered one plant, mint, until 1696, when British botanist John Ray differentiated them. Although there are only about 25 true species of mint, natural and artificial hybridization has yielded several thousand variations, with much confusion as to the correct naming of all of them. Generally, mint leaves may be rounded, oval, or slightly pointed; smooth or wrinkly; and have slightly toothed or serrated edges. The most distinguishable characteristic is that the stems are always square. Whorls of tiny flowers bloom in pastel shades of pink, lavender and white throughout the summer. Cut back to discourage straggleness and to encourage new growth. If you grow several varieties and allow them to flower, they will quickly cross-pollinate. Egyptian mint (*Mentha x niliaca*) is lanky (3-4') with large, pale green fuzzy leaves and tolerates full sun. Other mints are Crisped Scotch mint or Bergamot mint (*Mentha x gracilis 'crispa'*) which possesses a delightful lemon flavor and should not be confused with bee balm. Corsican mint (*Mentha requienii*) is the variety used to produce the liqueur crème de menthe and is the lowest creeper with tiny pale green leaves.

*Pineapple Mint (Mentha rotundifolia variegata)*

A low growing plant with smooth green woollyleaves, variegated with yellow; has pale purple flowers and has a refreshing aroma and

fruity flavor. The more it is picked, the more luxurious it grows

**Cultivation:** Because mints spread rampantly from invasive roots, they are ideal for container growing. Grow different varieties in separate containers. Fertilizer is not recommended; compost-mulch in summer and winter is beneficial. Mint is susceptible to rust when kept too damp; aphids, white flies and spider mites may be controlled with insecticidal soap. Compacted soil dwarfs the plant and causes it to die out. The best way to start most mints is from cuttings or root divisions in the early spring. Harvest ruthlessly, it won't affect the growth. However, the leaves bruise easily so handle the harvest with care. Flowers cause a slowdown in production so keep cut. Orange mint can be grown fairly well indoors. Others (like spearmint) need a period of dormancy. To dry mint, harvest entire stems of the plant and hang in a dry, airy, dark room for at least a week. When dry to the touch strip leaves from the stem.

**Constituents:** Spearmint: .8-2.5% essential oil containing ca. 50% carvone, as well as dihydrocarveol acetate and other monoterpenes; menthol is absent. The composition of the essential varies considerably according to its origin. In some others there is volatile oil (mainly menthol), tannins, flavonoids, tocopherols, choline, bitter principle.

**History:** Mint candies after dinner evolved from the ancient custom of concluding feasts with a sprig of mint to soothe the stomach. Mint was mentioned as a stomach soother in the *Ebers Papyrus*. From Egypt, mint spread to Palestine, where it was accepted as payment for taxes. From the Holy Land, mint spread to Greece and entered Greek mythology. Pluto, god of the dead, fell in love with the beautiful nymph, Minthe, the daughter of Cocytus. Pluto's wife, Persephone, became jealous and changed Minthe into mint. Pluto could not bring Minthe back to life, but he gave her plant form a fragrant aroma. "Minthe" evolved into

*Mentha*. Greek and Roman homemakers added mint to milk to prevent spoilage and served the herb after meals as a digestive aid.

**Energetics:** Character: pungent, dry, generally cooling.

**Properties:** Actions: antispasmodic, digestive tonic, prevents vomiting, carminative, relaxes peripheral blood vessels, promotes sweating but also cooling internally, promotes bile flow, analgesic.

**Medicinal Uses:** Ayurvedic physicians have used mint for centuries as a tonic and digestive aid and as a treatment for colds, cough, and fever. Medieval German abbess/herbalist Hildegard of Bingen recommended mint for digestion and gout. Shortly after Culpeper wrote about the benefits of mint, peppermint and spearmint were differentiated, and herbalists decided the former was the better digestive aid, cough remedy, and treatment for colds and fever. Spearmint cannot replace peppermint in combined bile and liver or nerve herbal teas even though it is used as a stomachic and carminative.

