

Mint Many Ways

Recipes from Laurel Oak Garden Center

Mojito Mint and Pea Soup

Mojito mint is, of course, excellent in the classic cocktail, but it also pairs well with peas. This soup is great on its own, but the addition of crème fraîche lends a rich buttery note to the fresh, bright flavors of the peas and mint. The mint oil also compliments the star ingredient: Mojito mint!

For the Soup:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
½ Leek, cleaned and diced (about ¾ cup)
1 Large garlic clove, crushed
1 Quart water
⅓ Cup packed Mojito mint leaves
16 oz of frozen or fresh peas
Salt and black pepper to taste
Crème Fraîche
Mint oil (recipe follows)
Pea tendrils and chive blossoms, for garnish (optional)

1. Clean and trim the leek, then chop in a medium dice.
2. Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a pot, then add the leeks and crushed garlic and turn the heat down to medium low. Sweat the leeks until tender, about 10 minutes.
3. While the leeks and garlic are cooking, pick the mint leaves and tender stems from the plant and wash thoroughly, then pat dry.
4. When the leeks and garlic are tender, add the water, mint, and peas to the pot. Adjust the heat to high and bring to a simmer. Cook until the peas are tender, about 5-8 minutes. The goal is for the peas to be tender, but not mushy and discolored—the longer you cook the soup at this stage, the less beautiful bright green the finished product will be.
5. Season with salt and pepper, then transfer to a blender and purée until smooth. An immersion blender can also be used for a more rustic texture.
6. Return the blended soup to the pot and adjust seasoning to your taste. Tip: if you are using frozen peas, try 1 teaspoon of granulated sugar to mimic the sweetness of freshly shelled peas.
7. Serve hot with a swirl of crème fraîche and mint oil. Garnish with pea tendrils and chive blossoms.

For the Mint Oil:

1 Small handful Mojito mint leaves (about 2 Tablespoons)
¼ Cup extra virgin olive oil

1. Pick leaves and tender stems from plant and wash thoroughly, then pat dry.
2. Chop the mint finely and add to the olive oil. You can also purée in a blender.
3. The mint oil can be strained if preferred. Allow the mixture to infuse for at least 8 hours at room temperature before straining.

Pineapple Mint Granita

545 g/1.2 pounds fresh pineapple chunks (roughly 3 ½ cups) *

Juice of 1 small lemon (roughly 2 Tablespoons)

1 small handful Pineapple mint leaves (roughly 2 Tablespoons)

2 Tablespoons granulated sugar

Pinch of sea salt

1. Combine the pineapple, lemon juice, mint, sugar, and a pinch of sea salt in a blender. Purée until thick and very smooth. It's okay if there are still specks of mint visible.
2. Adjust balance of sweetness and acidity (add more lemon juice or more sugar to your taste).
3. Transfer the mixture to an 8x8" glass baking dish (avoid metal, as you will be scraping the pan with a fork). The mixture will be about a ½" thickness.
4. Find a flat space in your freezer and freeze, uncovered, until the edges are firm and icy, about 45 minutes.
5. Fluff the semi-frozen granita with a fork from the edges into the center and return to the freezer for another ½ hour. Repeat this step every ½ hour until the granita is fully frozen but still flaky and fluffy, about 3 more times.
6. Fluff once more with a fork, then serve. This granita pairs well with a shot of tequila, rum, whipped cream, or just a sprig of pineapple mint.

*It is difficult to measure chunks of pineapple by cups, so this recipe also offers weight measurements.

Banana Mint Milkshake

1 Small handful Banana mint leaves (roughly 2 Tablespoons)

1 Large banana, frozen

1 Cup milk (dairy or non-dairy, whatever you like)

1 Large scoop vanilla bean ice cream or frozen yogurt

1. Pick leaves and tender stems from plant and wash thoroughly, then pat dry.
2. Combine all ingredients in a blender and purée until smooth. Add more milk if a thinner milkshake is desired.
3. Garnish with more Banana mint leaves.