



Basil adds just the right zest to many dishes that would otherwise be mundane.

## Keep the grill glowing with vegetable kabobs

For an out-of-the-ordinary barbecue try Rumaki-Vegetable Kebabs. Similar to popular Rumaki appetizers, these skewers of bacon, chicken livers, water chestnuts, zucchini, onion and corn-on-the-cob make for a delightfully different kind of brochette.

Each skewer is well basted with a full-flavored barbecue sauce. Made with convenient pantry staples such as tomato sauce and tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar,

and mustard, this sauce can be made at any time and used to top a wide variety of barbecued foods.

### RUMAKI-VEGETABLE KEBABS (Makes 6 skewers)

Make six 8-inch Rumaki-Vegetable Kebabs using 6 thick slices bacon, 1 pound chicken livers, water chestnuts, and 1-inch pieces of zucchini, onion, and corn-on-the-cob.

Weave bacon around livers, water chestnuts, and vegetables until skewers as needed until liver is cooked.

### BARBECUE SAUCE

2 crushed garlic cloves  
2 tsp. oil  
2 cups (two 8-oz. cans) tomato sauce  
1/2 cup (6-oz. can) tomato paste  
1/2 cup elder vinegar  
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
1/2 cup Worcestershire sauce  
2 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. pepper  
1 bay leaf

Saute garlic in oil in medium saucepan. Add remaining ingredients; mix thoroughly. Boil gently, uncovered, 30 minutes. Remaining sauce may be stored in refrigerator.

The adventurous cooks are learning more about tantalizing recipes calling for basil: the justifiably famous pesto sauce, basil-scented vinaigrettes, appealing combinations of basil and long-awaited garden vegetables.

Many cooks are intrigued by the enthusiastic descriptions of this glorious culinary herb only to discover they can't find it in a grocery-

The only guarantee against this maddening situation is to grow your own. They can be accommodated in one, small square foot of garden space or inside plant pots. Then all they need is a generous amount of sunlight, six hours per day minimum, and a little tending to produce a crop all summer.

Young plants are remarkably sturdy and can go into the garden with as few as four leaves if they are properly hardened off, which means exposed gradually to outside conditions by spending an increasing amount of time outdoors for a few days.

Plant seedlings 8 to 12 inches apart. Treat them to a side dressing of balanced fertilizer about two weeks after setting out and again after major harvests and you will be rewarded with lush growth.

WHEN BASIL plants are about 6" tall, pinch out the growing tip. This will give you your first tasty leaves and encourage bushy, high-producing plants. Once plants are growing well, cut the herb as you need it picking a few growing tips for seasoning use or cutting back to about four leaf nodes above the ground for major harvests such as pesto-making or preserving. You can plan on two or three major cuttings a season.

Basil is an annual, meaning a plant that completes its reproductive cycle by setting seed in a single season. That's not what you want the plant to do. But it's not what you want the plant to do because as soon as it throws a flowering stalk it will put all its energy into producing seed and you want it to continue to produce leaves. So when the flower stalk appears, pinch it out; you'll easily recognize it by its closely spaced floret petals.

Most garden-store seed racks will offer only the basic, sweet basil, *Ocimum basilicum*. This is a fine one to plant as an all-purpose type. The plants will grow 2' high.

FRENCH FINE leaf basil is basil-

ic fin vert in its native tongue and *Ocimum basilicum* var. minimum botanically. Its leaves are a tenth or less the size of standard, sweet basil. Its flavor is slightly milder, making it an excellent choice for inclusion in the salad bowl and seasoning light butter and cream sauces.

The Italian piccolo verde fino (*Ocimum basilicum* var. 'piccolo') has an immediate-size leaf. A well-tended plant can grow 2 1/2' tall and nearly as wide. This is the most forthright of the basils with a bright, assertive flavor. It is the best of all basils for pesto and also an excellent flavoring for soups.

Always add basil to cooked dishes for the last few minutes of cooking only; overexposure to heat diminishes the flavor of all basils, particularly this one.

Lettuce leaf basil, *Ocimum basilicum* crispum, is a slightly lighter green and has a mild but true basil taste. The plant is shorter than sweet basil but the curly leaves can be enormous, as large as 8" long by 4" wide. They are wavy, puckered and gorgeous. Use lettuce leaf basil generously for garnishing. It makes an excellent salad green and a wonderful wrapper for tabbouleh.

NEWCOMERS to basil are surprised to discover the purple basil, *Ocimum basilicum* purpurascens var. 'dark opal'. This is a less vigorous grower than the green types, reaching about 15".

It is beautiful in the garden but it tends to flower quickly so you have to manage the plants carefully. Dark opal basil can be used in any recipe where its color would be welcome; its best use is for making a beautiful, ruby-colored vinegar with a heavenly flavor.

Only recently have American cooks begun to explore the possibilities of lemon basil, a natural hybrid of the *O. canum* of the African continent and *O. b. var. purpurascens* of Northwestern India. A lemon basil plant that loves its site can grow 2' tall but it will more often hover around 1'.

This basil, too, is quick to flower and must be watched carefully but its piquant, lemon taste is worth the effort. Use lemon basil to flavor fish or chicken dishes, add at the last minute to stir fries of peas or mixed summer vegetables and reserve some for lemon basil vinegar.

These are the most versatile and best-tasting of the basils. There are more including varieties flavored

strongly of cinnamon, licorice and camphor but they are novelties of interest primarily to the herb enthusiast.

You can be sure there'll be basil recipes you'll want to try. Tabbouleh Wrapped in Lettuce Leaf Basil

6 oz Bulgur  
1 cup curly parsley, coarsely chopped  
1 cup mint leaves, coarsely chopped  
1 cup sweet onions, coarsely chopped  
1/2 cup chives, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 1/2 cup basil (any type), chopped  
5 tomatoes, preferably Roma or other paste type, chopped  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
1 1/2 cup olive oil  
25 lettuce leaf basil leaves, large  
25 assorted oriental garlic chives, optional

In a large bowl, combine the bulgur, parsley, mint, onions, chives, garlic, chopped basil and tomatoes and mix well. Emulsify the oil and lemon juice with a whisk or in a blender or food processor and pour over the tabbouleh mixture. Cover and refrigerate at least 6 hours or up to 24 hours, stirring occasionally. All of the dressing should be absorbed.

To assemble, place 2 tablespoons of tabbouleh at edge of each basil leaf near the stem end. Roll into a fat cigar shape. If desired, tie packets with a strand of chives. Alternately, serve tabbouleh in a bowl surrounded by the basil leaves and let guests serve themselves.

Yield: 25 servings

### CHARCOAL GRILLED LEG OF LAMB WITH BASIL AND MUSTARD

3 lb Leg of lamb, boneless  
1 1/2 cup basil leaves  
2 tsp. Dijon mustard  
2 tsp. onion or shallot, minced  
2 tsp. olive oil  
2 tsp. peppercorns, cracked  
1/4 tsp. sea salt or kosher salt

Remove any silver (whitish muscle coating) and excess fat from meat. Mince basil with a knife and combine with remaining ingredients. Rub mixture well into meat and let marinate at room temperature at least 2 hours.

Grill 6 inches from coals. For medium, rare, 12 minutes per side. These timings are for a piece of meat 2 inches at its thickest point; adjust appropriately. Yield: 8-10 servings.

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