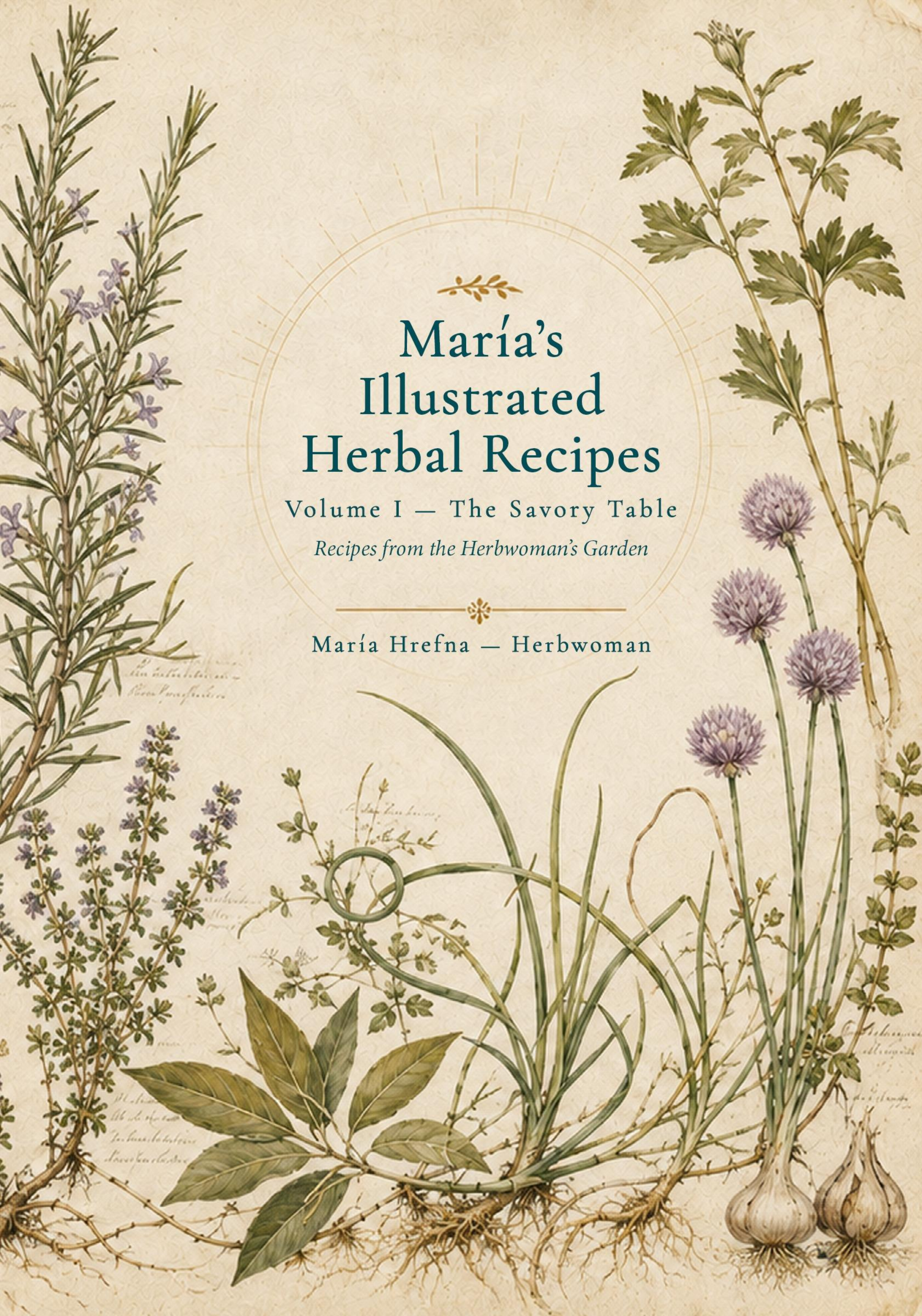




María's Illustrated Herbal Recipes

Volume I — The Savory Table

Recipes from the Herbwoman's Garden

María Hrefna — Herbwoman

María's Illustrated Herbal Recipes
First Edition



Falkasete Publishing



María's Illustrated Herbal Recipes

Volume I — Kitchen: The Savory Table

MARÍA HREFNA
the Herbwoman

FALKASETE PUBLISHING

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The recipes in this book describe traditional and culinary uses of plants. They are shared as heritage and food culture, not as medical advice.

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*I wrote the book to my beautiful and precious family:
My husband Nils, my daughter Mari and my son Sveinn and to all of
my grandchildren, current and future.
May their life be full of beauty and prosperity till the end of time.*

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Foreword

When I was twelve, I had read nearly every book in my hometown library. Ever since, wherever in the world I have travelled, I have brought home only books — and almost always recipe books. This, I now understand, is the book I was collecting toward all along.

I did not always know that food is medicine. I gathered herbs, I brewed remedies, I taught what the old people knew — and still the deepest truth stood quietly beside me for years without my seeing it: that the surest medicine is not what we reach for when we are ill, but what we set on the table every ordinary day.

My own body taught me this, in the hardest way a body can. I live with leiomyosarcoma — a rare cancer that has spread, and for which there is no cure. I will not pretend to know what caused it; no one can know that. But I have asked myself, more than once in the quiet hours, whether the road might have run differently had I understood sooner what clean, whole food builds in a body — how it strengthens the very ground we stand on, long before any sickness comes looking. That question has no answer. So I have given it a purpose instead.

I cannot cure myself. But I can teach. These five volumes are my purpose made practical: not a promise of healing, for no honest book makes that promise — but an invitation to prevention. Fill your kitchen with food that leaves the body no debts. Begin years before you think you need to. Begin at the table — for the table is the first apothecary, and I want you never to need the last one.

— *María Hrefna, Falkasete, Finnøy*



Soups & Stews

Every garden ends in a pot, and every pot begins a meal.



Asparagus & pea spring soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1200 g

A vivid green spring soup built on asparagus and peas, softened with leek and finished with lemon and mint. Smooth, light and full of folate and fibre — a bowl of early-season green.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears
250 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Peas, fresh or frozen
120 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leek, washed and sliced
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
800 g	Vegetable stock
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
5 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint leaves
4 g	Salt & pepper — Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Snap the woody ends off the asparagus. Cut off the tips and set aside; slice the stems into 2 cm pieces.
2. Soften the sliced leek in the olive oil in a saucepan over gentle heat for 5-6 minutes without colouring.
3. Add the asparagus stems and the stock, bring to a simmer and cook 8-10 minutes until tender.
4. Add the peas and the reserved asparagus tips and cook a further 3-4 minutes until just tender and still green.
5. Blend until smooth (reserve a few tips to garnish if you like). Stir in lemon juice, season, and finish with torn mint.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The lemon arrived in the Mediterranean world via Arab traders in the 10th–12th centuries; by 1150 it was established in Spain and southern Italy.



Ba Ji Tian Warming Tonic Broth

Food / culinary • Makes ~210 g

A gentle restorative broth in the Chinese soup-medicine tradition, using morinda root to warm and tonify after cold, tired spells.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Dried morinda root (ba ji tian) (<i>Morinda officinalis</i>) — Central woody core already removed.
200 g	Lean pork or chicken pieces — Omit for a vegetarian broth.
1 tbsp	Dried goji berries (<i>Lycium barbarum</i>) — Adds sweetness and colour.
3 slices	Fresh ginger slices (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Enhances the warming character.
1 l	Water — Enough to cover ingredients.

METHOD

1. Rinse the morinda root and goji berries.
2. Blanch the meat briefly in boiling water, then drain.
3. Place all ingredients in a pot with the water and bring to a boil.
4. Reduce to a low simmer and cook, covered, for about 1.5 hours.
5. Strain, season lightly with salt and serve the broth warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known as Ba Ji Tian, one of the classical yang-tonifying herbs of the Chinese materia medica, recorded since the Shennong Ben Cao Jing and used for impotence, infertility and weak lower back and knees.

BAMIA — ARABIC OKRA & LAMB STEW (بامية)

Food / culinary • Makes 5 servings

A classic of the Levantine and Egyptian table — tender lamb and whole baby okra simmered in a garlicky tomato sauce, finished with a taqliya of crushed garlic and fresh coriander and a squeeze of lemon or a drizzle of pomegranate molasses, served over vermicelli rice. Okra — *bāmiya* (بامية) — is treasured across the Arab world.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>) — Choose small tender pods; trim the cap in a cone without cutting into the pod to keep it silky.
500 g	Lamb shoulder, cubed (or beef) — For a vegetarian bamia, skip the meat and add 250 g more okra plus a tin of chickpeas.
30 g	Ghee (samna) or olive oil
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
20 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Use half in the base and half in the finishing taqliya.
30 g	Tomato paste (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
400 g	Ripe tomatoes, chopped (or passata) (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
600 g	Lamb stock or water
30 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — The garlic-and-coriander taqliya stirred in at the end is the soul of the dish.
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Egyptian style uses lemon; Levantine often uses pomegranate molasses (dibs rumman).
4 g	Baharat / seven-spice
10 g	Sea salt and black pepper — To taste.

METHOD

- Trim the okra caps in a small cone without cutting into the pods to keep the stew silky; for extra silkiness, toss the pods in a little oil and roast or fry 5–8 minutes first, then set aside.
- Brown the lamb in the ghee in batches and set aside; soften the onion in the same pot, add half the garlic and cook 1 minute.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Onion is one of humanity’s oldest cultivated and most everyday plants, eaten and used as a folk remedy across nearly every culture.

3. Stir in the tomato paste and cook 2 minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes, baharat, browned lamb and stock; cover and simmer 1–1½ hours until the lamb is tender.
4. Add the okra and simmer gently, stirring as little as possible, for 20–30 minutes until just tender.
5. Make the taqliya by frying the remaining crushed garlic with the chopped coriander in a little ghee until fragrant, then stir it into the stew with the lemon juice or pomegranate molasses.
6. Taste, season with salt and pepper, and serve hot over vermicelli rice with warm flatbread and extra lemon.

Borage Leaf & Potato Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A simple, sustaining soup that has fed Ligurian families for generations — borage leaves cooked like a pot-herb in good stock with potato give a soup that is mildly flavoured, iron-rich, and silky-smooth. Cooked borage leaves lose their bristles entirely and behave much like spinach or chard, with a clean, slightly mineral flavour. This is everyday cucina povera at its best: nutritious, seasonal, and requiring only what the garden gives.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Young borage leaves (fresh, washed) (<i>Borago officinalis</i>) — Young leaves preferred; older leaves (from mature plant) also work when cooked
400 g	Waxy potato (e.g. Charlotte or new potato) (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
120 g	White onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
10 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
40 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1000 g	Vegetable stock (or light chicken stock)
5 g	Sea salt, black pepper, freshly grated nutmeg (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash the borage leaves well. No need to remove bristles — cooking eliminates them completely.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic; sauté gently for 8 minutes until softened and just golden.
3. Add the diced potato, stir for 2 minutes.
4. Pour in the hot stock, bring to a simmer. Cook 10 minutes until potato is beginning to soften.
5. Add the borage leaves (torn or roughly chopped if large). Simmer for 8–10 minutes until potato and borage are completely tender.
6. Season with salt, pepper, and a grating of nutmeg.
7. For smooth soup: blitz with a hand blender until velvety. For chunky texture: mash some potato roughly with a spoon.
8. Ladle into bowls, finish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and Parmigiano if desired. Serve with good bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Borage has been prized since antiquity for its striking blue flowers and purported mood-lifting properties.

