



## Orange Basil Soda

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 10 / **Cook Time** 3 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**boil:** to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

**dissolve:** to stir an ingredient, like sugar, into another ingredient, like water, until they become one substance; or to melt or liquefy a solid food, such as butter, chocolate, or sugar.

**juice:** to extract or squeeze out the juice of a fruit or vegetable, like a lemon, orange, or carrot, often cutting open or peeling the fruit or veggie first to access its flesh.

**slice:** to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

### Equipment

- Small saucepan
- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Wooden spoon
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Pitcher

### Ingredients

Orange Basil Soda

- 1/2 C water
- 4 fresh basil leaves

- 1/2 C granulated sugar
- 2 to 3 oranges
- 2 C sparkling water
- ice

## Food Allergen Substitutions

Orange Basil Soda

## Instructions

Orange Basil Soda

### boil + dissolve + cool

In a small saucepan on your stovetop, boil **1/2 cup water**. Once boiling, turn off the heat and have your kids carefully add **4 whole basil leaves** and **1/2 cup sugar** to the hot water. Stir and let sit until the sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Let cool, then remove and discard the whole basil leaves.

### slice + juice

Have your kids slice **2 to 3 oranges** into wedges and squeeze the juice from their wedges into a pitcher.

### add + stir

Add the cooled basil simple syrup and **2 cups sparkling water**, stir, and serve in cups over ice. "Salute" (sah-LOO-teh) or "Cheers" in Italian!

## Featured Ingredient: Basil!

Hi! I'm Basil!

"Ciao (chow)! I'm Basil! But you can also call me Genovese basil (that's Italian, from Genoa). My leaves are usually used fresh, added late in cooking to keep my flavor. If you combine me with olive oil, garlic, pine nuts, and Parmesan cheese, you'll have a yummy, green Italian sauce called "pesto," which is good on pasta. You'll also find me on a delicious but simple pizza from Naples, Italy, called "pizza margherita." Besides fresh basil leaves, Neapolitans (people from Naples) traditionally top this pizza with a tomato sauce from San Marzano tomatoes, fresh mozzarella cheese, a drizzle of olive oil, and a sprinkle of salt. Of course, basil is good in dishes from many countries!"

History

A long time ago, Greeks and Romans believed basil would only grow if you screamed wild curses and shouted while sowing the seeds. They also thought that if you left a basil leaf under a pot, it would turn into a scorpion!

Basil may have originated in India; there are speculations that it originally came from tropical areas spanning from Southeast Asia to Central Africa.

Ancient Egyptians used to use basil to embalm the dead and prepare for burial.

In Italy, basil is considered a token of love, and in Romania, if a girl gives a sprig of basil to her boyfriend, they are engaged.

## Anatomy & Etymology

Basil is a part of the mint family. There are 50 to 150 species, including Genovese (Italian) basil (the most common), Thai basil, cinnamon basil, lemon basil, lettuce basil, spicy globe basil, and green ruffles basil! Each type of basil has a unique aroma and taste.

Leaves of the basil plant tend to be oval-shaped, shiny, and smooth-edged. Their edges cup slightly.

Basil plants can grow to be from 8 inches to 4 feet high.

Basil has seeds that can germinate after 10 years!

Basil will grow small flowers that look like spikes at the top of the plant. The flowers are edible, but we generally eat and use just the leaves.

The word "basil" comes from the Greek "vasilikos," which also means "royal." It is believed that basil was once used in royal perfumes.

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Basil grows best in hot climates. When harvesting basil, pinch or cut the leaves at the stem from the top of the plant down. Select a few large leaves rather than snipping the whole stem. Choose leaves that are bright and free from blemishes. Picking leaves encourages the plant to produce more leaves.

You could also try growing basil in a pot on your kitchen window sill, so it's easy to pick what you need when you need it.

Wash basil gently and pat dry. When you buy basil from the store, it will often come with its stems. Trim the ends of the stems and store in a glass of water as you would a bunch of flowers. Basil stores best at room temperature.

Use fresh basil leaves in salads, salad dressings, sauces, pasta, marinades, and sandwiches. Basil leaves in cold water make a nice summer refresher, or add some mint with the leaves to make a digestive hot tea.

Basil can be dried or blanched and frozen. Dried basil enhances the flavor of tomato soup.

## Nutrition

Basil contains 98% of our DV of Vitamin K1 in just one-half of a cup! Vitamin K1 is essential for blood clotting. For example, when we get a cut, we need our blood to clot so that the bleeding will stop and our cut will heal.

Basil contains carotenoids—those powerful plant-based nutrients that protect our cells from oxidation (rust) and enhance immunity.

Essential oils found in basil not only give it its aromatic and therapeutic scent but are also anti-inflammatory.

Basil has been shown to act as an adaptogen. Adaptogens are natural substances that help us respond in a healthful way to stress. So the next time you're feeling stressed, grab a handful of basil, hold it to your nose, and breathe in deeply. Then, toss it in your salad and eat it.