

Cooking With Garlic

Garlic is a practically ubiquitous culinary herb used in a wide variety of cuisines throughout the world. Can you imagine French, Italian, or Chinese dishes without it? Garlic goes with just about any savory food and is a critical element in many sauces and dressings. It can be used to flavor butter, vinegar, or oil, and its distinctive flavor enhances meat, vegetables and other dishes. With a little imagination it can even be used in desserts!

Sautéing is probably the most common and easiest method of cooking garlic, bringing out its nutty, savory taste and mellowing out the flavor. But be sure to stir constantly – garlic burns easily and then turns bitter.

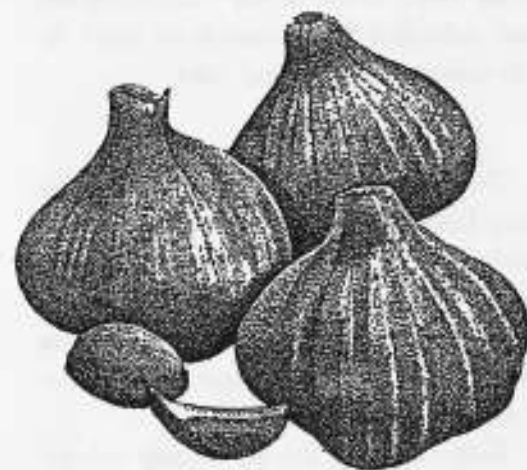
Roasting garlic brings out the nutty flavor, mellows hot, spicy varieties and adds an almost caramelized quality to the garlic. To roast a whole bulb, rub the loose skin off a garlic bulb and snip the ends off each clove to expose the flesh; place in a special garlic baker or on aluminum foil and brush with oil (which helps bring out the flavor) if you want. Cover or wrap tightly and roast for about two hours at 350° or one hour at 450° or until the cloves are soft. Squeeze the warm pulp out of the cloves and spread on bread, add it to mashed potatoes, or into sauces; or toss whole cloves with vegetables, into salads, or even bake into bread.

Immature garlic scapes can also be eaten. They should be harvested when still curled and before the flower buds develop; when straight or the flowers are out, they are woody and inedible. Garlic scapes make an unusual stir-fried vegetable and a delicious pesto.

For More Information

- *Growing Onions, Garlic, Leeks and Other Alliums in Wisconsin* – from University of Wisconsin Extension at <http://cecommerce.uwex.edu>
- *Growing Garlic in the Home Garden* – Ohio State University Extension Factsheet HYG-1627-92 at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1627.html>
- *Growing Garlic in Minnesota* – a UM Vegetable Crop Management publication, geared toward commercial production, at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7317.html>
- *Garlic Seed Foundation* – an informal organization of producers and consumers at <http://www.garlicseedfoundation.info/index.htm>
- *The Garlic Store* – for everything garlicky, including their "Garlic Cam" at <http://www.thegarlicstore.com/index.cgi/INDEX.HTML>
- *Filaree Farms* – one of the most extensive garlic sources, at <http://www.filareefarm.com>
- *Growing Great Garlic*, by Ron L. Engeland. 1995, Filaree Productions
- *Garlic Garlic Garlic: More Than 200 Exceptional Recipes for the World's Most Indispensable Ingredient* by Linda and Fred Griffith. 1998, Houghton Mifflin
- *Glorious Garlic: A Cookbook* by Charlene A. Braid. 1995 Random House

GARLIC



It's easy to grow your own garlic!

— and the flavor of fresh garlic is incomparable!

Extension

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About Garlic

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is one of the best known herbs around the world. This perennial plant, most often grown as an annual, produces edible bulbs composed of a number of cloves. This member of the onion family has been cultivated for thousands of years for both culinary and medicinal uses.

Varieties

There are numerous varieties available today, but the common names given to many varieties are not really indicative of their true origins. For example, the name "Italian" has been applied to many varieties only because Italian immigrants brought them here, not because they originated there.