Borscht — Eastern European beetroot soup

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

The iconic ruby soup of Ukraine, Poland and Russia: beetroot simmered with cabbage, carrot, onion and potato in a savoury broth, brightened with a little acid and finished with a swirl of soured cream and fresh dill. A nourishing, fibre- and folate-rich way to eat beetroot as real food.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>)
300 g	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i>)
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
8 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>)
250 g	Potato, peeled and diced (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
1500 g	Vegetable or beef stock
20 g	Cider or wine vinegar (or lemon juice)
20 g	Sunflower or olive oil
120 g	Soured cream, to serve
6 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pot; soften the onion and carrot 5 minutes, then add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
2. Add the stock, diced potato and shredded cabbage; simmer 15 minutes.
3. Add the grated or diced beetroot with the vinegar or lemon juice (the acid keeps the colour vivid); simmer 20-25 minutes until all vegetables are tender.
4. Season with salt, stir in most of the dill, and simmer 2 minutes more.
5. Ladle into bowls, top each with a spoonful of soured cream and the remaining dill. Serve with dark rye bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carrots were once purple and white; the familiar orange root was bred for its beauty, not for its taste.

Broccoli & cheddar soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A comforting, family-friendly soup that uses a whole head of broccoli — stalk and all. Onion and a little garlic build the base; mature cheddar makes it rich. A gentle way to eat a generous portion of greens.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), flower — Broccoli, head and peeled stalk, chopped
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped (~1 medium)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, chopped (~2 cloves)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil or butter
900 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — Vegetable or chicken stock (~900 ml)
100 g	Mature cheddar cheese — Mature cheddar, grated
4 g	Salt and black pepper — Salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Soften the onion and garlic in the oil or butter over medium heat 5–6 minutes without browning.
2. Add the chopped broccoli and stock, bring to a simmer and cook 8–10 minutes until the broccoli is tender (do not over-cook, to keep the colour fresh).
3. Blend until smooth (or leave a little texture). Return to low heat, stir in most of the grated cheddar until melted, and season.
4. Serve hot, topped with the remaining cheese.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The olive has been central to Mediterranean civilisation for thousands of years — a symbol of peace, victory and abundance.

Cantonese Jigucao Liver-Soothing Soup (with Pork & Adzuki)

Food / culinary • Makes 2000 ml

A classic Lingnan “old-fire” soup (*lou fo tong*) from Guangdong and Guangxi, simmering de-podded Jigucao with lean pork, adzuki beans (*chi xiao dou*), red dates and ginger. Traditionally taken as a summer “cooling” soup to soothe the liver and clear damp-heat, especially after rich food or alcohol.

INGREDIENTS

38 g	Jigucao (<i>Abrus cantoniensis</i> whole herb, de-podded, dried)
38 g	Adzuki bean / <i>chi xiao dou</i> (<i>Vigna umbellata/ angularis</i>)
20 g	Red dates / jujube (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>), pitted
6 g	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), sliced
110 g	Lean pork (food base)
2000 g	Water

METHOD

1. Rinse the Jigucao, adzuki beans and red dates.
2. Blanch the pork briefly in boiling water to remove impurities, then drain and rinse.
3. Combine all the ingredients with the water in a large pot; bring to the boil.
4. Skim off any scum, then reduce the heat and simmer gently, covered, 1.5-2 hours.
5. Season lightly with salt at the end. Serve the broth warm as a soup course; the herb itself is usually not eaten.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ginger was carried by sailors against the sea-sickness, and by lovers as a small warm promise.

Carrot & ginger soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1200 g

A smooth, warming soup of carrots simmered with onion, garlic and fresh ginger, then blended silky. Comforting, naturally sweet and rich in carotenoids.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrots, peeled and chopped
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped (~1 medium)
15 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, grated
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, chopped (~3 cloves)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
900 g	Vegetable stock — Vegetable stock (~900 ml)
4 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, freshly ground

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a large pot and gently sweat the onion with a pinch of salt until soft and translucent, about 8 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and grated ginger and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add the chopped carrots and the stock, bring to a simmer and cook 20–25 minutes until the carrots are very tender.
4. Blend until completely smooth, then season with salt and pepper. Loosen with a little hot water or stock if needed.
5. Serve hot with a swirl of olive oil or yoghurt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Hunger is the best cook.

Chilled beetroot & dill soup (summer borscht)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

A vivid pink, cooling summer soup in the Eastern European cold-borscht tradition (*chlodnik* / *šaltibarščiai*): cooked beetroot and cucumber blitzed or stirred into kefir or yoghurt, sharpened with lemon and showered with fresh dill. Refreshing, nourishing and beautiful.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>) — Cooked beetroot, peeled and grated or diced
15 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Fresh dill, chopped
150 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, diced
500 g	Kefir or thin plain yoghurt — Kefir or buttermilk/ yoghurt thinned with water
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed
4 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Put the kefir (or thinned yoghurt) in a large bowl and stir in the grated cooked beetroot until the soup turns deep pink.
2. Stir in the diced cucumber, crushed garlic, lemon juice and most of the chopped dill. Season with salt.
3. Chill thoroughly for at least an hour. Serve cold, topped with the remaining dill.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Garlic was given to the workers who raised the pyramids, thought to keep both their strength and their courage up.

Chilled cucumber, yoghurt & mint soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A no-cook chilled summer soup blending cucumber with yoghurt, mint, garlic and lemon — cool, hydrating and ready in minutes. Close cousin to Bulgarian tarator and Persian aab-doogh-khiar. A refreshing, food-first way to use a glut of cucumbers.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>), fruit
10 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
1 count	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To taste
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
300 g	Plain yoghurt
100 g	Cold water — To loosen
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Roughly chop the cucumber (peel first if the skin is thick or bitter).
2. Put the cucumber, yoghurt, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, mint, water and salt in a blender.
3. Blend until smooth, or leave lightly textured to taste.
4. Chill thoroughly, at least 1 hour.
5. Serve cold, garnished with extra mint and a drizzle of olive oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mint has been cultivated and valued around the Mediterranean since antiquity. The Greek name minthe gave rise to the genus name *Mentha*, from the myth of the nymph Minthe transformed into the sweet-smelling herb.

Chilled lettuce, cucumber & pea soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A cooling, pale-green summer soup that makes a virtue of lettuce that has begun to bolt or wilt. Lettuce, cucumber and peas are simmered briefly, blended smooth and chilled — light, fresh and a clever way to avoid wasting leaves.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) — Lettuce (any type, incl. bolting/outer leaves), shredded
200 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, roughly chopped
200 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Petits pois (fresh or frozen)
50 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Spring onions, sliced
600 g	Vegetable stock
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
3 g	Sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Soften the spring onion in the olive oil in a saucepan, 2-3 minutes.
2. Add the peas, chopped cucumber and stock; bring to a simmer and cook 5 minutes.
3. Add the shredded lettuce and cook just 1-2 minutes more so it keeps its fresh green colour.
4. Blend until smooth; season with salt and pepper and stir in the lemon juice.
5. Chill thoroughly and serve cold, with a swirl of yoghurt or a drizzle of olive oil if you like.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Black pepper has been one of the world's most valued spices for over two thousand years.

Chinese Mung Bean Cooling Soup (Lu Dou Tang)

Food / culinary • Makes ~1500 ml

A centuries-old summer-heat remedy: sweet mung bean soup enjoyed warm or chilled.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Dried mung beans (<i>Vigna radiata</i>)
1500 ml	Water
30 g	Rock sugar — optional
1 piece	Dried tangerine peel (<i>Citrus reticulata</i>) — optional

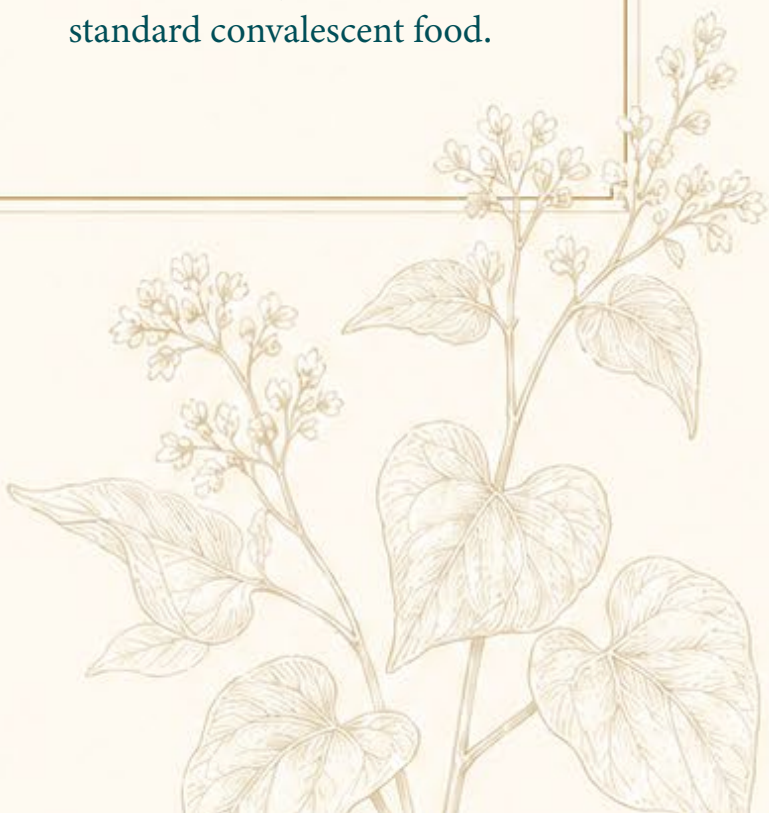
METHOD

1. Rinse beans and add to water.
2. Bring to a boil, then simmer until beans soften and split and the liquid turns green.
3. Stir in rock sugar and tangerine peel if using.
4. Serve warm or chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mung bean soup (‘lu dou tang’) is a centuries-old Chinese summer remedy for heat exhaustion; in Ayurveda, moong dal is considered the most easily digested pulse and a standard convalescent food.



Classic French Cream of Sorrel Soup (Potage à l'Oseille)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A cornerstone of French spring cooking, this silky green soup showcases sorrel's bright, lemony tartness balanced by cream and potato. The recipe has roots in medieval French herb soups and was elevated to classic status in 17th-century French cuisine. Sorrel wilts down to a fraction of its volume and turns the soup a beautiful pale jade-green colour. Serve as a first course or light lunch.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Common sorrel leaves, fresh, stems removed (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), leaf
30 g	Unsalted butter
80 g	Shallot (1 large), finely sliced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
300 g	Floury potato (2 medium), peeled and diced (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
1000 g	Vegetable or chicken stock (1 litre)
100 g	Double cream or crème fraîche (100 ml, density 1.0 g/ml)
5 g	Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	White pepper, to taste (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Melt 30 g butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add 1 large shallot (finely sliced) and cook gently for 5 minutes until softened but not coloured.
2. Add 2 medium potatoes (peeled and diced, approximately 300 g) and 1 litre vegetable or chicken stock. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15–20 minutes until potato is fully tender.
3. Add 250 g fresh sorrel leaves (washed, thick stems removed) to the hot soup — they will wilt and discolour rapidly to an olive-green. Stir and cook for just 1 minute.
4. Remove from heat and blend with an immersion blender (or in batches in a jug blender) until very smooth. Pass through a sieve for a silkier texture if desired.
5. Return to low heat. Stir in 100 ml double cream or crème fraîche. Season generously with fine sea salt and white pepper. Do not boil once cream is added.
6. Ladle into warmed bowls. Garnish with a swirl of extra cream and a few snipped chives or tiny sorrel leaves. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sorrel has been gathered and eaten since at least Neolithic times. Greek and Roman writers including Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder noted its use as a food plant and mild digestive remedy.

