

ASK THE NUTE GURU

THE NUTE (NUTRITION) GURU IMPARTS WISDOM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL, WHOLE-FOODS NUTRITION FOR MIND/BODY WELLNESS.

Q

Hey Nute Guru, I have found a whole new appreciation for mint! I've even been growing it in my garden. However, now I am completely overrun with mint! What are some ways I can use all of this fresh mint?

A

I'm glad you asked! Mint can get out of hand if growing unchecked in the garden. I tend to grow it in it's own pot to keep it from taking over my other herbs. The good news is that Mint has so many health benefits! Other than making killer mojitos, here are a few ideas to get some of that mint under control!

With its distinctively spicy taste and invigorating scent, mint is often an ingredient in gum, candy or tea, but people also eat it fresh. Fresh mint leaves add flavor and nutrition to many different recipes, and chewing on whole leaves may have certain health benefits and ward off some medical conditions.

Vitamins and Minerals

Fresh mint, including spearmint and peppermint, contains several key vitamins and minerals you need for good health, though they're not present in huge amounts. For example, fresh mint contains trace amounts of iron, a mineral you need to make red blood cells. Mint also has small amounts of fiber, vitamin A and potassium.

Antioxidant Power

One of the primary benefits of fresh mint is that it contains potent antioxidants. Peppermint, for example, has perillyl alcohol, which might stop the formation or spread of cancer, according to Michael T. Murray and Joseph E. Pizzorno, authors of "The Encyclopedia of Healing Foods." Peppermint also contains another antioxidant called rosmarinic acid, which can help prevent and treat certain allergies.

Digestive Benefits

Eating fresh mint leaves might help promote digestion, according to Murray and Pizzorno. Mint, most notably peppermint, also acts as a carminative, which means it can help ease gas and its associated symptoms. Peppermint makes the flow of bile more efficient, which means that you digest your food more quickly, and it also helps relax the muscles in your digestive tract, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Fresh Mint In Your Diet

Chop fresh mint leaves and scatter them over a tossed green or grilled chicken salad. The leaves will add trace amounts of nutrients as well as a bold flavor. Stir chopped mint into meatballs and serve the cooked meat on leafy greens with a drizzle of sesame or olive oil. Add chopped mint leaves to brewed iced tea or lemonade or stir them into fruit salad. If you want to use mint for nausea, talk to your doctor first, especially if you have gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, cautions the University of Maryland Medical Center. Peppermint can exacerbate symptoms of GERD, because it can cause stomach acids to come back up the esophagus.

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/249915-what-are-the-benefits-of-eating-whole-mint-leaves/>

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