

Description/Taste

Green garlic are immature garlic plants that are harvested before they begin to form mature bulbs or cloves. Green garlic range in height from eight to eighteen inches producing thin, green stalks and small, cylindrical to globular white bulbs. The bulb size will vary depending upon variety and by how mature the garlic is allowed to get prior to harvesting. Green garlic has a bright, piquant garlic aroma and flavor and a succulent firm texture. When selecting Green garlic avoid stems that are bruised or wilted significantly and look for bunches that have dark green leaves, long white, pink, purple bases and roots that are still intact.

Seasons/Availability

Green garlic is available for a brief period, from late spring through early summer.

Current Facts

Green garlic is simply young garlic that is harvested prior to reaching maturity. Also known as Spring garlic, New garlic and in France as Ail Frais, Green garlic is botanically a part of *Allium Sativum* and a member of the lily family along with chives, shallots and onions. Garlic is the common name dedicated to hundreds of varieties which can be classified as hardneck or softneck type, both of which can produce Green garlic.

Nutritional Value

All varieties of garlic possess antibiotic properties to some forms of bacteria, viruses and intestinal parasites. Plants in the garlic family lower blood pressure and cholesterol, and may also be used a diuretic, an anti-inflammatory agent, an expectorant or a decongestant.

Applications

Green garlic is entirely edible, though the top, dark green leaves are often trimmed if too fibrous or woody. These green leaves can however be saved and used to add flavor to soup and stocks. It can be used interchangeably where green onions or traditional garlic is called for. Pair green garlic with similar fresh, spring vegetables such as asparagus, morels, green herbs, peas, leeks and fiddlehead ferns. They can be braised, sautéed, grilled, roasted or prepared confit as a whole vegetable. They can be used raw or cooked in salads, compound butters, hummus, pesto, dressings and other savory sauces. Use whole along with other herbs and vegetables in pickled preparations. The flavor of Green garlic pairs well with seafood, pasta, eggs, lamb, fresh cheeses, basil, mint, parsley, sage, onion, tomato and potatoes. To store wrap Green garlic in a damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag and refrigerate until ready to use.

Alternatively it can be kept refrigerated in a tall glass with enough water in the bottom to cover the roots.

Green garlic is best consumed within a week of harvesting.

Ethnic/Cultural Info

In vegetable farming communities and farmers markets of the United States and Europe the sprouting of Green garlic is seen as one of the first signs of the change in food seasons, from winter to spring crops. Sauces made of Green garlic are mentioned in *Le Viandier de Taillevent*, one of the earliest cookbooks written in the Middle Ages. The medieval cookbook the *Du Fait de Cuisine* written in 1420 also mentions Green garlic be used in preparation of sauce for eel and pike fish. A famous poem on health preservation in the Middle Ages, the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* notes that Green garlic sauce should be prepared with sage which would temper the bite of the garlic and impart a green color to the sauce.

Geography/History

Garlic is believed to have originated in central Asia and records of it date back nearly 5,000 years in China and Mesopotamia. Green garlic has long been removed from garlic plants, predominately in the spring as a means of making room for mature garlic to grow. Many different cultures have historically made use of crops such as Green garlic, as a source of sustenance and in effort to use all parts of the plant. In modern times Green garlic has experienced a surge in popularity at farmers markets as one of the first spring produce items to come into season each year. A secondary crop for farmers growing garlic, Green garlic was originally only offered by a handful of growers selling what they had thinned from their crop. Over the years though it has experienced a surge in culinary popularity and the market demand for Green garlic has transformed a pruning necessity into a cash crop for growers.