



Refreshing Mint Tea

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 5 / Cook Time / Serves 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

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.

peel: to remove the skin or rind from something using your hands or a metal tool.

tear: to pull or rip apart a food, like basil leaves, into pieces instead of cutting with a knife; cutting breaks cell walls more, so herbs can discolor faster.

Equipment

- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Grater
- Dry measuring cups
- Liquid measuring cup
- Citrus squeezer (optional)
- Strainer (optional)

Ingredients

Refreshing Mint Tea

- 1/2 cucumber

- 6 mint leaves
- 1/2 C granulated sugar
- 2 C water
- 1 lime
- 2 C ice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Refreshing Mint Tea

Instructions

Refreshing Mint Tea

peel + grate

Peel and grate **1/2 cucumber**. Add the grated cucumber to your blender.

tear + measure + add

Tear **6 mint leaves** and measure **1/2 cup sugar** and **2 cups water** and add them to the blender.

wash + slice + juice

Wash and slice **1 lime** in half and squeeze its juice into the blender. Blend until the cucumber and mint are very small. If you have time, strain the drink to catch extra pieces of cucumber. Add **2 cups of ice**, stir, and pour into cups. "Ganbei" (GHAN-bay) or "Cheers" in Chinese!

Featured Ingredient: Mint!

Hi! I'm Mint!

"I'm a green herb with a sweet, cool taste and pleasant aroma. You may have tasted me in gum and toothpaste, but my favorite is mint chocolate chip ice cream!"

History & Etymology

With its fresh scent hard to miss, mint was undoubtedly one of the earliest herbs discovered. It has been found in Egyptian tombs dating back to 1,000 BCE and has been part of Chinese medicine even longer. Ancient Romans and Greeks used mint to flavor cordials and fruit compotes, as well as for baths and perfumes.

Mexicans call mint "yerba buena" or "good herb."

The United States produces over 70 percent of the world's peppermint and spearmint.

The word "mint" comes from the Old English "minte," from German "minze," from the Greek "minthē."

Anatomy

The mint plant is from the *Mentha* genus. It is an aromatic perennial herb. The plants can grow 4 to 48 inches tall and have runners below and above ground that can spread.

There are 18 to 24 species of mint currently recognized. Other mints are natural hybrids and cultivated hybrids. Some herbs with "mint" names, like cat mint (catnip), are not part of the *Mentha* genus.

Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) is also known as common garden mint. Peppermint (*Mentha × piperita*) is a natural hybrid cross between spearmint and watermint (*Mentha aquatica*).

How to Pick, Buy, & Use

Mint is easy to grow at home or can be purchased at the grocery store. You can keep a bunch of fresh mint in a glass of water for up to two days.

Mint is harvested for its leaves, fresh or dried, for many culinary uses to add a cool, refreshing flavor. Foods that mint is added to include beverages, candies, ice cream, jellies, meat dishes, sauces, syrups, and teas.

Mint essential oil and menthol are added as flavoring to breath fresheners, candy, chocolate, drinks, gums, and toothpaste. It can also be used for aromatherapy.

Mint pairs well with these foods: asparagus, beans, carrots, cucumbers, eggplant, peas, potatoes, tomatoes, and yogurt. You can combine mint with these herbs and spices: basil, clove, cumin, dill, ginger, oregano, parsley, and thyme.

Nutrition

Although mint has some health benefits, it is best to eat it in moderation.

Mint has small amounts of vitamins A and C, along with the minerals calcium and iron.

Mint may aid in digestion, but if you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), it may aggravate symptoms.