Garlic varieties can be broadly categorized as either hardneck and softneck. **Hardneck types (H)** all produce a woody flower stalk – called a scape – while softneck types do not. Some types may not produce large bulbs unless the flower stalks are removed. Hardneck types typically have 4-12 cloves in a single circle surrounding the stiff stalk (which can't be braided) and generally do not store well. **Softneck types (S)** generally don't form a scape and therefore the soft necks can be braided. They typically produce 10-40 cloves, and often can be stored for 6-9 months. They tend to lack the flavor of hardneck garlic, having either a very hot or very mild taste.

Elephant garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum*) is not a true garlic – it is actually a type of leek. The extremely large bulbs with 5-6 cloves can weigh as much as a pound.

Some recommended varieties for Wisconsin include:

- 'Brown Tempest' (H) – brown cloves with a rose blush and no stripes. The purple splotted bulbs average 6 cloves. It has a fiery flavor when eaten raw, but that mellows to a pleasing aftertaste. It stores longer than many hardnecks.
- 'Chesnock Red' (H) – a good performer that holds its shape and retains flavor after it is cooked. Purple-striped wrappers hold 8-12 cloves. Hot, zippy flavor mellows in storage.
- 'Georgian Crystal' (H) – large clean white bulbs with 4-7 cloves and mild but robust flavor. It has a mild flavor even when eaten raw so is good in dishes such as pesto, salsa, etc.
- 'German Extra Hardy' (H) – from Central Europe, with 4-7 big, full-bodied, spicy white cloves. Best used raw, as most of the flavor is lost in cooking.
- 'Giant Siberian' (H) – large white bulbs with 5-7 purple-striped cloves.
- 'Inchelium' or 'Inchellium Red' (S) – vigorous with mild taste, but the 10-20 cloves can be difficult to peel. It stores well, with the flavor becoming more pronounced over time.
- 'Italian Late' (S) – tight, light colored wrappers surround fat outer cloves with rich garlic flavor. Stores 6-9 months. Can be planted in spring.
- 'Killamey Red' (H) – is better adapted to wet conditions than most others. Produces 8-10 pink skinned, easy-to-peel cloves.
- 'Korean Red' (H) – produces 4-8 large purple cloves in purple-striped bulbs. The big cloves are easy to peel and have a very hot flavor. Stores for 6 months or more.
- 'Music' (H) – large bulbs with pink skin similar to 'German White' and robust flavor.
- 'Polish White' (H) – large cloves inside the purple-striped wrapper.
- 'Silver Rose' (S) – rose colored cloves are enclosed in smooth, bright white wrappers. Stores up to 8 months. Can be planted in spring.

Growing Garlic

Garlic does best in full sun in well-drained soil high in organic matter. Till the soil well before planting.

Planting

Garlic should be planted in fall, 1-2 weeks after the first killing frost. A period of cold is necessary for bulbing; most garlic varieties planted in the spring produce weak shoots and poorly developed bulbs.

Separate the individual cloves from the bulb just before planting. Choose the largest cloves since they generally will produce the largest bulbs. Place the cloves pointed side up, 1-2" deep and about 6" apart. Mulch with 6" of straw once the ground freezes.

Culture & Maintenance

Control weeds by shallow cultivation or mulching. Apply fertilizer at planting and again when the shoots are 4-6" tall. Water if rainfall is not adequate. Remove the scapes of hardneck garlic just after curling starts.

Harvest & Storage

In general, garlic is ready to harvest when half of the leaves have turned brown. Dig a couple of "test" plants to make sure their cloves fill the skins. Carefully lift the entire plant with the shoots still attached, and knock off the excess soil (do NOT wash). Cure the bulbs in a warm spot out of direct sunlight for 3-4 weeks, then trim the roots and stem and brush away any remaining soil. Store in a cool place for several months (hardneck generally 3-4 months; softneck 6-8 months); or at room temperature if used for replanting in the garden.