Classic Watercress Soup

Food / culinary • Makes ~700 ml

A silky, peppery green soup that captures watercress at its freshest, vivid in colour and gently warming, a nourishing bowl for cool days and a fine way to eat this vitamin-rich green.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Watercress (<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>) — Washed, tough stalks trimmed
1 medium	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Peeled and diced, to thicken
1 small	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Chopped
700 ml	Vegetable or chicken stock
1 tbsp	Butter or oil
1 pinch	Salt and pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a pot and soften the onion gently for a few minutes without browning.
2. Add the diced potato and the stock, bring to a boil, then simmer 12-15 minutes until the potato is tender.
3. Add most of the watercress (reserving a few sprigs) and cook just 1-2 minutes to keep the colour bright.
4. Blend until smooth, season with salt and pepper, and reheat gently without boiling.
5. Serve garnished with the reserved watercress and an optional swirl of cream.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Eaten since antiquity: Greeks and Romans prized it for the mind and as a restorative; it was a staple of Victorian working-class breakfasts sold as bunched ‘creases’ and long valued as a spring cleansing green.

Cock-a-leekie soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1800 g

Scotland’s ancient leek-and-chicken broth, traditionally enriched with a little barley and (classically) a few prunes for a sweet counterpoint. A hearty, nourishing one-pot in which leek is the defining vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leeks, white & green, sliced and washed (~4 medium)
600 g	Chicken — Chicken (bone-in thighs or a small boiling fowl)
60 g	Pearl barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>) — Pearl barley, rinsed
80 g	Prunes (<i>Prunus domestica</i>) — Pitted prunes, optional (traditional)
1500 g	Water/stock — Water or light chicken stock
6 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
2 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Put the chicken in a large pot with the water/stock, bring to a simmer and skim. Add the barley and about half the leeks. Simmer gently, partly covered, for about 1 hour until the chicken is tender.
2. Lift out the chicken; when cool enough, strip the meat, discard skin and bones, and return the meat to the pot.
3. Add the remaining leeks (and the prunes, if using) and simmer a further 20–30 minutes until everything is soft and the broth is rich.
4. Season with salt and plenty of pepper and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

One of the most anciently cultivated alliums: leeks were eaten in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia and were a staple of the Roman table — the emperor Nero reputedly ate them to clear his voice, earning the nickname Porrophagus (‘leek-eater’).

Cock-a-leekie — Scottish leek and chicken broth with prunes and barley

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

Scotland’s national soup: a beautifully simple, deeply nourishing broth of chicken, leeks, pearl barley, and the surprising sweet-sharp addition of prunes, attested in Scottish records from 1598 and served at Burns Night suppers to this day. The leek is the soul of the dish. Leek contributes folate, vitamin K, and allium sweetness; barley adds beta-glucan fibre; the long-simmered chicken broth is rich in minerals and collagen-derived gelatin. A restorative, warming bowl for winter.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Leeks (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i>) — About 5 medium leeks; use shank and most of the green
1500 g	Whole chicken or chicken pieces (legs/thighs) — A whole bird gives the richest broth; or use 1 kg bone-in thighs
80 g	Pearl barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>)
8	Pitted prunes (dried plums) (<i>Prunus domestica</i>) — Traditionalists halve or julienne them; others leave whole and remove before serving
2	Bay leaf (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>)
2000 ml	Cold water — Enough to cover the chicken comfortably
	Fine sea salt and black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Place the chicken in a large pot, cover with cold water, and bring slowly to the boil. Skim off any grey foam that rises during the first 10 minutes.
2. Add half the sliced leeks, the pearl barley, bay leaves, salt, and a generous grind of black pepper. Reduce to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook for 1 hour until the chicken is cooked through and the barley is tender.
3. Lift out the chicken and set aside to cool slightly. Remove the bay leaves. Add the prunes and remaining leeks to the broth and simmer a further 20 minutes.
4. Shred the chicken meat, discarding skin and bones, and return it to the pot. Taste the broth and adjust seasoning. If the prunes are still whole, remove them or julienne a few as a garnish.
5. Ladle into warm bowls and serve immediately with crusty bread. The soup thickens as it sits — add extra hot water or stock when reheating.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A good soup gathers the house.

Common Inkcap Broth (Traditional Hot-Water Preparation) — Strictly Alcohol-Free

Decoction • Makes 500 ml

A simple hot-water extraction of fresh *Coprinopsis atramentaria* fruiting bodies to produce a savoury mushroom broth. This preparation extracts water-soluble constituents including phenolic acids and polysaccharides. Because coprine is also water-soluble, this broth carries the same absolute alcohol contraindication as raw or sautéed mushroom. Not recommended for general use; included here for completeness of traditional ethnomycological record.

INGREDIENTS

125 g fresh Common inkcap (*Coprinopsis atramentaria*) — fresh fruiting bodies, pileus — Young fruiting bodies with pure white gills; harvest same day; do not use any that have begun to blacken.

METHOD

1. Confirm identification: gills must be pure white. Reject any specimens with discolouration.
2. Wipe fruiting bodies clean. Place whole or halved in a saucepan with 600 ml cold water and a pinch of sea salt.
3. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat. Simmer uncovered for 20–25 minutes. Skim any foam from the surface.
4. Strain through a fine sieve. The clear broth may be used as a soup base or drunk warm as a savoury preparation. The strained mushroom flesh can be chopped and returned to the broth or discarded.
5. Consume immediately. Do not add any wine, spirits, or alcohol-containing ingredients at any stage. Do not store the broth.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The common inkcap has fascinated naturalists and writers for centuries. The genus name *Coprinus* (retained in common parlance) derives from the Greek *kopros* (dung), reflecting early observations that some relatives grow on dung, though *C.*

Common Mallow Soothing Greens Soup

Food / culinary • Makes ~600 ml

A gentle, silky green soup that celebrates common mallow’s natural mucilage - the very quality that thickens the pot and soothes the throat and gut. Mild and comforting, it is a lovely way to use a handful of foraged leaves.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Fresh common mallow leaves (<i>Malva neglecta</i>) — Washed, tough stalks removed
1 small	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Chopped
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 small	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Diced, to add body
600 ml	Vegetable stock
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 wedge	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To serve
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

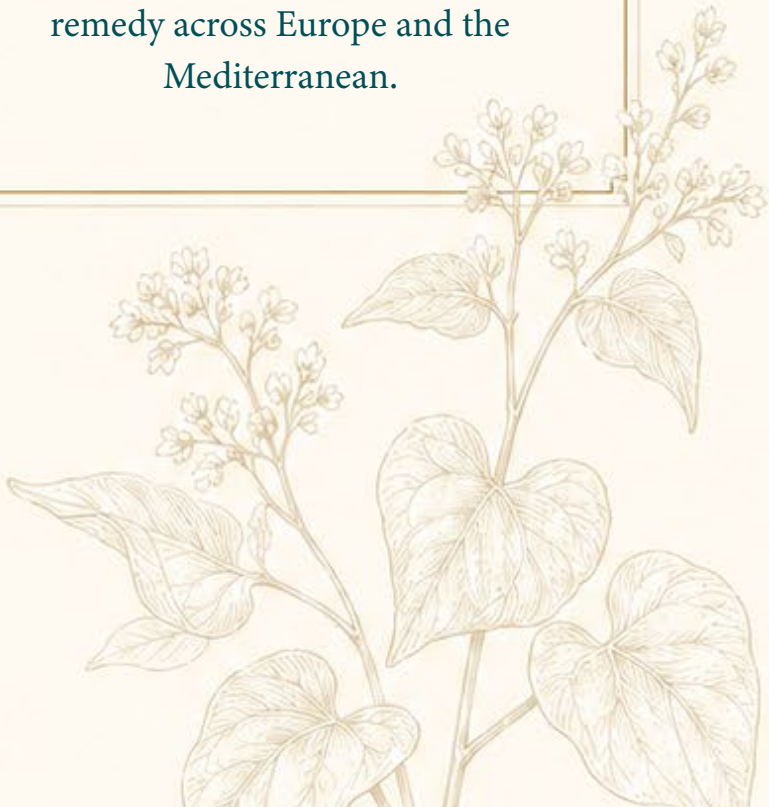
METHOD

1. Soften the chopped onion and garlic in the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add the diced potato and stock; simmer until the potato is tender, about 12 minutes.
3. Stir in the washed mallow leaves and cook a further 4-5 minutes until wilted.
4. Blend until smooth and silky, season with salt, and serve warm with a squeeze of lemon.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known as ‘common mallow’, ‘dwarf mallow’ or ‘cheeseweed’ for its cheese-shaped fruits, which children have long nibbled. A humble but valued pot-herb and soothing folk remedy across Europe and the Mediterranean.



Cordyceps militaris Nourishing Broth (Culinary Tonic)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

A warming, savoury broth incorporating cultivated *Cordyceps militaris* fruiting bodies, drawing on the traditional East Asian culinary practice of simmering *Cordyceps* in chicken or pork bone soup as a restorative tonic. Cordycepin and polysaccharides are released during prolonged simmering. This is a food preparation, not a medicine, and is enjoyed as part of a nourishing diet.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	<i>Cordyceps militaris</i> fruiting bodies (dried, cultivated) — Dried cultivated <i>C. militaris</i> fruiting bodies, whole or roughly broken. Third-party COA verified. Do not use myceliated grain.
1200 ml	Water (filtered) — Filtered or spring water. Ginger, spring onion, salt (optional) — Optional: 2 slices fresh ginger, 2 spring onions, pinch sea salt — classic TCM broth additions; omit for a plain tonic.

METHOD

1. Rinse 10 g of dried *Cordyceps militaris* fruiting bodies briefly under cold water to remove any surface dust. No soaking required.
2. Place the fruiting bodies in a medium saucepan with 1200 ml of cold filtered water. Add optional aromatics (ginger, spring onion) if using. Bring to a boil over medium heat.
3. Reduce heat to a low simmer. Simmer gently for 45–60 minutes, partially covered, until the broth is lightly golden and carries a clean, earthy aroma. Top up with a little water if needed. This extended simmering deactivates the heat-labile CMP18 protein and extracts polysaccharides and nucleosides.
4. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer. The spent fruiting bodies can be eaten if soft, or composted. Season the broth lightly with sea salt if desired. You should have approximately 1000 ml of golden broth.
5. Serve warm as a plain drink or use as a base for soups, congee or noodle dishes. Refrigerate any unused portion and use within 48 hours, or freeze in portions.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cordyceps has a recorded history in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Tibetan medicine stretching back at least to the 15th century CE, where it was known primarily in the form of *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* (the wild Himalayan caterpillar fungus).

Creamy cauliflower soup (Dubarry-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic French-inspired silky white soup — *chou-fleur Dubarry* — where cauliflower is gently simmered until very soft, then blended to a satiny purée. Simple, elegant, and an excellent vehicle for the curd’s gentle sweetness and fine texture. Excellent way to use whole heads including the stalk and inner leaves.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Cauliflower (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>) — Cauliflower, broken into florets, stalk and inner leaves included
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — White onion, roughly chopped (~1 medium)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic (~2 cloves)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil or butter (~2 tbsp)
900 ml	Vegetable or chicken stock — Good quality unsalted stock
100 ml	Double cream or full-fat oat cream — Cream for richness (~3–4 tbsp)
5 g	Sea salt and white pepper — Season to taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sweat gently, covered, for 8–10 minutes until completely soft but not coloured.
2. Add the cauliflower florets, stalk (peeled and diced) and inner leaves. Pour in the stock and bring to a simmer. Cook uncovered for 15–20 minutes until the cauliflower is very tender.
3. Blend until completely smooth — a high-speed blender gives the silkiest result. Return to the pot, stir in the cream and season well with salt and white pepper.
4. Serve hot. Finish each bowl with a thread of olive oil, a pinch of grated nutmeg, and chives or parsley. For texture, add a few roasted cauliflower florets as a garnish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cauliflower traces to cultivated forms long selected around the eastern Mediterranean, most plausibly in the Cyprus–Syria–Egypt region. The first clear Arabic descriptions appear in botanical writings of the 12th–13th centuries (e.

