

# XCentric Ideas



As for the garden of mint, the very  
smell of it alone recovers and  
refreshes our spirits, as the taste stirs  
up our appetite for meat...

Pliny the Elder

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Recipes from the Internet  
All photos my own





## Myth of Mint

Mint is part of Greek mythology and according to legend - "Menthe" originally a nymph and Pluto's lover, angered Pluto's wife, Persephone, who in a fit of rage turned Minthe into a lowly plant, to be trod upon. Pluto, unable to undo the spell, was able to soften it by giving Minthe a sweet scent, which would perfume the air when her leaves were stepped on - thus aromatic herb Mint.

## Health benefits of mint

**Digestion:** *Mint is a good appetizer and promotes digestion, due to its typical aroma. It also soothes the stomach in cases of indigestion, inflammation etc.*

**Nausea & Headache:** *The strong and refreshing aroma of mint is an excellent and quick remedy for nausea. Whenever you feel it, just smell the oil of mint or crushed fresh mint leaves or use any product with mint flavor.*

**Respiratory Disorders, Cough etc.:** *The strong aroma of mint is very effective in opening up congestion of nose, throat, bronchi and lungs, giving relief in respiratory disorders resulting from asthma, cold etc.*

**Skin Care, pimples etc.:** *While mint oil is a good anti septic and anti pruritic, mint juice is an excellent skin cleanser. It soothes skin, cures infections, itching etc., and is also good for pimples.*

**Oral Care:** *This is a well known property of mint. Being a germicidal and breathe freshener, it takes care of oral health by inhibiting harmful bacterial growth inside mouth and by cleaning tongue and teeth.*

**Cancer:** *Current researches show that certain enzymes present in mint may help cure cancer.*

## Mint Varieties

The mint varieties come in a number of good and useful flavors. There is one called Chocolate mint to be used in desserts, Spearmint for drinks, Peppermint for drinks & desserts and Garden mint for general cooking. Pineapple mint is used for salads & cooking.

# Minted pea and yoghurt dip

variety of vegetables cut into dipping-size pieces

## DIP

1 x 200 ml tub of yoghurt

2 handfuls fresh podded peas

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 drops Bandito's Jalapeno Sauce (optional)

1 (or more) handfuls of fresh mint, leaves picked

1 handful of freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 lemon, the juice (1 tbsp)

Blend the yoghurt and mint in a food processor. Add the peas and Parmesan and blend again.

Put in a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and the lemon juice. Sometimes the mixture may separate, but this is absolutely fine. Just pour away any excess water.

*The best way to serve this is to put the dip in a bowl and have a big board next to it with your veggies on. (Use evenly sized baby carrots, radishes, crunchy lettuce leaves and chunks of any other vegetable you fancy.) Have some salt and pepper to hand in case anyone needs some.*



# Yoghurt and Mint Mayonnaise

250 ml good-quality bought mayonnaise

125 ml plain yoghurt (you can add more if it's too tangy)

250 ml mint leaves, washed, dried and chopped



Blend well together.

Use as a dip with fresh carrots and cucumber.

*It goes well with chicken, salmon, lamb or pork .*

*Spread on cucumber sandwiches, burgers or wraps.*

*Pour over peeled, cubed and cooked potatoes and chill.*



# Greek Potato Salad

500 g baby potatoes, scrubbed and halved  
12 cherry tomatoes, halved  
200 g feta cheese, coarsely crumbled  
20 ml chopped fresh mint  
20 ml chopped fresh parsley

## *Dressing*

65 ml olive oil  
30 ml balsamic vinegar  
pinch salt  
salt and black pepper

Beat all the ingredients for the dressing together and set aside. Boil the potatoes in salted water until tender.

Drain and pour the salad dressing over the hot potatoes. Add the tomatoes, baby spinach leaves, feta cheese, pine nuts and herbs. Mix lightly and serve lukewarm.

salt  
200 g baby spinach leaves  
45 ml pine nuts  
20 ml chopped fresh basil



# Avocado and Mint Pasta

300 g avocado flesh  
30 ml olive oil  
salt and milled pepper  
150 g sliced Parma ham or bacon (optional)  
freshly grated Parmesan cheese

45 ml fresh mint  
125 ml crème fraiche or cream  
30 ml lemon juice  
500 g penne, cooked until al dente  
Dried chilli flakes (optional)



Blend avocado, mint, oil, crème fraiche/cream and seasonings until smooth.

Add lemon juice and blend well.

Heat remaining oil in a frying pan and fry bacon quickly on both sides until golden.

Pour avocado sauce over hot penne, top with fried bacon and sprinkle with cheese.

# Cucumber and mint pâté

250 g low-fat smooth cream cheese  
1 cucumber, coarsely grated  
1 lemon (grated rind only)  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
green salad, to serve

200 ml low-fat natural yoghurt  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
25 ml finely chopped fresh mint  
6 pita breads  
radishes, to garnish

Mix the cream cheese, yoghurt, cucumber, garlic, lemon rind and mint. Season well.

Spoon into serving bowls, then cover and chill for at least 1 hour.

Serve with warm pita breads, salad leaves, Cherry tomatoes and radishes.





# Minted Spatchcocks

(*flat chicken*)

45 ml olive oil

1 orange, grated rind

30 ml fresh mint, chopped

4 spatchcocked poussins (baby chicken)

100 ml orange juice

60 ml fruit chutney, strained

15 ml soy sauce



Combine oil, juice, rind, chutney, mint and soy sauce in a large, flat plastic or ceramic container. Add the spatchcocks to marinade. Cover and refrigerate overnight, turning occasionally.

Remove spatchcocks from marinade. Reserve marinade. Cook spatchcocks over an open fire or grill until they are well browned and tender. Brush with reserved marinade during cooking.

*Baby chickens at Thrupps, Illovo,  
Gauteng (www.thruppsillovocentre.co.za -  
011-268 0243)*



# Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies

2 tbsp butter

1/2 cups packed dark brown sugar

1/8 tsp salt

3/4 cup all purpose flour

1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

2 tsp canola oil

1 tsp vanilla

1 large egg white

1/4 tsp baking soda

Handful roughly chopped fresh mint leaves

Preheat oven to 190°C. In a medium bowl, cream together butter, oil and sugar. Add vanilla, salt and egg white; mix thoroughly to combine.

In a small bowl, mix together flour and baking soda; stir into batter. Add chocolate chips and mint leaves to batter; stir to distribute evenly throughout.

Drop rounded half-teaspoons of dough onto one or two large non-stick baking sheets, leaving a small amount of space between each cookie. Bake cookies until golden around edges, about 4 to 6 minutes; cool on a wire rack.

*I didn't think the fresh mint would make such an impact – heavenly!*



# Mint-Infused-Cream Fridge Tart

500 ml plain yoghurt

Muesli

3 tbsp fresh mint, chopped

1 tin condensed milk

250 ml fresh cream



Blend the yoghurt & condensed milk.  
Microwave it on high for 4 minutes.

Pour a layer muesli on bottom of dish.  
Pour the mixture on top and  
refrigerate.

Before serving, whip the cream with a  
few drops of vanilla essence and 1 tsp  
sugar, add the chopped mint and serve.

May your verse be a glorious adventure  
Strewn by the crisp morning air  
Which helps the mint and the thyme grow.  
Everything else is mere literature.

- Verlaine, Paul

