

# OREGANO

## QUICK INFO

- Oregano is a shrubby perennial in USDA hardiness zones 5b and 6a.
- Oregano contains more antioxidants than any culinary herb and more than many vegetables and fruits.
- Oregano is also known as “pizza herb” in the United States.
- With its scent, oregano can deter insects, such as mosquitos, cabbage moths and cucumber beetles, from the garden.

## COOKING TIPS

- Oregano is delicious sprinkled over pizza or stirred into spaghetti.
- Buttered popcorn can be seasoned with a blend of oregano, garlic and thyme.
- Pesto can be made with oregano instead of basil and used as a sauce on fish, shrimp, steak, pasta or chicken.

## OTHER USES

- Oregano leaves and flowers can be infused for tea.
- A delicious Italian herb blend can be created with dried oregano, thyme, basil, parsley, and garlic.
- Oregano makes a lovely, bushy, green plant in a perennial bed.

## STORAGE AND PRESERVATION

- Oregano leaves can be harvested at any time during the growing season and the plant will rejuvenate.
- Oregano leaves can be cleaned and picked and then spread on a towel or cookie sheet to dry. Store in an airtight container out of direct light.
- Oregano is most often used dry in cooking. When using fresh oregano in a recipe, use 2-3 times as much as called for dried.

## GROWING TIPS

- Oregano is native to the Mediterranean region and enjoys a hot, but not too wet climate.

- Oregano prefers full sun to part shade and well-drained soil.
- Divide oregano plants by the roots and replant every few years to ensure a more flavorful herb.
- Frequent cutting back of new growth and pinching off flowers promotes good growth and flavor.

## QUICK & EASY RECIPE

- **Oregano pesto (fresh leaves):** **Ingredients:** 4-6 cloves of garlic, 2 cups of loosely packed oregano leaves, 1 cup fresh parsley, ½ cup lightly toasted nuts (pine nuts, almonds, walnuts), ½ cup grated parmesan cheese, ½ teaspoon lime zest, 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice, 1-2 seeded and finely chopped serrano chiles, and ¼ cup olive oil. Chop the garlic, oregano, parsley, nuts and cheese in a food processor or pound with a mortar and pestle. Add the lime zest and juice and the chopped chiles. Slowly add the oil, adding a little more if necessary to make a thick, green paste. Spoon into half-pint jars and top with a layer of olive oil. The pesto can be stored in the refrigerator for immediate use or in the freezer for 6 months.

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