Creamy land cress & potato soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A warming, vivid-green winter soup that uses land cress like a more peppery version of spinach. Potatoes give body while the cress adds a bright flavour and outstanding vitamin K and A content. Inspired by the classic Appalachian and British tradition of using land cress (creasy greens) in cooked dishes. Ready in about 30 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Land cress (<i>Barbarea verna</i>) — Leaves and tender stems, washed; use older leaves freely here
400 g	Floury potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper, Yukon Gold) (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Peeled and roughly diced
120 g	Onion, white or yellow (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Peeled and roughly chopped
30 g	Butter, unsalted — Or use olive oil for dairy-free
900 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — Density ~1.0 g/ml; use a good-quality stock
60 g	Double cream or crème fraîche (optional) — Stir in after blending for richness; omit for a lighter soup

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook gently for 5 minutes until softened and translucent but not coloured.
2. Add the diced potato and stir to coat in the butter. Cook for 2 minutes, then pour in the stock. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potato is very tender.
3. Add all the land cress leaves and stems. Stir to submerge them in the hot liquid and simmer for 3–4 minutes until wilted and bright green.
4. Remove from heat. Using a stick blender (or ladle into a jug blender in batches, taking care with hot liquid), blend until very smooth. Season generously with salt and black pepper.
5. Stir in the cream or crème fraîche if using. Taste and adjust seasoning. Reheat gently if needed — do not boil after adding cream. Serve in warmed bowls with a swirl of cream and crusty bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Land cress has been cultivated as a leaf vegetable in England since at least the 17th century, prized as a readily available substitute for watercress in inland areas without access to streams.

Curried parsnip soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

A velvety, warming winter soup — sweet parsnip mellowed with onion and built on gently toasted curry spices (cumin, coriander, turmeric, ginger). A British classic that turns a humble root into something comforting and nourishing. Food-first warmth for cold days.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Parsnip (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>) — Parsnips, peeled and roughly chopped
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped (1 medium)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed (~3 cloves)
4 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin (~2 tsp)
3 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Ground coriander (~1.5 tsp)
2 g	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — Ground turmeric (~1 tsp)
8 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, grated (~1 tbsp)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil (or butter) to soften
1000 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — About 1 litre
5 g	Sea salt & black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Warm the oil in a large pot. Soften the onion gently for 6–8 minutes until translucent; add the garlic and ginger for a further minute.
2. Stir in the cumin, coriander and turmeric and toast for about a minute until fragrant.
3. Add the chopped parsnips and the stock. Bring to a simmer and cook, partly covered, for 20–25 minutes until the parsnips are completely soft.
4. Blend until silky-smooth (vent the lid for hot liquid). Season to taste, loosen with a little water if needed, and serve hot with a swirl of cream or yoghurt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Onions were sworn upon in old oaths, their many hidden layers taken as a sign of eternity and the endless.

Dang Shen Tonic Chicken Soup

Food / culinary • Makes ~640 g

Dang shen (Codonopsis) is the gentle, food-grade ‘poor man’s ginseng’ of Chinese kitchens. Simmered slowly into a chicken soup it lends a mild sweetness and is traditionally taken to restore energy after illness or fatigue.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Dang shen (<i>Codonopsis pilosula</i>) — Dried Codonopsis (dang shen) roots
600 g	Chicken pieces — Bone-in for a richer broth
15 g	Dried goji berries (<i>Lycium barbarum</i>) — Added near the end
3 slices	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
2 litres	Water
1 tsp	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Rinse the dried Codonopsis roots and cut into finger-length pieces.
2. Blanch the chicken briefly in boiling water, then drain to clean the broth.
3. Add chicken, Codonopsis, ginger and water to a pot; bring to a boil, then reduce to a low simmer.
4. Simmer, partly covered, for about 1.5 hours.
5. Add the goji berries in the last 10 minutes, season with salt, and serve hot; lift out the fibrous root pieces before eating.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Salt was once so precious that soldiers were paid in it, and from that small fact comes the word salary.



Dāng Guī Tonic Chicken Soup (Food-as-Medicine Broth)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A traditional Chinese nourishing soup in which a little dāng guī (*Angelica sinensis* root) is simmered with chicken, ginger and red dates. In Chinese food-as-medicine custom this warming broth is taken to “nourish the blood” and restore strength — for example during recovery or around the menstrual cycle. A gentle culinary way to use the root, but the same precautions apply.

INGREDIENTS

9 g	Dong quai (<i>Angelica sinensis</i>), root — dried dāng guī root, a few slices
15 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), rhizome — fresh ginger, sliced (culinary seasoning)
500 g	Chicken — chicken (e.g. thighs or a small bird), for the broth
20 g	Red dates (jujube) (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>) — red dates (jujube), pitted
1500 g	Water

METHOD

1. Rinse the chicken and blanch briefly in boiling water, then drain (this keeps the broth clear).
2. Put the chicken, a few slices of dried dāng guī root, the sliced fresh ginger and the pitted red dates in a pot with about 1.5 litres of water.
3. Bring to a boil, skim, then simmer gently, partly covered, for about 1–1.5 hours until the broth is fragrant and the chicken tender.
4. Remove the dāng guī slices, season lightly to taste, and serve warm. Eat occasionally rather than daily.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

What the garden gives gladly, the
table receives twice.

Fresh pea & peppermint soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1200 g

A bright spring-green soup of sweet peas and fresh peppermint - peas and mint are a classic English pairing. Served hot or chilled, it shows peppermint at its food-first best: a nourishing bowl, not a remedy.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Fresh or frozen peas
8 g	Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>), leaf — Fresh peppermint leaves (add most at the end to keep it bright)
700 ml	Vegetable or light stock
80 g	Onion, chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Softened as the base
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil or butter, for softening the onion
4 g	Sea salt & black pepper — To taste

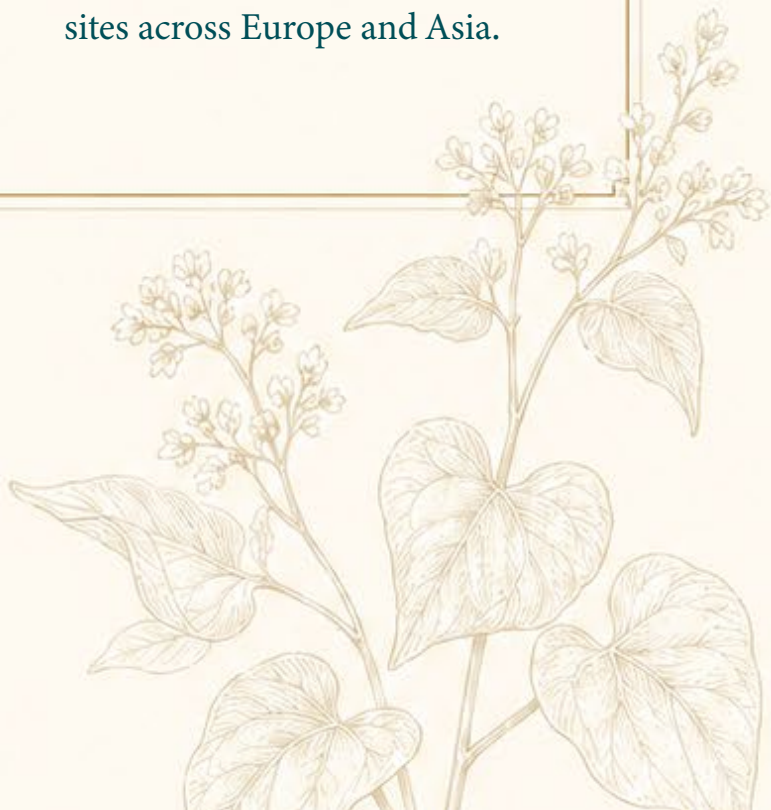
METHOD

1. Soften the chopped onion in the olive oil or butter over low heat until translucent.
2. Add the peas and stock, bring to a simmer and cook 5–8 minutes until the peas are tender.
3. Add most of the peppermint leaves and blend the soup until smooth.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. Serve hot or chilled, with a swirl of yoghurt or cream and a few whole mint leaves on top.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The pea is one of humanity’s founder crops, domesticated in the Near East around 10,000 years ago alongside wheat, barley and lentils, and carbonised peas appear at Neolithic sites across Europe and Asia.



Ful medames — Egyptian slow-stewed fava beans

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

The national breakfast of Egypt and a Levantine staple: dried fava beans simmered until creamy, then crushed and dressed with olive oil, lemon, garlic and cumin. A high-protein, high-fibre food-first dish eaten with flatbread. (Note: contains fava beans — not for people with G6PD deficiency / favism.)

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Broad bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>) — Dried fava beans (small brown ful type), soaked overnight
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~3 tbsp), for dressing
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed (~3 cloves)
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1 lemon)
3 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin (~1½ tsp)
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, chopped, to finish
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Drain the soaked fava beans and simmer in fresh water, covered, for 1–2 hours until very soft and creamy, topping up water as needed.
2. Drain lightly, keeping the beans moist, and mash coarsely with a fork or masher, leaving some texture.
3. Stir in the crushed garlic, olive oil, lemon juice and cumin.
4. Season with salt to taste.
5. Serve warm, topped with extra olive oil, chopped parsley and a lemon wedge, scooped with warm flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Parsley’s name descends from the Greek petroselinon, ‘rock-celery’, via Latin petroselinum.



Galangal Coconut Broth (Tom Kha Style)

Food / culinary • Makes ~600 ml

Greater galangal gives Thai tom kha its unmistakable piney, citrus-pepper warmth. This aromatic coconut broth showcases the fresh rhizome as the culinary star it is across Southeast Asia.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Greater galangal (<i>Alpinia galanga</i>) — Fresh <i>Alpinia galanga</i> rhizome, thinly sliced
400 ml	Coconut milk (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
200 ml	Light stock or water
1 stalk	Lemongrass stalk, bruised (<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>)
3 leaves	Kaffir lime leaves (<i>Citrus hystrix</i>)
2 tbsp	Fish sauce and lime juice — To taste
150 g	Mushrooms or chicken, sliced

METHOD

1. Gently heat the stock and coconut milk in a pot without letting it boil hard.
2. Add the galangal slices, bruised lemongrass and torn lime leaves; simmer 8-10 minutes to infuse.
3. Add the mushrooms or chicken and cook until just done.
4. Season off the heat with fish sauce and fresh lime juice, and serve hot, garnished with chilli and coriander.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A lemon tree can carry blossom and fruit at once, the promise and the keeping side by side on a single branch.

Giant Kelp Mineral Broth

Food / culinary • Makes ~1000 ml

A clear, savoury sea broth in the tradition of kombu dashi, drawing minerals and gentle umami from dried giant kelp.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Giant kelp (<i>Macrocystis pyrifera</i>) — Dried giant kelp (<i>Macrocystis pyrifera</i>), one small strip
1000 ml	Water — Cold, filtered
2 piece	Dried shiitake mushroom — Optional, deepens the umami

METHOD

1. Wipe the dried kelp lightly with a damp cloth; do not scrub off all the surface, but remove grit.
2. Place the kelp (and optional shiitake) in a pot with the cold water and let it soak for 20-30 minutes.
3. Heat slowly and remove the kelp just before the water reaches a boil, to keep the broth clear and mild.
4. Simmer gently for a few more minutes if using shiitake, then strain.
5. Season lightly and use as a broth or cooking base.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Coastal peoples of the Pacific have long used kelps as food and, dried, as a mineral source. In the modern era *Macrocystis* is a major commercial source of alginate used as a thickener and stabiliser in foods, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals.

Green purslane & potato soup (omega-3 summer soup)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A gentle, nourishing soup that cooks purslane with potato, onion and garlic into a soft green pottage. The mucilaginous stems lightly thicken the broth and the potato rounds it out, while cooking tames purslane’s tang and lowers its oxalate. A comforting way to eat a big serving of this omega-3-rich green.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Purslane (<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>)
300 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Use ripe tubers only; never green/sprouted potato (solanine)
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
900 g	Vegetable stock or water — Adjust for desired thickness
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash and roughly chop the purslane; finely chop the onion and garlic.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pot over medium heat and soften the onion and garlic, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the diced potato and the stock or water; bring to a simmer and cook 12-15 minutes until the potato is nearly tender.
4. Add the chopped purslane and simmer a further 8-10 minutes.
5. Blend smooth or leave rustic, and season with salt.
6. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil and the lemon juice; serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Purslane has been eaten and valued for thousands of years across the Old World.