The infusion of the herb has been used for diarrhea and as an emmenagogue. Mint tea eases colic and lifts depression. It relieves earaches when the fresh juice or a few drops of the essential oil are placed in the ear. A few drops of the oil in water, applied with a cloth, help burning and itching, heat prostration, and sunburn. Apply it directly to an itchy skin condition or sunburn. For heat prostration place the cool fomentation on the forehead and wrists.

Menthol is an allergic sensitizer that may cause hives. The menthol in oil of peppermint is an effective local anesthetic. It increases the sensitivity of the receptors in the skin that perceive the sensation of coolness and reduces the sensitivity of the receptors that perceive pain and itching. Menthol is also a counterirritant, an agent that causes the small blood vessels under the skin to dilate, increasing the flow of blood to the area and making the skin feel warm. When you apply a

skin lotion made with menthol, your skin feels cool for a minutes, then warm. Menthol's anesthetic properties also make it useful in sprays and lozenges for sore throats.

*Mentha rotundifolia* is combined with elderflower or ginger to break a fever by inducing sweating.

#### PREPARATIONS:

Infusion: Take for nausea, travel sickness, indigestion, flatulence, colic, feverish conditions and migraines.

Tincture: Use for the same conditions as the infusion

Compress: soak a pad in the infusion to cool inflamed joints or for rheumatism or neuralgia

Inhalation: Put a few fresh leaves in boiling water, and inhale to ease nasal congestion

**SAFETY:** Avoid prolonged use of the essential oil as an inhalant. Mint can irritate the mucous membranes and should not be given to children for more than a week without a break. Do not give any form of mint directly to young babies.

**HOMEOPATHY:** Homeopaths use menthol for neuritis, acute nasal catarrh, blocked Eustachian tubes, pharyngitis laryngitis, itching, and vulvar itching. Compresses of the oil and water relieve frontal headache, sinus pain, pain in the eyeballs and mental confusion. Asthmatic conditions with headache and dry smoker's cough are benefited as well.

**Spiritual Properties:** When mint is used appropriately in smaller quantities—a cup or two of tea once a week—is that there is a strong tendency for a cleansing of the entire physical vehicle so that the vibrations of each chakra and the various subtle bodies draw energy from the soul and the higher self, throughout the being, and release it to the earth.

**Other Uses:** In the pharmaceutical industry the oil is used for flavoring syrups, pastilles and ointments. In cosmetics it serves as an ingredient for toothpastes and mouth washes because of its refreshing taste, and for soaps, shampoos, and scents. It is very widely used

for the preparation of foodstuffs, to flavor confectionery and preserved foods and in the manufacture of syrups and liqueurs. Menthol is often used to flavor tobaccos.

**Ritual Uses:** Spearmint: Gender—Cold; Planet—Venus; Element—Air; Basic Powers—Healing, Love; Specific Uses—add to healing incenses and poppets, especially for curing lung diseases. A good addition to love mixtures and sachets.

Mint was one of the Druids' most sacred plants. Generally, the scent of a mint brings a sense of pleasure, denoting success and bringing an aura of protection. Mint was woven into the laurels that the ancient Romans used to crown themselves and their heroes at great feasts and celebrations. Mint may be given not only to celebrate success but also to invoke success. Mints are excellent herbes for blessing one's home. It can be bundled with other herbes, dipped into blessed water, and used to asperge away all previous energy and bring purification. Mint is placed in the home as a protective herb. It belongs in the sphere of Venus. Place it on the altar when you work healing spells. Mint brings easy travel, attracts prosperity, and is placed in the wallet to draw money.

**LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS:** Spearmint: warmth of sentiment; friendliness. Mint: homeliness, homely virtue; wisdom

**Cosmetic Uses:** Mint tea is useful as a moisturizer, often helping to banish blemishes. It can also be blended to make a refreshing complexion milk, hair rinse, bath vinegar or mouthwash. The oil improves with age and retains its strength for 10-12 years. It provides "coldness" to toilet preparations and is mixing with bay rum in after shave lotions. It also adds an invigorating fragrance to soaps and bath essences. The oil rubbed onto the teeth improves their whiteness, the reason for its inclusion in toothpastes.

