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*Spice up your life!*

The library will have take-and-make  
kits to pick up at the beginning  
of every month.

Each kit includes:

- Packet of the featured spice
- Information and fun facts
- Recipes to try at home



# mint

Mint, (*genus Mentha*), genus of 25 species of fragrant herbs of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*). Native to Eurasia, North America, southern Africa, and Australia, mints are widely distributed throughout the temperate areas of the world and have naturalized in many places. A number of species, particularly peppermint and spearmint, are used as flavorings for foods (including candy and gum) and for liqueur and dentifrices (toothpastes and toothpowders). The essential oils of mints are used as scents in perfumery.

Mints have square stems and opposite aromatic leaves. These hardy plants can grow on many different soil types under full sun or partial shade. Many can spread vegetatively by stolons and can be aggressive in gardens. The small flowers are usually pale purple, pink, or white in color and are arranged in clusters, either forming whorls or crowded together in a terminal spike. The flowers are not typical of other members of the family, having four rather than five united petals. The volatile oils are concentrated in resinous dots in the leaves and stems.

## Fun Facts

- The nymph Mentha was transformed into a mint plant by the goddess of the Underworld, Persephone, when Persephone became jealous and enraged that Pluto, the god of the Underworld, preferred Mentha over her.
- In Ancient Greece and Rome, mint was thought to be an aphrodisiac and was woven into crowns to be worn on the head.
- Menthol may help improve cold symptoms as many over-the-counter cold and flu treatments contain menthol, which helps as a nasal decongestant.
- Mint is best known for its association with fresh breath due to the cool sensation it creates in the mouth.

Information from *Britannica* and *University of California*

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Toast walnuts on a baking sheet, tossing once, until golden brown, 6–8 minutes. Let cool; finely crush with the side of a chef's knife.
2. Place a medium skillet over medium heat and add ½ cup water. As soon as you see bubbles, add one-third of the spinach and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the spinach is wilted, then add more. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until all the spinach is in the pan and wilted, 6–8 minutes. Transfer spinach to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking and lock in its bright green color. Drain and squeeze out excess liquid. Finely chop spinach and set aside.
3. Wipe out skillet and heat 2 Tbsp. oil over medium. Cook onion, stirring occasionally, until soft but without taking on any color, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is softened, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl.
4. Heat remaining 4 Tbsp. oil in a small skillet over medium. Once oil begins to shimmer, remove from heat and stir in dried mint. The oil will sizzle immediately and the mint will become fragrant. Transfer to a small bowl; season with salt.
5. Combine yogurt, lemon juice, onion mixture, half of the walnuts, and reserved spinach in a medium bowl. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Scrape into a shallow serving bowl and use the back of a spoon to carve a few swirls into the dip. Top with remaining walnuts and spoon sizzled mint oil over.



# Spinach-Yogurt Dip with Sizzled Mint

🕒 Total Time: 1 hr 15 mins

🍽 Servings: 4



## Ingredients

- 1 cup walnuts
- 8 ounces baby spinach (about 10 cups)
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- **2 tablespoons dried mint**
- 3 cups plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper

Recipe from: Bon Appétit

<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/spinach-yogurt-dip-with-sizzled-mint>



# Lebanese Stuffed Cabbage Rolls

🕒 Total Time: 1 hr

🍽 Servings: 6



## Ingredients

- 1 green cabbage
- 1 pound ground sirloin
- ½ cup long grain white rice
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 lemon Juice of lemon
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 cloves garlic grated
- **2 tablespoons dried mint crushed**

Recipe from: The Lemon Bowl

<https://thelemonbowl.com/lebanese-cabbage-rolls/>



## Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of water (or chicken broth) to a boil.
2. Using a sharp knife, carefully remove tough inner core of the cabbage. When water or broth has come to a boil, add the whole head of cabbage (cored) to the pot. In about 2-3 minutes, the cabbage leaves will slowly start to separate from the head. Carefully place them on a plate as they fall off the core.

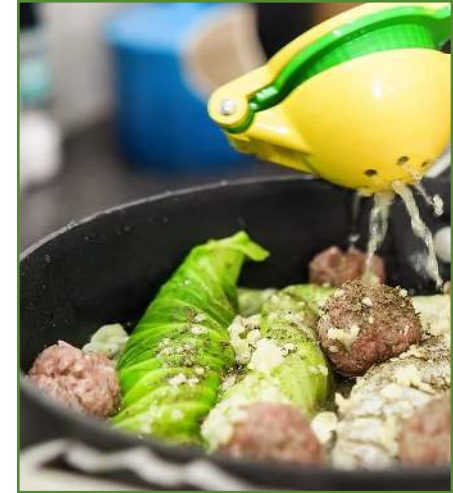


3. In a medium bowl, combine sirloin, rice, salt, pepper, lemon juice, cinnamon and half of the garlic.
4. Working one leaf at a time, place 1-2 tablespoons of meat mixture in the middle and roll until meat is covered with cabbage.
5. Place stuffed cabbage rolls in the same pot you used to cook the leaves and line them up close together, alternating direction with each layer. Continue until leaves are gone.



## Instructions continued...

6. If you have any extra meat mixture, roll them into tiny meatballs and add them on top of the stuffed rolls. Cover stuffed cabbage with water – about 1/2 in above top layer. Throw in dried mint and remaining 2 crushed garlic cloves. Squeeze any leftover lemon juice and season with salt and pepper to taste.



7. Take a small plate and turn it upside down and place on top of rolls. Push down to ensure all rolls are submersed in liquid. Cover pot and bring to a boil. Simmer for 20-30 minutes or until meat is fully cooked through. Serve with plain yogurt.