Hearty cabbage soup with carrot, potato & bay (shchi-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A nourishing everyday cabbage soup in the Slavic shchi tradition: cabbage, onion, carrot and potato simmered with bay into a light, warming, vitamin-rich broth. Frugal, food-first comfort that makes a whole cabbage stretch a long way.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>), leaf — Green or white cabbage, shredded
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped
150 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, diced
250 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Potato, diced (sound, non-green)
1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Bay leaf (1 leaf)
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Fresh parsley or dill, chopped, to finish
1500 g	Vegetable or meat stock — Simmering liquid

METHOD

1. Sweat the onion and carrot in a little oil or butter until softening, about 8 minutes.
2. Add the stock, potato and bay; bring to a simmer and cook 10 minutes.
3. Add the shredded cabbage and simmer until everything is tender, a further 10–15 minutes.
4. Season to taste, remove the bay leaf, stir in fresh herbs and serve hot (with soured cream if liked).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Potatoes travelled the whole world from a single mountain valley, and have since fed more people than any king ever ruled.

Hearty Lima Bean Vegetable Stew

Food / culinary

A simple, nourishing stew built around thoroughly cooked lima beans and root vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

2 cup	dried lima beans (<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>) — soaked overnight
1 cup	carrots, diced (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
1 cup	celery, diced (<i>Apium graveolens</i>)
6 cup	vegetable or chicken stock
2 tbsp	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tsp	salt, pepper, bay leaf — to taste

METHOD

1. Soak dried lima beans overnight, then drain and discard the soaking water.
2. Boil beans hard, uncovered, in fresh water for at least 10-15 minutes; discard this water.
3. In a large pot, sauté carrots and celery in olive oil for 5 minutes.
4. Add the parboiled lima beans, fresh stock, and bay leaf; simmer 45-60 minutes until beans are fully tender.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Domesticated in the Americas some 6,000-7,000 years ago; lima beans are depicted on ancient Peruvian Moche pottery. The English name ‘lima bean’ derives from Lima, Peru, a historic export port for the crop.

Hou Tou Gu Traditional Hot-Water Broth (Lion’s Mane Decoction)

Decoction • Makes 500 ml

*In Traditional Chinese Medicine, Hou Tou Gu (猴头菇, *Hericium erinaceus*) has been prepared as a hot-water decoction (broth) for digestive support and as a Qi tonic. Hot water extraction is also the primary method for releasing β -glucan polysaccharides from the mushroom cell walls, making this a nutritionally and traditionally grounded preparation. Adapted from TCM culinary-medicinal tradition documented in Herbal Reality and TCMWiki monographs.*

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Dried Lion’s mane (<i>Hericium erinaceus</i>) fruiting body — Dried Lion’s mane fruiting body, sliced or broken into pieces. Use cultivated product with verified identity.
750 ml	Filtered water — Filtered or spring water. Use sufficient water to account for evaporation during simmering.

METHOD

- Place 20 g of dried Lion’s mane slices in a medium saucepan. Add 750 ml of filtered water.
- Bring the water to a gentle simmer over low-medium heat (do not boil vigorously). Simmer uncovered for 40–60 minutes until the liquid reduces to approximately 500 ml.
- Strain the broth through a fine sieve or cheesecloth into a heat-safe jug or container. The spent mushroom pieces may be eaten or composted.
- Drink warm (1–2 cups, 200–250 ml per serving). Season lightly with a little sea salt or ginger if desired. Refrigerate remaining broth immediately and use within 48 hours.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Salt is the memory of the sea; use it as you use memories — sparingly, and at the end.

Huáng Qí Tonic Chicken Soup (Astragalus & Red Date Restorative Broth)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A traditional Chinese home tonic soup in which astragalus root is simmered for hours with chicken, red dates (jujube) and ginger into a nourishing restorative broth — a classic food-as-tonic eaten to build strength and warmth in the colder months.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Astragalus (huang qi) (<i>Astragalus membranaceus</i>)
8 g	Red dates (jujube) (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>)
2 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
800 g	Chicken
1500 g	Water

METHOD

1. Rinse the astragalus root slices, red dates and ginger.
2. Place the chicken, astragalus, red dates and ginger in a large pot with the water.
3. Bring to the boil, skimming off any scum, then reduce to a gentle simmer.
4. Cover and simmer 1.5-2 hours until the chicken is tender and the broth is fragrant.
5. Remove and discard the fibrous astragalus slices before serving.
6. Season lightly and serve hot as a warming meal, 1-3 bowls per week, especially in autumn and winter.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Soup was the first hot meal humans ever shared, once we had learned to hold water over fire.

Kaffir Lime Leaf Coconut Soup (Tom Kha)

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 ml

The glossy double leaves of makrut (kaffir) lime perfume this creamy Thai coconut soup with an unmistakable bright, floral citrus lift that no other herb can imitate.

INGREDIENTS

4 leaves	Makrut lime (<i>Citrus hystrix</i>) — Makrut (kaffir) lime leaves, bruised
400 ml	Coconut milk (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
5 slices	Galangal, sliced (<i>Alpinia galanga</i>)
1 stalk	Lemongrass, bruised (<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>)
1 cup	Mushrooms, lime juice, fish sauce, chilli — To taste

METHOD

1. Gently heat the coconut milk with 1 cup water, galangal, lemongrass and the bruised lime leaves; do not boil hard.
2. Simmer 5 minutes to infuse, then add the mushrooms and cook until tender.
3. Season off the heat with lime juice, fish sauce and chilli to taste.
4. Serve hot, garnished with a finely shredded lime leaf.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Across Southeast Asia, *Citrus hystrix* has long served beyond the kitchen.

Kelp (Kombu-style) Mineral Broth

Food / culinary • Makes ~1000 ml

A light, savoury umami broth drawn from a single small piece of dried oarweed kelp.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Oarweed (<i>Laminaria digitata</i>) — One small strip of dried kelp (do not exceed this occasionally)
1000 ml	Water
2 pieces	Dried shiitake — Optional, for deeper umami

METHOD

1. Wipe the kelp with a damp cloth (do not scrub off the white surface minerals).
2. Soak it, with the shiitake if using, in the cold water for 30 minutes.
3. Heat gently and remove the kelp just before the water reaches a boil (boiling turns it bitter and slippery).
4. Strain and use the pale broth as a cooking base.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mushrooms are neither plant nor animal but a kingdom of their own, and by blood they stand nearer to us than to the flowers.



Khoresht-e beh — Persian quince & lamb stew

Food / culinary • Makes 4 portions

Khoresht-e beh (خورشت به) is a classic autumn dish of Iranian cuisine: slow-braised lamb or beef with golden quince, fragrant saffron, and earthy split peas. The quince’s firm flesh holds its shape during slow cooking, perfuming the whole stew with its distinctive floral warmth. Served over saffron rice, this is nourishing, deeply flavoured food with a history stretching back centuries in Persian kitchens. Quince’s astringent tannins mellow entirely into the braise, and its natural pectin body thickens the sauce beautifully.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Quince (<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>) — Ripe quinces (2 medium), peeled, cored and cut into 8 wedges each. Seeds discarded.
600 g	Lamb shoulder or bone-in leg, diced — Cut into 4 cm pieces. Beef chuck also works well.
120 g	Yellow split peas (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Rinsed. Add halfway through cooking so they don’t disintegrate entirely.
200 g	Onion, finely diced (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Fried slowly until deep golden — this is the flavour base
60 g	Saffron water (<i>Crocus sativus</i>) — Steep a large pinch of saffron threads in 60 ml hot (not boiling) water for 15 min
60 g	Fresh lime or lemon juice — Balances the natural sweetness of the quince
30 g	Pomegranate molasses or raw sugar — Add to balance sour/sweet. Pomegranate molasses is traditional; sugar is a substitute.
30 g	Neutral cooking oil — For browning meat and onions
5 g	Sea salt and black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat oil in a heavy-based pot over medium-high heat. Brown the lamb pieces in batches, seasoning with salt and pepper. Remove and set aside.
2. In the same pot, fry the diced onion over medium heat for 20–25 minutes until deeply golden and fragrant.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cydonia oblonga is one of the oldest cultivated fruits in recorded history. The genus name derives from Kydonia (Cydonia), an ancient city on Crete. The species was formally named by Philip Miller in his *Gardeners’ Dictionary* (8th ed.

This is essential for depth of flavour. Add 1 tsp turmeric and stir for 1 minute.

3. Return the lamb to the pot. Add enough water or stock to just cover (about 300–400 ml). Bring to a boil, skim any foam, then reduce heat and simmer covered for 45 minutes.
4. Add the rinsed split peas and half the saffron water. Continue simmering for 20 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, fry the quince wedges briefly in a little butter or oil until golden on each side (about 2 min per side). Add to the stew along with the pomegranate molasses (or sugar) and lime juice. Stir gently.
6. Simmer uncovered for a further 20–30 minutes until quince is completely tender and the sauce has thickened. Adjust sweet/sour/salt balance. Drizzle remaining saffron water over before serving.

Kohlrabi & greens soup with ginger

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A nourishing, zero-waste soup that uses both the kohlrabi stem and its nutritious greens — inspired by the Kashmiri tradition of cooking Mōnji (kohlrabi stem and leaves together). Light, warming, and rich in vitamin C, potassium and fibre. Serve with crusty bread or flatbread.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Kohlrabi stem (swollen bulb) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — About 2 medium kohlrabi
100 g	Kohlrabi greens (leaves) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — Leaves from the kohlrabi — zero-waste use
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — 1 medium onion
10 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 2–3 cloves
10 g	Fresh ginger root (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — ~2 cm piece
1000 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — 1 litre; density_g_per_ml ~1.0
20 g	Olive oil or ghee — ~1.5 tablespoons
15 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To finish; about ½ lemon
	Salt and pepper — Season to taste

METHOD

1. Peel and dice the kohlrabi stem into 1-2 cm cubes; wash and roughly chop the kohlrabi greens, removing any tough midribs.
2. Warm the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat; cook the onion gently 5-7 minutes until soft, then add garlic and ginger and cook 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add the diced kohlrabi stem and stir to coat; pour in the stock and bring to a simmer, cooking 10-12 minutes until just tender.
4. Add the greens and cook a further 3-4 minutes until wilted; season generously.
5. Serve as a chunky broth, or blend half for a creamier texture, and finish with lemon juice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The German name Kohlrabi combines Kohl (cabbage) and Rabi, an old German/Swiss dialectal form of the Latin Rapa (turnip), aptly describing the swollen stem that looks like a turnip growing on a cabbage.

Korean-Style Gugija Leaf and Soybean Paste Soup

Food / culinary

A traditional Korean preparation using young *Lycium chinense* leaves ('gu-gi-yeop'), simmered in a light soybean-paste broth as a spring green vegetable dish.