To Soothe tense, tight, tired feet and ankles and reduce swelling:

### **Mint Coconut Cream**

4 Tbsp mint infusion  
1/2 tsp borax  
3 Tbsp coconut oil  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
1 Tbsp almond oil  
1/2 tsp beeswax

Prepare the mint infusion in advance by placing three or four sprigs of mint into a tea cup, and fill with boiling water. Infuse it for two hours before straining. Dissolve the borax in the liquid. Place the oils and wax in a double boiler and melt them gently. Remove from the heat and slowly add the reheated mint infusion. Whisk until it is cool. This fluffy white cream can be used as either a day or night cream and is suitable for dry, normal and combination skins. (The Natural Beauty Book)

**Culinary:** The different varieties of spearmint are the best for cooking, with various meats, beans and grains, soups, vegetables, or desserts; or made into herb butters and vinegars. Peas, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, and tomatoes are particularly good with mint. Other good culinary varieties are peppermint and apple and pineapple mint. Apple, pineapple and Egyptian mint may be finely chopped for salads, sauces, and fruit dishes and make good vinegar and mint sauce. Mexican women often add a few leaves toward the end of cooking their chicken soup because it loses its flavor when cooked for long periods of time. .

Mint is synonymous with mint juleps (some 300,000 sprigs of Kentucky mint are harvested to make all the mint juleps consumed at the Kentucky Derby each year), mint chocolate ice cream and the mint apple jelly that often accompanies a leg of lamb. Widely used around the Mediterranean and in Middle Eastern cuisine, mint is essential for tabbouleh and falafel. Indian cooks combine minced cucumber and onion, plain yogurt, cardamom seeds, and finely chopped mint for a condiment that cools the palate and is especially good with

spicy foods. Thai cooks use fresh mint for stir-fries, salads and as a garnish.

Fresh mint leaves are more flavorful than dried, so freeze the leaves for winter use. And don't forget when you cut off those mint flowers to use them in tabbouleh, or chocolate mint ice cream.

### **Recipes:**

#### **Any mint:**

#### **Salmon with a Mint Crust**

1 oz mint leaves  
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed  
2 oz shelled walnuts  
1 oz Parmesan, freshly grated  
1 Tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice  
3-4 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil  
salt, pepper  
1 1/2 oz fresh brown breadcrumbs

4 salmon steaks or fillets  
olive oil

For the crust, place the mint leaves in a food processor with the next 4 ingredients and chop. Then slowly add sufficient oil to form a thick paste. Taste and add salt and pepper. Spoon into a bowl. Shortly before cooking, mix in the breadcrumbs and stir well. Rub a little oil over the salmon and lay on a foil-lined grill tray. Place under a medium-hot grill. Cook for about 4-5 minutes, then remove. Turn the fish over and spread the crust on top of each piece of fish. Return to the grill for 3-4 minutes until the fish is just cooked. Serve at once. (Feasting on Herbs)

#### **Crepes with Curried Shrimp and Mint**

##### **Crepes:**

1 cup unbleached or all-purpose flour  
3/4 cup water  
2/3 cup milk  
3 large eggs or 3/4 cup egg substitute  
2 Tbsp canola oil  
1/4 tsp salt

##### **Filling:**

2 Tbsp butter  
2 Tbsp canola oil  
1 Tbsp garam masala or curry powder

¼ cup dry white wine  
¼ cup finely sliced fresh mint leaves  
1 lb small or medium shrimp, peeled, deveined, and cooked  
1 cup low-fat or nonfat ricotta cheese  
½ tsp salt  
1 /4 tsp ground black pepper  
8 crepes, thawed if frozen  
1 cup pureed Roasted Red Bell Peppers (recipe follows)

In a blender or food processor, combine all crepe ingredients. Blend until batter is smooth. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Lightly oil a 6-inch skillet or crepe pan, or spray with nonstick cooking spray, and heat over medium heat. Stir the batter and pour 2 tablespoons into the pan. Cook about 1 minute, or until set. Turn and cook the other side about 45 seconds. Transfer to a sheet of parchment. Do not stack warm crepes. Use immediately. Or, stack cooled crepes and wrap them in both plastic wrap and an airtight plastic bag; refrigerate for up to 5 days or freeze for up to 2 months.

