

Spice up your cooking with licorice-scented herbs

July 24 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Love the idea of using more exotic fresh herbs in your

cooking, but not sure where to begin? Thai basil and tarragon are two to try.

Thai basil and tarragon are richly flavored, leafy green herbs—both have the aroma of anise or licorice—that can add interest to mild-tasting vegetables, fruits and proteins as well as sauces, dressings and other condiments.

Often used in Asian cooking, Thai basil pairs well with sweeter flavors like the pineapple in this fruit salsa.

Thai Basil Pineapple Salsa

- 1 cup Thai [basil](#) leaves, chopped
- 1 cup finely chopped pineapple
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
- 1 lime, zested and juiced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl and toss well to combine. Let sit for an hour in the refrigerator to allow the flavors to meld before serving.

Yield: About 2 cups

Tarragon is one of the herbs most essential to French cooking and is often used to make distinctive sauces, like Bearnaise. A sprinkling of the [herb](#), finely chopped, will enhance simply prepared chicken and seafood. It's also the star of this tasty variation of traditional pesto.

Tarragon Almond Pesto

- 1/2 cup almonds
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup each tarragon leaves and flat-leaf (Italian) parsley
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Process almonds, garlic and salt in a food processor until the almonds are well chopped. Add the tarragon and parsley and process until the herbs are finely chopped. With the motor running, slowly add the oil and let the machine run until the mixture emulsifies. Toss with [whole grain pasta](#) or use as a condiment for your favorite grilled protein.

Yield: Enough pesto for 4 pasta or protein servings

More information: CookingMatters.org has more ideas on [cooking with herbs](#) and spices.

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Citation: Spice up your cooking with licorice-scented herbs (2019, July 24) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-07-spice-cooking-licorice-scented-herbs.html>

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