INGREDIENTS

3 cup	<i>Lycium chinense</i> young leaves and shoots — washed, tough stems removed
2 tbsp	fermented soybean paste (doenjang) (<i>Glycine max</i>)
1 clove	garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
4 cup	water or light broth

METHOD

1. Bring water or broth to a simmer and dissolve the soybean paste into it.
2. Add garlic and simmer 5 minutes.
3. Add the washed *Lycium* leaves and shoots and simmer 3-5 minutes until just tender.
4. Season lightly and serve hot as a side soup.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Di Gu Pi was first recorded in the Shennong Ben Cao Jing (compiled c. 100 BC), one of the earliest Chinese materia medica texts. *Lycium chinense* has traditionally been distinguished from its close relative *L.*

Leek & potato soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

The classic homely soup in which sweet softened leeks and floury potato are simmered in stock and (optionally) finished with a little cream — a nourishing way to eat plenty of leek. Food-first comfort cooking.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leeks, white & light-green parts, sliced and washed (~3 medium)
400 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and diced
100 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped
40 g	Butter
900 g	Stock — Vegetable or chicken stock
60 g	Single cream — Single cream, optional to finish
5 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, freshly ground

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a large pan over low heat. Add the leeks and onion with a pinch of salt and sweat gently, covered, for 8–10 minutes until soft but not coloured.
2. Add the diced potato and the stock. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15–20 minutes until the potato is completely tender.
3. Blend until smooth (or leave part-chunky for a rustic soup). Season with salt and pepper.
4. Stir through the cream off the heat if using, reheat gently without boiling, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pepper was once counted coin for coin with silver, and rents in old cities were paid in peppercorns.

Lemony Sheep Sorrel Soup

Food / culinary

A bright, spring-green soup that turns the tart wild leaves into something silky and comforting, with a natural lemony tang and no lemon needed.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups Young sheep sorrel leaves (*Rumex acetosella*) — Loosely packed, washed and stemmed.
- 1 medium Onion (*Allium cepa*) — Finely chopped.
- 1 medium Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) — Diced, to thicken.
- 4 cups Vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp Butter
- 0.25 cup Cream — Also helps bind oxalate.

METHOD

1. Melt the butter and soften the onion gently without colouring.
2. Add the diced potato and stock, and simmer until the potato is tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Stir in the sorrel leaves and cook just until they collapse and turn olive-green, 2-3 minutes.
4. Blend until smooth, stir in the cream, warm through and season to taste.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The pot knows patience the cook must learn.

Lovage & potato soup (celery-scented green soup)

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

A comforting, thrifty soup that shows lovage at its food-first best: a generous handful of the celery-scented leaf transforms humble potato, onion and stock into a fragrant green bowl. This is the classic European cottage-garden use of lovage as a pot-herb.

INGREDIENTS

25 g	Lovage (<i>Levisticum officinale</i>) — Fresh lovage leaves, chopped (a generous handful)
500 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and diced
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~1.5 tbsp)
900 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — Hot stock (~900 ml)
6 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a pot and soften the onion gently for 6–8 minutes until sweet and translucent; add the garlic for the last minute.
2. Add the diced potato and the hot stock, bring to a simmer and cook 15–18 minutes until the potato is tender.
3. Stir in most of the chopped lovage (reserve a little to finish) and simmer 2–3 minutes — brief cooking keeps its colour and aroma.
4. Blend until smooth (or leave partly chunky), season with salt and pepper, and finish with the reserved fresh lovage. Serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Olive trees can live a thousand years,
and some now bearing fruit were
already old when Rome was young.

MARAG BAMIA — IRAQI & GULF OKRA STEW (مرق بامية)

Food / culinary • Makes 5 servings

The Iraqi and Gulf table’s okra stew: lamb and okra in a tomato broth given its signature sour depth by dried lime (loomi / noomi basra). Brothier than the Levantine bamia and made to be ladled over fluffy white rice.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>) — Small whole pods; trim caps in a cone.
450 g	Lamb, cubed (or beef) — For vegetarian marag, omit and add 250 g more okra.
30 g	Ghee (samna) or oil
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
18 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
40 g	Tomato paste (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
300 g	Ripe tomatoes, chopped (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
10 g	Dried limes (loomi / noomi basra), pierced (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — Pierce and leave whole; remove before serving for a milder result.
4 g	Baharat / seven-spice
2 g	Ground turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
700 g	Lamb stock or water
10 g	Sea salt and black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Brown the lamb in the ghee and set aside; soften the onion, then add the garlic.
2. Stir in the tomato paste and cook 2 minutes; add the chopped tomatoes, baharat and turmeric.
3. Return the lamb, add the stock and the pierced dried limes; simmer covered 1-1.5 hours until the lamb is tender.
4. Trim the okra caps in a cone and add the pods whole; simmer gently 20-30 minutes more until tender, stirring little.
5. Taste and season; remove the dried limes if a milder sourness is preferred.
6. Ladle over fluffy white rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The tomato was grown for fifty years as an ornament, thought poisonous, before anyone was brave enough to taste it.

Mediterranean tomato & white bean stew with bay

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

A nourishing, food-first one-pot: white beans simmered with tomato, onion, garlic and olive oil, lifted by bay, thyme and a little oregano. Slow cooking lets the bay perfume the whole dish; the leaf is removed before serving. Beans must be properly cooked (never eaten raw or undercooked) — soaking and a good simmer make them digestible and safe.

INGREDIENTS

1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Whole dried bay leaf (1-2), added during simmering and removed before serving
480 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Cooked white beans (e.g. cannellini/haricot), ~2 cans drained, or dried beans soaked and fully cooked
400 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Chopped ripe tomatoes (or 1 can)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, minced (~3 cloves)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
1 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Thyme, a few sprigs (or 1 tsp dried)
1 g	Oregano (wild marjoram) (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>) — Dried oregano
3 g	Sea salt and black pepper — To season, to taste (add salt after beans have softened)

METHOD

1. If using dried beans, soak overnight, drain, cover with fresh water and simmer until fully tender (about 1-1.5 hours) — never use raw or undercooked beans. Drain.
2. Warm the olive oil in a heavy pan and soften the onion gently for 8-10 minutes until sweet and translucent; add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
3. Add the tomatoes, bay leaf, thyme and oregano. Simmer 10 minutes to reduce slightly.
4. Stir in the cooked beans with a splash of water or stock and simmer gently 15-20 minutes until thick and mellow. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Remove and discard the bay leaf (and thyme sprigs) before serving. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Thyme has been valued since antiquity. The Egyptians used it in embalming, and the Greeks burned it as a temple incense — the name is often linked to Greek thymos (“courage” or “to fumigate”).

Minestra di scarola e fagioli — Neapolitan escarole & white bean soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A deeply nourishing Neapolitan classic: dark outer escarole leaves — rich in folate and vitamin K — braised tender in a garlicky olive-oil broth with creamy cannellini beans. Simple pantry ingredients, made beautiful by good olive oil and a thick slice of toasted sourdough. A template for getting bitter greens into everyday meals.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Endive (<i>Cichorium endivia</i>), leaf — whole head roughly torn; blanch 2 min in boiling water if you prefer milder flavour
400 g	White beans (cannellini) (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — drained cooked cannellini or borlotti beans (or 1 × 400 g tin, drained and rinsed)
15 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 4–5 cloves, crushed or thinly sliced
60 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra-virgin; plus more to drizzle at the table
800 ml	Water or stock — or light vegetable / chicken stock
2 g	Dried chilli flakes (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — pinch of dried chilli flakes (optional)

METHOD

1. Wash the escarole thoroughly, discarding any damaged outer leaves. Tear into large pieces. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil, add the escarole and blanch for 2 minutes (this reduces bitterness). Drain well, pressing out excess water.
2. Heat the olive oil in a wide, heavy pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook gently until fragrant and beginning to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Add the chilli flakes if using.
3. Add the blanched escarole to the pot, stir to coat in the garlicky oil, and cook for 3–4 minutes, turning occasionally.
4. Add the beans and water or stock. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook uncovered for 10–15 minutes until the escarole is completely tender and the soup has a silky, slightly thickened broth. Taste and season with salt and black pepper.
5. Ladle into deep bowls. Drizzle generously with your best olive oil. Serve with toasted sourdough or crusty bread for dipping.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Endive and escarole have been cultivated since antiquity in the Mediterranean basin; the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans ate broad-leaved endive.

Negi, tofu & wakame miso soup

Food / culinary • Makes 800 ml

A nourishing everyday Japanese miso soup finished with plenty of sliced Welsh onion (negi). The fresh green onion is stirred in at the very end so its colour, bite and nutrients stay bright — a gentle, warming bowl built on real food.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Welsh onion (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — Welsh onion / negi, thinly sliced on the diagonal
800 ml	Dashi stock (or vegetable stock) — Kombu/bonito dashi, or kombu-only for vegan
60 g	Miso paste — White or mixed miso
150 g	Soybean (<i>Glycine max</i>) — Silken or firm tofu, cubed
5 g	Dried wakame seaweed — Rehydrated in water for 5 minutes, drained

METHOD

1. Heat the dashi in a pot until steaming but not boiling. Add the cubed tofu and the rehydrated wakame and warm through for a minute.
2. Put the miso in a small bowl or ladle, add a little of the hot dashi and whisk until smooth, then stir it back into the pot. Do not let it boil.
3. Turn off the heat. Stir in most of the sliced Welsh onion.
4. Ladle into bowls and scatter the remaining fresh onion over the top. Serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Soybean has been cultivated in China for approximately 5,000 years and was one of the five sacred grains of ancient Chinese agriculture alongside rice, wheat, barley and millet.

Nettle Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic spring nettle soup — the time-honoured way to eat the first young nettles of the year. Cooking destroys the sting and gives a vivid green, mineral-rich soup with a flavour between spinach and watercress.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), leaf — young nettle tops, washed
1 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — chopped
1 g	Potato (medium) (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — peeled, diced
1000 g	Vegetable stock — hot
30 g	Butter or olive oil — for sweating the vegetables

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, wash the nettle tops and discard any tough stalks.
2. Sweat the chopped onion and diced potato in the butter or oil until soft.
3. Add the hot stock and simmer until the potato is tender, about 10 minutes.
4. Stir in the nettles and cook 3–5 minutes until wilted (this removes the sting).
5. Blend until smooth, season, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Nettle has been used since antiquity for food, fibre and folk remedy.



Nordic Bilberry Soup (Blåbärssoppa)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

A traditional Scandinavian fruit soup of bilberries, served warm or cold as a nourishing drink or dessert — famously offered to skiers for an energy boost. A simple, wholesome way to enjoy the berry as food.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Bilberry (<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>), fruit — fresh or frozen bilberries
800 ml	Water
80 g	Sugar — sugar, to taste
20 g	Potato starch (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — potato starch, slaked in cold water

METHOD

1. Simmer the bilberries with the water for about 10 minutes until soft.
2. Add sugar to taste and stir to dissolve.
3. Slake the potato starch in a little cold water, stir into the hot soup, and bring just back to the boil so it thickens; do not boil hard.
4. Serve warm or chilled, as a drink or fruit soup.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A single teaspoon of healthy soil holds more living creatures than there are people on the whole Earth.

Notoginseng Chicken Tonic Broth

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 g

A warming Chinese home tonic soup in which steamed notoginseng root gently supports circulation and recovery. Traditionally taken during convalescence.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Dried notoginseng root (steamed/cured) (<i>Panax notoginseng</i>) — Sliced; do not exceed for home use
400 g	Chicken pieces
1.2 l	Water
3 slices	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
4 whole	Red dates (jujube) (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>) — Optional, for sweetness
1 tsp	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Blanch the chicken in boiling water for 2 minutes, then drain and rinse.
2. Place chicken, sliced notoginseng root, ginger and red dates in a pot with the water.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer.
4. Simmer covered for about 1.5 hours until the broth is fragrant and the chicken tender.
5. Season with salt and serve hot in bowls.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

An onion shares its layers only with the knife that goes slowly.

Okra & Tomato Stew (Bamia-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic across the Middle East, the Mediterranean and the American South — tender okra simmered with tomato, onion and garlic. The pod’s natural mucilage gently thickens the sauce, while a splash of acid (tomato/lemon) keeps the texture pleasant. A simple, nourishing way to enjoy okra as a fibre- and antioxidant-rich vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>), fruit
400 g	Tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
1 count	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
3 count	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
30 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Trim the stems of the okra, taking care not to cut into the pods if less sliminess is wanted.
2. Soften the chopped onion and garlic in the olive oil over medium heat.
3. Add the chopped tomatoes and a splash of water, and simmer a few minutes to break down.
4. Add the okra, cover, and simmer gently for 20–30 minutes until tender.
5. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice and fresh herbs if using.
6. Serve hot with rice or bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried from the Andes to Mesoamerica, the tomato (from Nahuatl tomatl) was domesticated and cultivated by the time of the Aztecs.