Heat oven to 425F. In a large skillet, heat the butter and oil over medium-high heat. Add the garam masala or curry powder and cook, stirring, for 1 minute, or until fragrant. Add the wine and mint and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes, or until liquid is reduced slightly. Remove from the heat and stir in the shrimp, cheese, salt, and pepper.

Divide the filling between the crepes. Roll each one up and place seam side down in a shallow baking dish lightly coated with nonstick cooking spray. Bake for 10 minutes, or until the crepes are crisp. Serve with 1/ 4 cup pureed peppers atop each serving.

## ROASTED RED BELL PEPPERS

Hold a sweet red bell pepper over an open gas flame or charcoal fire, or place under a broiler. Turn until all sides are blackened. Put the pepper into a paper bag, close, and let cool for about 15-20 minutes. Remove and peel, cut in half, and remove stem and seeds. Slice into 1/ 4 inch or 1/ 2 inch strips. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator covered with olive or canola oil.

To serve roasted peppers as an appetizer, combine 2 sliced roasted peppers with 1 minced garlic clove, 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, and 1 teaspoon minced basil or marjoram. Toss and let marinate for 1 hour at room temperature before serving. (The Herbal Palate)

## Basil Mint Pesto

1 cup fresh mint leaves  
1 cup fresh basil leaves  
2 medium-size garlic cloves  
1/ 4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
1/ 4 cup pine nuts or walnuts  
1/ 2 cup olive oil  
salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine the mint, basil, garlic, cheese and nuts in a food processor or blender. Process to mix. With the motor 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. Stuff mushrooms with it or serve on the side with winter soups. (Pestos! Cooking with Herb Pastes)

## Tortilla Soup from Patzcuaro

2-3 dried guajillo or pasilla chiles  
2 dried ancho chiles  
3 Tbsp light cooking oil  
1½ medium white onions, finely chopped  
4-6 cloves garlic, minced  
3½ cups roasted tomatoes or one 29-ounce can whole tomatoes, peeled and crushed or lightly blended  
3 Tbsp best quality tomato paste  
1 bay leaf  
6 cups very rich homemade chicken stock  
1 tsp dried oregano, crumbled  
1 tsp dried thyme, crumbled  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 handful fresh mint sprigs  
2 large avocados  
fresh lime juice  
6 corn tortillas  
cooking oil to fill skillet ½ inch  
½ - ¾ cup crumbled queso fresco or grated Monterey Jack cheese

garnishes: 4 dried pasilla chiles, fresh mint and cilantro sprigs

Lime wedges

Remove the stems and seeds (and the midrib veins for less piquancy) from the dried chiles, and lightly toast on a hot, ungreased griddle for about 30 seconds; do not burn or they will taste bitter. Heat the oil; sauté the onions and the garlic until translucent. Add the tomatoes and the tomato paste, bay leaf, chiles and chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 25 minutes.

Add the oregano and thyme, and simmer another 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and add fresh mint. Simmer a final 5 minutes.

While soup is simmering, cut the avocados into bite-size chunks and sprinkle with fresh lime juice; set aside. Quarter the tortillas, then cut each into 16 triangular chips. Fry in hot oil until crisp; drain on paper towels. Quickly fry the 3 pasilla chiles in the remaining hot oil; they will puff up slightly. Do not burn. After they have cooled, crumble and set aside. Divide the fried tortillas among the bowls. Ladle in the piping hot soup, and quickly add the avocado chunks and grated cheese garnish with crumbled chiles and mint and cilantro sprigs. Serve with lime wedges. (The Herb Garden Cookbook)

### **Sicilian-Style Fish with Mint Sauce**

2 lb swordfish or shark

about ½ cup all-purpose flour

1/3 cup olive oil

3 garlic cloves, minced

½ cup white wine vinegar

½ cup water

½ cup fresh mint leaves, coarse-chopped

3 Tbsp capers

salt and freshly ground pepper

Trim any skin from the fish. Dice the flesh in about 3/4 inch pieces. Season the fish lightly with salt and pepper and dredge in the flour to coat well. Shake off excess flour. Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a pan large enough to hold the fish in one layer, or cook it in two pans. Brown the fish all over, tossing it or shaking the pan, until it is light

golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for a minute. Add the vinegar, water, mint and capers. Season with salt and pepper, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes, or until the fish is just cooked. Turn the fish and sauce onto a serving platter to cool to room temperature before serving. (Herb in the Kitchen)

