



Get to know: Coriander



Also known as cilantro or Chinese parsley, Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is a soft leafy herb that is used in a variety of cuisines. Every part of the coriander plant is edible. The seeds and the leaves are most commonly used in cooking, but the roots are also used in Asian cuisine. Coriander is native to southern Europe, northern Africa, and southwestern Asia.

Nutrition

100g of coriander leaves contains 23 calories, 0.5g of fat, 2.8g of dietary fibre, and 0.9g of sugar. Coriander contains no cholesterol or saturated fat. Overall, coriander is very nutritious with little health risk.

Fun Facts

Most people would characterize the taste and smell of coriander as refreshing and reminiscent of lemon or lime. However, some people have a very different experience, describing the smell and taste as soapy or rotten. This difference in perception is thought to be due to the gene OR6A2, which controls sensitivity to certain smells.

About half a litre of coriander was found in Tutankhamen's tomb. Since coriander does not grow wild in Egypt, this suggests that the ancient Egyptians cultivated coriander.

Coriander seeds are used in brewing certain kinds of beer to add a citrus character.

Health Benefits

Coriander is a very good source of Vitamin A – 100g of coriander leaves contains 134% of your recommended daily value. That 100g also contains 45% of your recommended daily value of Vitamin C and 14% of your daily value of potassium. Acids found in coriander, such as lineolic acid, oleic acid, and palmitic acid, help to lower the levels of bad cholesterol (LDL) and raise the levels of good cholesterol (HDL) in your body.

source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coriander, <https://www.organicfacts.net/health-benefits/herbs-and-spices/health-benefits-of-coriander.html>

image: <http://www.thespicemarket.in/coriander-leaf-seeds>

What you can try with coriander:

Vietnamese inspired pork and coriander meatball soup

by: Rachel Kelly, from The Guardian

Serves: 2

What You Need:

- 250g pork mince
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 spring onions, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1-2 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
- 1 tsp fish sauce
- vegetable oil
- 2 slices fresh ginger
- 1.25 litres chicken stock
- 1 stick of lemongrass
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 1 star anise
- 1-2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 300-400g dried noodles
- 1 birds eye chilli, finely sliced (to serve)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce

What to do:

1. Blend garlic, spring onions, fish sauce and coriander to a paste. Tip into bowl with beaten egg and pork mince. Scrunch up until well mixed.
2. Form the meatballs - best way to do this is with wet hands - meatballs are easier to roll.
3. Either quickly fry meatballs for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or bake in oven on 180C / Gas Mark 4 for about 10 minutes until partially cooked through.
4. Add stock, lemongrass, garlic, ginger, spring onions, sugar, salt, lime juice, fish sauce and star anise. Simmer for 30 minutes flavours to infuse. Strain broth of aromatics. Taste for seasoning and balance.
5. Add meatballs. Simmer for 15 minutes, or until cooked through.
6. Cook noodles according to instructions. Drain. Refresh under cold water. Drain then tip into bowls and ladle over soup and meatballs.
7. Serve with fresh coriander, chilli and soy sauce.

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/mar/20/coriander-kindzis-satsebela-zhug>

Try these other recipes

- Chickpea and coriander burgers: <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1364634/chickpea-and-coriander-burgers>
- Crispy coriander potatoes: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/aarti-sequeira/crispy-coriander-potatoes-recipe.html>
- 4 cilantro (coriander) cocktails: <http://www.organicauthority.com/juicy-spirits/cilantro-cocktails-recipes.html>