Onion, Garlic & Thyme Immune Broth

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

A nourishing, savoury cold-season broth built on the kitchen alliums. Onion and garlic give a warming, aromatic, antimicrobial base, while thyme adds a fragrant, traditionally chest-friendly lift. Simmered into a simple stock, it is sipped warm as comforting food through the cold months — herbal support in the most everyday, whole-food form.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>), bulb
140 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), bulb
60 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>), leaf
1200 g	Water
5 g	Salt and black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Roughly chop the onion and crush the garlic; gather the thyme.
2. Add the onion, garlic, thyme and water to a pot, season lightly, and bring to a gentle simmer.
3. Simmer, partly covered, for 30–45 minutes until fragrant and well flavoured.
4. Strain (or blend for a thicker broth), adjust the seasoning, and serve warm. Cool and refrigerate or freeze any surplus.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The ancient Egyptians revered it — onions appear in tomb paintings and were placed with the dead, its concentric layers taken as a symbol of eternity — and Egyptian labourers, like Greek and Roman soldiers and athletes, ate it for strength.

Pleurotus ostreatus Nutritive Broth

Decoction • Makes 1000 ml

A simple, nourishing long-simmered broth using dried oyster mushroom fruiting bodies. Long decoction (1–2 hours) extracts water-soluble beta-glucans (pleuran), proteins, B vitamins, potassium, and iron. Used traditionally in East Asian cooking and modern functional-food practice. This is a culinary/nutritive preparation — a supplement-grade hot-water extract — not a pharmaceutical intervention.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 30 g | <i>Pleurotus ostreatus</i> fruiting body (dried) — Dried fruiting bodies, sliced or whole; or 100 g fresh |
| 1200 ml | Filtered water — Cold filtered water |
| | Optional aromatics — Optional: small piece of kombu seaweed, a few black peppercorns, bay leaf — to deepen flavour without masking mushroom |

METHOD

1. Place 30 g of dried *Pleurotus ostreatus* fruiting bodies (or 100 g fresh, cleaned) in a medium saucepan. Pour over 1200 ml cold filtered water.
2. Bring gently to a simmer over medium heat. Do not boil hard. Skim any foam from the surface in the first few minutes.
3. Simmer uncovered on a very low heat for 60–90 minutes until the liquid is reduced to approximately 1 litre and has taken on a golden-amber colour.
4. Optional: add kombu, peppercorns, or bay leaf for the final 20 minutes. Remove before straining.
5. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve or muslin. Press the mushroom solids to extract all liquid. Discard or compost spent mushroom material (or use in cooking for texture).
6. Season lightly if desired. Drink warm as a broth, or use as a nutritive base for soups, risotto, or porridge. Cool and refrigerate remainder promptly.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pleurotus ostreatus has been consumed in Europe and Asia for centuries. The earliest documented cultivation dates to 199 CE in China (reference to cultivation in bamboo habitats).

Potato & chive soup (warm vichyssoise-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A silky potato and leek-onion soup finished with a generous shower of fresh chives — comforting served warm, or chilled as a classic vichyssoise. The chives are added at the end so their fresh oniony brightness sits on top of the mellow, creamy base.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf — Fresh chives, snipped, to finish
500 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Potatoes, peeled and diced
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>), bulb — 1 onion, chopped
800 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — About 800 ml
100 g	Cream or milk — About 100 ml

METHOD

1. Sweat the chopped onion in butter or oil until soft but not coloured.
2. Add the diced potatoes and stock; simmer 18–20 minutes until the potato is tender.
3. Blend the soup until smooth.
4. Stir in the cream or milk and season to taste.
5. Serve warm, or chill thoroughly for a vichyssoise-style soup.
6. Finish each bowl with a generous scatter of fresh chives and a swirl of cream.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Chives have a long history as a kitchen herb across Europe and Asia, gathered wild and grown in gardens since antiquity and recorded in cultivation in China some 4,000–5,000 years ago.

Reishi Tonic Broth

Food / culinary • Makes 1500 ml

An easy, food-first way to take reishi: a few dried slices simmered into a savoury stock base. The bitterness mellows into a deep, earthy, umami broth that can be used for soups, grains or sipped on its own as a warming tonic.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Reishi (<i>Ganoderma lucidum</i>), pileus — dried sliced reishi cap
1600 g	Water — water (reduces during simmering)
5 g	Aromatics (cook's choice) — optional: kombu, dried shiitake, ginger, garlic, a pinch of salt to build a savoury stock

METHOD

1. Put the dried reishi slices in a large pot with about 1.6 litres of water and any aromatics you like (kombu, dried shiitake, ginger, garlic).
2. Bring to the boil, then reduce to a low simmer.
3. Simmer part-covered for 1–2 hours until the broth is deep amber and well flavoured, reducing to roughly 1.5 litres.
4. Strain out the reishi (it stays woody) and the aromatics; season to taste.
5. Use as a stock or sip warm. Cool quickly and refrigerate or freeze the surplus.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Trees in a forest share sugar and warnings through underground threads of fungus, feeding their sick and their young.

Ribollita — Tuscan cavolo nero & bean soup

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

The great Tuscan bread-and-bean soup, whose name literally means “re-boiled” — because it improves every time it is reheated. Dark cavolo nero (Lacinato kale), cannellini beans, stale bread, and root vegetables in a deep tomato-and-sage broth, crowned with a generous pour of peppery Tuscan olive oil. A dish of extraordinary flavour from the most humble ingredients, made for cold-weather cooking and for crowds. This is peasant cooking at its finest: deeply nourishing, very economical, almost completely plant-based.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Lacinato kale / cavolo nero (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>acephala</i>)
250 g	Dried cannellini or borlotti beans — or 2 × 400 g tins, drained (reduce simmering time accordingly)
200 g	Stale sourdough or rustic bread, torn into rough chunks
150 g	Yellow onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
80 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>)
200 g	Potato (waxy or floury) (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
400 g	Canned chopped tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
60 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (Tuscan-style, peppery) (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
15 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
6 g	Fresh sage leaves (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>)
30 g	Tomato paste / concentrato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
1000 g	Vegetable stock or water — plus bean cooking liquid
	Salt and black pepper — to taste

METHOD

1. Soak dried beans overnight; drain and simmer in fresh unsalted water 45–60 min until tender. Reserve cooking liquid.
2. Soften onion, carrot, and celery in olive oil 8–10 minutes. Add garlic and sage; cook 1 min. Stir in tomato paste; cook 2 min.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Kale is one of the oldest members of the brassica family in cultivation, descended from the wild cabbage of Mediterranean coastal cliffs.

3. Add chopped tomatoes. Mash one-third of the beans; add all beans (mashed and whole) with their cooking liquid and stock to cover. Simmer 20 min.
4. Add potatoes and cavolo nero; simmer 20 min until potatoes are tender and kale is completely soft.
5. Stir in stale bread; simmer 10 min until bread dissolves into the soup. Add stock if too thick. Season generously.
6. Turn off heat. Drizzle generously with olive oil; rest 5 min. Best the next day — reheat gently (ribollita means “re-boiled”).

Roasted butternut squash & ginger soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A velvety, golden bowl built around roasted *Cucurbita moschata* — the sweetest way to eat winter squash. Roasting concentrates the squash’s natural sugars and carotenoids, while onion and garlic build a savoury base and fresh ginger lifts it with gentle warmth. Nourishing, naturally low in fat and rich in provitamin-A; food-first comfort in a bowl.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Butternut squash (<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>), fruit — Whole squash, about 1 kg trimmed weight
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
15 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
100 g	Coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>) — Coconut milk, to finish
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
800 g	Vegetable stock
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Halve and seed the squash, rub the cut sides with a little oil, and roast cut-side down at 200°C for 35-45 minutes until soft and caramelised.
2. Scoop the flesh from the skin and set aside.
3. In a large pot, gently soften the chopped onion, garlic and ginger in olive oil over low heat, 8-10 minutes.
4. Add the roasted squash flesh and the stock; bring to a simmer and cook 10 minutes.
5. Blend until smooth.
6. Loosen with a little coconut milk, season with salt, and reheat gently before serving hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The coconut palm has been called the “tree of life” across the tropics for the sheer breadth of its uses — food, drink, oil, fibre, timber, thatch and fuel from a single plant.

Roasted pumpkin soup with sage, garlic & nutmeg

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

A velvety autumn soup that puts orange-fleshed pumpkin or winter squash at the centre of the plate. Roasting first concentrates its natural sweetness and beta-carotene-rich flesh; sage, garlic, onion and a little nutmeg round it into a warming bowl.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Courgette (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>) — Pumpkin or winter squash flesh, peeled, deseeded, cubed
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, ~4 cloves
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil for roasting (~2 tbsp)
900 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — Vegetable or chicken stock (~900 ml)
4 g	Fresh sage leaves (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>) — Fresh sage leaves (~6–8 leaves)
0.5 g	Nutmeg, grated (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) — Freshly grated nutmeg (a pinch)
5 g	Fine sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Toss the pumpkin cubes with olive oil and roast at 200°C for 30-35 minutes until soft and caramelised at the edges.
2. Meanwhile, gently soften the chopped onion and garlic with the sage leaves in a little olive oil in a large pot.
3. Add the roasted pumpkin, nutmeg and stock; bring to a simmer and cook 10 minutes.
4. Blend until smooth; season with salt.
5. Reheat gently and serve hot with a swirl of cream or drizzle of oil and a few toasted seeds.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

No dish is poor that was made with attention.

Roasted Tomatillo & White Bean Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A nourishing, tangy green soup: roasted tomatillos blended into a broth with white beans and greens. Bright and comforting, high in fibre and vitamin C — a lovely food-first way to enjoy the harvest.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Tomatillos, husked & washed (<i>Physalis philadelphica</i>), fruit
400 g	Cooked white beans (1 tin) (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>)
800 ml	Vegetable stock + onion, garlic, greens

METHOD

1. Husk and wash the tomatillos, then roast them (with onion and garlic) until softened and lightly charred.
2. Blend the roasted tomatillos, onion and garlic with a little of the vegetable stock until smooth.
3. Transfer to a pot, add the remaining stock and the cooked white beans, and bring to a simmer.
4. Stir in the greens and simmer a few minutes more until wilted and the soup is heated through.
5. Season to taste.
6. Serve warm, topped with coriander, avocado and a squeeze of lime.
7. Refrigerate leftovers; the soup reheats and freezes well.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Domesticated in Mesoamerica long before the tomato, the tomatillo was a staple of Aztec and Maya kitchens; its name comes from the Nahuatl “tomatl.” It is still often called the husk tomato or Mexican husk tomato for its papery lantern.

Samgyetang — Korean Ginseng Chicken Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A classic Korean restorative dish: a whole young chicken stuffed with glutinous rice and simmered with fresh ginseng root, jujube and garlic. Traditionally eaten in the hottest days of summer (boknal) as a nourishing, energy-restoring meal.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Asian Ginseng (<i>Panax ginseng</i>), root — 1 fresh root (~8 g) or 1 dried root, rinsed
1 count	Whole young chicken (Cornish hen / poussin) — cleaned
80 g	Glutinous (sweet) rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — soaked 1 hour, for stuffing
4 count	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — peeled
3 count	Dried jujube (red dates) (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>) — rinsed
1200 g	Water — for the broth

METHOD

1. Rinse the chicken. Mix the soaked glutinous rice with a little of the garlic and pack it into the cavity; close the opening with a skewer or by crossing the legs.
2. Place the stuffed chicken in a deep pot with the ginseng root, remaining garlic and jujube. Add about 1.2 litres of water to cover.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently, partly covered, for about 1–1.5 hours until the chicken is very tender and the rice is cooked.
4. Serve hot in a deep bowl with plenty of broth. Season with salt and pepper at the table.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every grain of rice in a bowl was planted, tended and gathered by a human hand somewhere in the world.