### **Green Peas with Minted Garlic Butter**

3 cloves of garlic

½ cup butter, softened

2 Tbsp minced fresh parsley

1 Tbsp minced fresh mint

16 oz fresh or frozen green peas

Boil garlic in water to cover in saucepan for 4-5 minutes. Drain well and dry; crush in small bowl. Cream butter in mixer bowl until light and fluffy. Add garlic, parsley and mint, beating well. Chill, covered, for several hours before using. Cook peas until tender; drain. Place in serving dish; dot with herb butter. (Along the Garden Path)

### **Stuffed Cabbage Leaves**

1 cabbage

1 onion, chopped finely

½ lb red lentils, cooked

1 Tbsp raisins or sultanas

1 tomato, chopped finely

1 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground allspice

1 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped

1 Tbsp tamarind paste, soaked in ½ cup water mixed with a little sugar and salt

1 Tbsp fresh mint, chopped

oil

salt and pepper

Start by cutting out the core of the cabbage. Then cook the rest of the whole cabbage in boiling water for 15-20 minutes until almost soft. Drain. Now sauté the onion until transparent. Add the lentils, raisins or sultanas, tomato, cinnamon, allspice and basil; season. Stir well and turn off the heat. Remove the leaves from the cabbage. Place a spoonful of the mixture in the center of each leaf and wrap it up. Now pour a little oil into a large pan. Line the base with any remaining

unfilled leaves and lay the filled ones on top. Pour the tamarind juice over the cabbage pouches and cook gently, covered, for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with the mint and serve. (The Spices of Life)

### **Lemon Mint Liqueur**

¾ cup fresh mint leaves, loosely packed  
1½ cup light rum  
1/3 cup fresh lemon thyme leaves, loosely packed  
1 cups sugar  
2 cups water  
1/3 cup fresh lemon balm, loosely packed  
1/3 cup fresh lemongrass  
2 tsp lemon zest

Coarsely chop mint leaves and place in clean 1-quart container with tight-fitting lid. Add rum. Cover and let stand in a cool, dark place for 1 week. Use a fine-mesh strainer to strain out leaves. Discard. Transfer liquid to a clean container. Coarsely chop lemon thyme leaves and add to rum mixture. Cover tightly and let stand for 1 week. Use a fine-mesh strainer to strain out leaves. Discard. Transfer liquid to a clean container. Make a simple syrup by bringing sugar and water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Coarsely chop and add lemon balm and lemongrass and boil for 5 minutes more, stirring frequently. Use a fine-mesh strainer to strain out solids. Discard. Let tea cool for 15 minutes. Add tea and lemon zest to rum mixture. Cover and age for 1 month. Rack or filter liqueur into final container, cover and age for 2 months before serving. Yield: 1 fifth. (Cordials From Your Kitchen)

### **Brad Brown's Sangria Sorbet**

1½ cups dry red wine  
1 24-oz bottle lemon-lime soda  
1 cantaloupe, peeled and cubed  
1/3 cup fresh orange juice  
juice of 2 lemons  
juice of 2 limes  
½ cup lavender or regular honey  
8 mint leaves, finely chopped  
mint, orange, lemon and lime slices for garnish

Place all the ingredients except garnish in a food processor and blend thoroughly. Freeze the sorbet in an ice-cream maker or in ice trays in the freezer. If sorbet is frozen in ice trays, process the sorbet quickly before serving to improve the texture. Garnish with fruit slices before serving. (Cooking with Herbs)

### **Bitter Chocolate Pave with its River of Wild Mint**

Mint Crème Anglaise  
4 1/3 cups milk  
1 bunch fresh wild mint, about 1 cup chopped (or use apple or spearmint)  
8 egg yolks  
1 cup sugar  
7 Tbsp green crème de menthe  
10 oz semisweet chocolate  
10 oz unsweetened chocolate  
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter  
2 cups heavy cream, whipped  
chocolate shavings, for garnish  
confectioners' sugar  
mint leaves for garnish

To make the cream, place the milk and mint in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, in a bowl beat the yolks and sugar together until they are pale and thick. Pour the boiling milk into the egg mixture, stirring constantly. Return the sauce to the saucepan and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 15 minutes. Do not allow the sauce to boil. Cool to room temperature, covered, then stir in the crème de menthe and pass through a fine strainer to remove any lumps. Set aside.

