



Cinnamon Basil



Cinnamon Basil is one of my very favorite basil. I love the mild spicy cinnamon taste and aroma. Yes, it even smells like cinnamon.

I use Cinnamon Basil in all kinds of recipes from desserts, to my Vietnamese recipes. One of my favorite recipes is Cinnamon Basil Lime Icebox Cookies, and the recipe is available to you this month.

You can use Cinnamon Basil in Teas, vegetable dishes, and fruit salads. You can rub leaves on beef or cook with the aromatic cinnamon basil in a pot roast or pork tenderloin stuffed with apples. Poultry, fish, veal and lamb dishes welcome its flavor. Use cinnamon basil in pesto flavored with ground toasted walnuts and pine nuts for another great flavor. To bring flavors out, drizzle the leaves with a port and lemon juice vinaigrette. Pear and apple salads also benefit from its goodness.

Cinnamon basil sprigs add flavor and visual appeal to cranberry and apple juice, fruit nectars, chutneys and jellies. It is excellent for tomato dishes, pasta sauces and cold or hot soups. And, remember to pair cinnamon basil with beans, pasta, rice, cheese and eggs. Combine it with other fruity flavored herbs. Flavor vinegars using cinnamon basil. Use it as lovely edible garnish. And how about this....Use cinnamon basil to make a fragrant potpourri herb. Add pizzazz to cheesecake or a cheesecake mixes with one-half cup chopped cinnamon basil leaves. Stir in just before filling the crust. Chill. Garnish with cinnamon basil sprigs.



You should also know that it's easy to keep and store cinnamon basil. Here is what I do. To store, treat fresh basil like a flower. Put stems in a pot or glass of water; use within three to six days. Refrigerating fresh basil causes this delicate herb to develop dark brown spots, which ruins its flavor and presentation.

Cinnamon basil is known as bai manglak in Thailand where they prefer its taste in salads and use it as a garnish.

Cinnamon Basil is a warm loving basil. Just like most basil, Cinnamon Basil can be grown outdoors in the warmer weather, or can be grown year round in a greenhouse. My greenhouse is full of cinnamon basil. Herbs have a long history. Cultivated more than five thousand years, basil has many varieties that have been developed since its early roots in India and tropical regions of India. A long time favorite, cinnamon basil is well adapted to Middle Eastern and Asian style cooking. Preferring well-drained rich soil and full sun, cinnamon basil plants grow up to thirty inches high and spread out twelve to eighteen inches. Producing sturdy dark purplish-red stems, the cinnamon scented leaves are in contrast its pinkish-purple flowers that bloom during summer months. The genus name, *Ocimum basilicum* cinnamon, is derived from the Greek word "basileus" meaning "king" and "okimon" meaning, quite appropriately, "smell".



Harvesting basil leaves for the recipe is an art where the leaves are trimmed in a way such that it should boost the plants growth and one should also be able to gather basil leaves that a recipe needs.



Make sure that you are cutting the basil leaves and stems that are not new growth; by doing this, the growth of the plant is not affected in any way. But will enhance the growth and make a bushier plant.

You can also cut the stragglers hanging out from the basil plant.



Ramona's BASIL GARDEN



Cut the top portion of the basil plant that is trying to form seeds. The reason is, whenever the basil plant goes to seed, it will create bitterness in the basil leaves.

But if you want seeds from a basil plant, then dedicate a plant to form seeds and do not take any leaves from them for your recipes.



Rinse the cut basil leaves in cool water.

Rinsing in cool water will liven up the leaves and also will remove dirt from them.



Pinch off the leaves from the stem, dry them using a paper towel.

When you are adding the basil leaves to a recipe, make sure that you are not adding the leaves with the stem.

The stem has a strong flavor than the leaves and may alter the actual taste of the recipe.



Once the leaves are dry, chop them using kitchen utility scissors and put the chopped leaves in to a bowl.



Chop the leaves further if you want the basil leaves to be finer.

If you have extra chopped basil leaves, store them in a zip of bag in the freezer.

When you use frozen basil leaves, you will want to take out of freezer and use immediately, otherwise they are mushy, but are still okay to use. Measure while Basil is frozen.