Melt the chocolates in a double boiler over hot but not boiling water. Stir in the butter. Cool to barely warm, then fold in the whipped cream. Pour the pave into a lightly greased rectangular mold, and refrigerate until firm, about 4-6 hours or overnight.

To serve, unmold the pave, slice about 1 inch thick. Place a slice in the middle of each plate, then surround with large chocolate shavings and a sprinkle of confectioners' sugar. Spoon the sauce around the cake. Chop several mint leaves and sprinkle over the cake and

sauce, then decorate with whole leaves.  
(Cooking with Herbs)

### **Mint Julep Ice Cream**

1 cup sugar  
1 cup water  
1 cup fresh mint leaves, tightly packed  
2 10-oz cans condensed milk  
1 quart heavy cream  
2 cups milk  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
pinch of salt  
½ cup Southern Comfort or Bourbon  
green food coloring (optional  
mint leaves, for garnish

In a saucepan, bring the sugar, water, and mint to a boil. Simmer over medium heat for 5 to 8 minutes to make a simple syrup. Cool and strain, discarding mint. In a large bowl, combine the condensed milk, cream, milk, vanilla, salt and liquor. Stir in the mint syrup. Tint with a few drops of food coloring, if desired. Pour into an ice-cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions until firm. Garnish with additional mint sprigs.  
(Cooking with Herbs)

### **With Orange Mint**

#### **Winter Tomato Bisque with Orange Mint**

3 medium cans whole tomatoes  
1-3 Tbsp sugar  
1 tbsp butter  
3 cans Tomato Soup  
2 ½ soup cans of milk  
1 ½ soup cans of water  
1-3 Tbsp dried orange mint, slightly crushed

Drain juice from the tomatoes into a 4-quart kettle. Chop the tomatoes and add to the kettle along with the sugar and the butter. Heat the mixture slowly over low heat, and simmer until the juice is reduced by half (40-60 minutes). Add the remaining ingredients, one at a time and heat slowly to the boiling point. Ladle into warm serving bowls, garnish with a spoonful of whipped cream (unsweetened) and a sprig of fresh parsley (Special Request Herbal Recipes)

### **Orange Mint-Banana Frappe**

2 ripe bananas, peeled  
1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice  
2 Tbsp (loosely packed) whole orange mint leaves  
1 ½ cups orange juice  
4 ice cubes

Garnish:

Whole orange mint leaves

Place bananas, lemon juice, mint leaves, and orange juice in a blender. Processor on high speed until bananas and orange mint leaves, are pulverized. With motor running, drop 1 ice cube at a time through the lid opening, and process until ice cubes are crushed. Pour into glasses and serve immediately, garnishing with mint leaves  
(Morning Glories)

### **Poached Pears**

2 ½ cups water  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves (reserve a few leaves for garnish)  
4 pears  
sweetened whipped cream

Combine the water, sugar, and mint in a saucepan large enough to hold the pears and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, then strain the mint leaves from the syrup. Peel the pears and simmer them in the syrup for 10-20 minutes, or until a fork easily pierces the flesh. Carefully turn the pears several times while they cook. Chill them in the syrup for several hours, preferably overnight. To serve, put pears on individual dessert plates, spoon a little syrup over each and garnish with fresh mint leaves. Can be accompanied by whipped cream if desired.  
(The Cornell Book of Herbs & Edible Flowers)

### **Fresh Fruit With Orange Mint Sauce**

Assorted fruits: strawberries, melon, kiwi, bananas, peaches  
1 Tbsp orange mint oil  
1 cup low-fat yogurt or sour cream  
1-2 Tbsp powdered sugar or honey  
2 Tbsp apple juice  
2 drops green or red food coloring (optional)

Cut fruits into bite-size pieces, cubes or balls. Allow ½ cup fruit per serving. To make sauce, combine remaining ingredients in a blender. Taste for mint flavor and sweetness before pouring over the fruit. Serve in individual dessert dishes or layer in larger dish.

Orange mint oil:

2 cups orange mint leaves and tender stems, hard-packed

½ cup vegetable oil

Blend mint and oil together till smooth, turning blender off and on and pushing down leaves. Refrigerate or freeze in small containers. Spearmint, apple mint or peppermint may also be used. (Southern Herb Growing)

### **Orange-Mint Muffins**

Zest from 3 oranges

¼ cup sugar

¼ cup water

½ cup sugar

¼ cup butter or margarine

1 egg, well beaten

2 ¼ cups flour

3 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 Tbsp fresh chopped orange mint

1 cup orange juice, squeezed from 3 oranges above

Combine zest, the ¼ cup of sugar and the ¼ cup of water in a small saucepan and simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes until mixture is golden brown and bubbly. Watch closely so mixture doesn't stick and burn. Remove from heat and cool. In mixing bowl, combine the ½ cup of sugar and butter. Add the egg and mix well. Add cooled zest mixture to egg mixture. Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt together. Stir in the chopped mint leaves. Alternately add the dry ingredients and the orange juice to the first mixture. Do not overmix. Grease 16 muffin cups. Fill cups about 2/3 full with the batter. Bake in a 350F oven 20-30 minutes or until tops are firm and muffins are lightly browned. Wonderful served warm (The Best of Thymes)

### **Orange Mint Jelly**

3 cups chopped fresh orange mint, spearmint or peppermint

3 ½ cups orange juice

¼ cup orange granules

2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar

1 1 ¾ oz package fruit pectin

3 drops yellow food coloring

4 cups sugar

1 Tbsp butter or margarine

1 tsp mint extract

Combine mint and orange juice in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Turn off heat, cover, and cool. Strain juice. Measure 3 cups strained liquid into a large kettle. Add orange granules and next 3 ingredients. Mix well. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute. Stir in sugar to dissolve. Add butter. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Mix in mint extract. Ladle into 4- or 8- oz sterilized jars, filling to 1/8 inch from the top. Wipe rims and seal. Process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes. Remove from water, cover jars with a towel, and let stand overnight. Yield: about 4 cups jelly. (Today's Herbal Kitchen)

### **Orange Mint-Chip Scones**

Peel of 1 small orange, removed in strips with a vegetable peeler

2 Tbsp (packed) whole orange mint leaves or chocolate mint leaves

½ cup granulated sugar

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour, preferably bleached

1 Tbsp baking powder

½ tsp coarse salt

½ cup cold unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

¾ cup plus 2 Tbsp heavy cream, half-and-half, or milk

½ cup semisweet chocolate chips

1 egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 425F. In a food processor, whiz orange peel, orange mint leaves and sugar until leaves are finely ground. Add flour, baking powder, and salt and process briefly to blend. Add butter; pulse until butter is in small pieces (do not over process).

Transfer mixture to a medium bowl. With a rubber spatula, stir in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cream; add remaining cream as needed to make a soft dough. Fold in chocolate chips. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board; divide in half. Press or roll out each half into a 6-8 inch circle; brush lightly with beaten egg. Cut each circle into 8 wedges. Place wedges, not touching, on a parchment paper-lined or lightly greased baking sheet. Bake scones for 10-13 minutes, until golden and slightly firm when pressed. Cool slightly or completely on a wire rack before serving. (Morning Glories)

### **Grand Marnier Sherbet with Orange Mint Nougatine**

#### *Sherbet*

1 cup water  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sugar  
1 orange rind, minced  
2 cups orange juice  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream  
2 Tbsp Grand Marnier

#### *Orange Mint Nougatine*

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar  
1 cup water  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup orange mint leaves, minced  
Garnish:

1 orange rind, cut into matchstick pieces

Bring 1 cup water and  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup sugar to a boil and cook until sugar is dissolved. Cool. Add the minced orange rind, orange juice, and lemon juice. Blend in the heavy cream and Grand Marnier. Dissolve the remaining sugar and water together, and poach the matchstick pieces of orange rind in the resulting syrup for 3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and set on a rack to drain. Add the minced orange mint leaves to the poaching syrup. Cook slowly until the sugar begins to caramelize and turn a light brown color. Remove from the heat and pour onto a lightly greased pan or marble slab. When it has hardened, break it into hunks and grind in a mortar until pieces are the size of peas. Mix the caramelized mint with the orange mixture and freeze in an ice cream machine. To serve, spoon the sherbet into 6 stemmed balloon wine goblets and top with the

poached peel. Serve with 2 icebox cookies and extra orange mint as a garnish, if desired. (The Fearington House Cookbook)

### **Moroccan Mint**

#### **Mint Chocolate Mousse**

4 oz plain dark chocolate  
2 eggs, separated  
1 tsp instant coffee granules  
1 tsp fresh-chopped Moroccan mint  
whipped cream and mint leaves for decoration

Melt the chocolate either in a microwave or in a double saucepan. When smooth and liquid, remove from heat. Beat the egg yolks and add to the chocolate while hot (this will cook the yolks slightly), then mix in the coffee and chopped mint. Leave to cool for about 15 minutes. Beat the egg whites (not too stiff) and fold them into the cooling chocolate mixture with a metal spoon. Pour into containers, decorate with cream and garnish. (Good Enough to Eat)

### **Pineapple Mint**

#### **Pineapple Crème**

1 cup heavy cream whipped  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup granulated sugar  
1 8oz can crushed pineapple in its own juice, unsweetened  
1 Tbsp unflavored gelatin  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup lukewarm water  
2 six-inch sprigs pineapple mint

Place pineapple fruit, sugar and the leaves of the mint in the top of a blender. Blend for 1 minute. Add softened gelatin which has been soaked in lukewarm water. Whirl again until mint is just small flecks. Beat cream till thick in a large bowl. Fold in fruit puree from blender. Pour into six individual molds or 1 large one that has been rinsed in cold water. Chill till firm. Raw sugar that has had a vanilla bean flavoring in it is nice to use in this.

### **For Chocolate Mint**

#### **Coffee Choco-Mint Punch**

2 quarts strong coffee, cold  
2 cups milk  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

2 tsp vanilla  
1 quart vanilla ice cream  
whipped cream  
sprigs of fresh chocolate mint

Combine coffee and next 3 ingredients. Mix well. Place ice cream in a punch bowl. Pour coffee mixture over top. Add a dollop of whipped cream and a sprig of chocolate mint to each serving. (Today's Herbal Kitchen)

### **Chocolate Mint Pie**

2 cups chocolate chips  
4 eggs, slightly beaten  
2 cups sugar  
2 sticks butter, melted  
2 tsp vanilla  
2 cups chopped pecans or walnuts  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh chocolate mint  
2 9-inch pie shells, unbaked  
sprigs of fresh chocolate mint for garnish

Melt chocolate chips in a double boiler. Mix chocolate with egg and next 4 ingredients in a large bowl. Add flour and chopped mint. Mix well. Divide evenly into pie shells. Bake at 350F for 30 minutes. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream and garnish. (Today's Herbal Kitchen)

### **For Banana Mint**

#### **Banana Mint Bread**

1 Tbsp minced banana mint leaves  
1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp baking soda  
½ tsp coarse salt  
½ cup unsalted butter, softened  
¾ cup granulated sugar  
2 eggs  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 cup mashed, very ripe bananas  
1/3 cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 350F. Grease a 9-by-5-inch pan. In a small bowl, whisk together banana mint leaves, flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, beat butter and sugar together on high speed until light and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl at least once. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well

after each addition. Beat in vanilla and bananas just until incorporated. With the mixer on low speed, add half of flour mixture, then buttermilk, then remaining flour mixture, beating just until blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 55-60 minutes, until bread springs back when top is lightly pressed with a finger. Remove immediately from the pan and let cool on a wire rack. (Morning Glories)

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