Savory Lentil Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A nourishing, everyday lentil soup built around summer savory — the herb that has seasoned pulses across Europe for generations. Lentils give protein, fibre and iron; savory, garlic, onion, carrot and bay turn them into a warming bowl. Lemon at the end lifts the flavour and its vitamin C helps your body take up the plant iron.

INGREDIENTS

4 g	Summer savory (<i>Satureja hortensis</i>), leaf — 1 tbsp fresh chopped, or 2 tsp dried, added early
300 g	Lentil (<i>Lens culinaris</i>) — dried green or brown lentils, rinsed
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — 1 onion, diced
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — 2 carrots, diced
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 2 cloves, minced
0.5 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — 1 bay leaf
27 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — olive oil, for the base
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — juice of, to finish
1400 g	vegetable stock or water — about 1.4 litres
4 g	sea salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a large pot; soften the onion and carrot 5-7 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and savory and cook 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add the rinsed lentils, bay leaf and stock; bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer 25-30 minutes until the lentils are tender.
5. Remove the bay leaf, season with salt, and finish with lemon juice.
6. Serve hot with bread or a drizzle of olive oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Beans are among the first plants we ever tamed, kept in our gardens for longer than we have kept written words.

Shaggy Mane Mushroom Broth

Decoction • Makes 500 ml

A simple, nourishing culinary broth made from freshly harvested *Coprinus comatus* fruiting bodies. This preparation must be made and consumed immediately after harvest due to the mushroom's rapid autolysis. Valued in European and Asian folk culinary traditions as a light, delicately flavoured mushroom broth.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Shaggy mane fruiting bodies (fresh) (<i>Coprinus comatus</i>), plant — Freshly harvested young fruiting bodies with white gills only; cook within 1 hour of picking
600 ml	Filtered water

METHOD

1. Immediately after harvest (within 1 hour), rinse 4-6 young shaggy mane fruiting bodies gently under cold water. Confirm gills are still white to pale pink - do NOT use any specimen showing black autolysis.
2. Slice the mushrooms longitudinally into quarters.
3. Place in 600 ml cold water in a saucepan. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 15-20 minutes.
4. Strain the broth through a fine mesh sieve. Season lightly with sea salt if desired. Consume immediately.
5. Do not refrigerate or store. Discard any unused portion.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Coprinus comatus has been eaten as a table mushroom in Europe and Asia for centuries wherever it occurs, prized for its delicate flavour when young and cooked immediately.

Shiitake Dashi / Culinary Broth

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

Shiitake dashi is the traditional Japanese culinary broth made by simmering dried shiitake in water. It forms the umami base of countless Japanese and Chinese dishes and delivers a food-level intake of B vitamins, vitamin D₂, polysaccharides, and minerals from thoroughly cooked mushrooms.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Dried Shiitake fruiting body (<i>Lentinula edodes</i>) — Soak and use soaking liquid too; dried whole preferred
1000 ml	Cold filtered water — Cold filtered water for soaking and simmering

METHOD

1. Place 30 g of dried shiitake fruiting bodies in 1 litre of cold filtered water. Soak for a minimum of 30 minutes, or overnight in the refrigerator for a richer broth. The soaking liquid is rich in 5-GMP (umami) and polysaccharides — do not discard.
2. Transfer the soaking liquid and mushrooms to a pot. Bring slowly to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer gently for 20–30 minutes to ensure thorough cooking (eliminates dermatitis risk) and optimal flavour extraction.
3. Remove mushrooms (slice stipes away as they remain tough — add to stock or discard). Strain broth through fine mesh. Season with a pinch of sea salt if desired.
4. Use as a base for miso soup, ramen, risotto, congee, or any recipe calling for umami-rich stock. For a full Japanese dashi, combine with a small piece of kombu added from cold and removed before the simmer stage.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The oldest living tree has kept time for over four thousand years, older than the last stone of the pyramids.

Silky Sunchoke and Roasted Hazelnut Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A velvety, earthy soup that showcases the sunchoke at its most elegant. Roasting the tubers first deepens the flavour; hazelnut oil and toasted hazelnuts add nutty richness that complements the sweetness of the inulin-rich tubers. Warm, sustaining, and full of prebiotic goodness.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Jerusalem artichoke tubers (<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>) — Roasted before adding to soup
200 g	Brown onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
20 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
900 g	Vegetable or chicken stock — 900 ml; density 1 g/ml
30 g	Butter or olive oil
60 g	Roasted hazelnut halves (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) — To garnish; toast in dry pan until golden
20 g	Hazelnut oil or good olive oil — To drizzle at the table; 2 tablespoons
5 g	Sea salt and white pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Toss sunchokes with a splash of olive oil and spread on a baking tray. Roast for 25 minutes until golden and tender.
2. While the sunchokes roast, melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and a pinch of salt; cook gently for 12–15 minutes until soft and translucent. Add garlic and cook 2 more minutes.
3. Add the roasted sunchokes and stock to the pan. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 10 minutes.
4. Blend until completely smooth with a stick blender or upright blender (work in batches if using upright). Pass through a fine sieve for an ultra-silky result if desired.
5. Return to heat, adjust seasoning with salt and white pepper. Ladle into warm bowls. Drizzle with hazelnut oil, top with toasted hazelnuts, and finish with a pinch of smoked paprika or chives.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A spoonful of honey is the life's work of a dozen bees, each visiting some fifty flowers on a single trip.

Split pea & ham soup (London particular)

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A thick, warming winter soup built on dried split peas — the historic way peas were eaten as a storable staple. Long simmering softens the dried peas into a velvety, protein- and fibre-rich pottage. (Dried/mature peas must be cooked, which is exactly what this recipe does.)

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>), seed
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
100 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
1 count	Ham hock or smoked bacon (optional)
1500 g	Water or stock

METHOD

1. Rinse the split peas under cold water.
2. Soften the onion, carrot and celery in a little oil in a large pot.
3. Add the split peas, optional ham hock and the water or stock.
4. Bring to the boil, skim off any foam, then simmer gently 60–90 minutes until the peas collapse into a thick soup.
5. Remove the ham, shred and return the meat; season to taste.
6. Blend partly for a smoother texture if liked, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The wild plant, “Queen Anne’s lace”, gathers folklore around its lacy white umbel and central dark floret — said to be a drop of blood where Queen Anne pricked her finger making lace.



Swede, carrot & onion winter soup

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A thrifty, warming winter soup built on swede, carrot and onion softened in rapeseed oil and simmered to a smooth, naturally sweet pottage. A nourishing, low-cost whole-food bowl that makes the most of stored winter roots.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Swede (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Swede / rutabaga root
300 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
14 g	Cold-pressed rapeseed (canola) oil (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Rapeseed/canola seed oil - same species
1200 g	Vegetable stock — Stock (water + bouillon)
5 g	Sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Heat the rapeseed oil in a large pot and sweat the chopped onion over medium heat until soft.
2. Add the swede and carrot and stir to coat.
3. Pour in the stock, bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook until the roots are very tender, about 25–30 minutes.
4. Blend until smooth.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve hot with bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bread and patience rise the same way
— in warmth, unhurried.

Trinidad-Style Stewed Pigeon Peas

Food / culinary

A Caribbean coconut-milk stew of fresh or dried pigeon peas, traditionally served with rice.

INGREDIENTS

2 cup	<i>Cajanus cajan</i> (fresh or soaked dried pigeon peas)
1 cup	coconut milk (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
2 clove	garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
2 sprig	thyme sprig (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)
0.5 cup	onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — diced

METHOD

1. Sauté onion and garlic until soft.
2. Add peas, coconut milk, thyme, and enough water to cover; bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer 45-60 minutes (fresh peas) or until dried peas are tender.
4. Season with salt and pepper; serve over rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A staple pulse crop for millennia in South Asian cuisine (as dal/toor dal/arhar), and central to West African and Caribbean cookery (e.g. gungo peas and rice in Jamaica, pois d'Angole in the French Caribbean).

Turkey Tail Immune Broth

Food / culinary • Makes 1500 ml

A nourishing immune-support broth simmering *Trametes versicolor* fruiting bodies with vegetables and aromatics. Long slow simmering extracts polysaccharides into a flavourful, mineral-rich broth. The mushrooms are removed before serving — they are too tough to eat but their actives transfer to the liquid.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Turkey tail fruiting body (<i>Trametes versicolor</i>) — Dried or fresh Turkey tail fruiting bodies, rinsed. Confirm identity.
2000 ml	Filtered water
2 cloves	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Optional aromatics
1 piece	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Thumb-sized piece, lightly bruised
1 piece	Astragalus root (optional) (<i>Astragalus membranaceus</i>) — Optional — 5 cm piece of dry astragalus root adds further immune-tonic properties

METHOD

1. Rinse the Turkey tail mushrooms and place in a large saucepan or slow cooker with 2 litres of filtered water.
2. Add optional aromatics: garlic cloves (bruised), ginger (sliced), and astragalus root if using. Bring to a very gentle simmer over low heat.
3. Simmer uncovered for 2–4 hours, allowing liquid to reduce to approximately 1.5 litres. The longer the simmer, the deeper the colour and flavour and the higher the polysaccharide extraction.
4. Strain out all mushroom pieces and aromatics through a fine sieve. DISCARD the mushrooms — they are not safe to eat due to their tough, indigestible texture.
5. Season lightly with sea salt if desired. Use as a soup base, drink as a warm tonic broth, or use in cooking. Refrigerate remainder and use within 3 days, or freeze in portions.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Turkey tail has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), where it is known as Yun Zhi (云芝, “cloud mushroom”) or Cai Yun (coloured cloud).

Tuscan white bean & rosemary soup (zuppa di fagioli)

Food / culinary • Makes 1600 g

A rustic Tuscan soup of creamy cannellini (white) beans with rosemary, garlic, olive oil and tomato — humble, deeply nourishing peasant food built around the common bean.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Dried cannellini (white) beans, soaked, soak water discarded
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to serve
4 g	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) — Fresh rosemary, finely chopped
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, chopped
60 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery, chopped
80 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, diced
150 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Bay leaf
6 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1000 g	Water or vegetable stock — For the soup

METHOD

1. Drain the soaked cannellini beans, discarding the soaking water.
2. Warm the olive oil in a large pot and sauté the onion, celery, carrot and garlic until softened.
3. Add the rosemary and cook briefly until fragrant.
4. Add the beans, chopped tomatoes, bay leaf and water or stock.
5. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently until the beans are tender, about 1–1.5 hours, topping up liquid as needed.
6. Season with salt, and serve hot drizzled with extra-virgin olive oil, ideally over toasted country bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Rosemary has been esteemed since antiquity as the herb of remembrance, fidelity and protection.

Verdolagas guisadas — Mexican stewed purslane with tomato

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A homely Mexican dish of purslane (verdolagas) simmered with tomato, onion, garlic and chilli. Gentle cooking softens the succulent stems, mellows their tang and lowers their oxalate, turning purslane into a comforting vegetable stew eaten on its own, with beans, or as a taco filling. Classically made with pork (verdolagas con puerco) — here a vegetable-forward version.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Purslane (<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>)
400 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Chilli
8 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Coriander (cilantro)
25 g	Neutral or olive oil — For frying
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a wide pan and soften the chopped onion, garlic and chilli until fragrant.
2. Add the chopped tomato and cook, stirring, until it breaks down into a thick sauce.
3. Add the washed, chopped purslane and a splash of water; stir to coat in the sauce.
4. Cover and simmer gently 12-18 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the purslane stems are tender.
5. Season with salt, stir in the coriander, and serve hot with warm tortillas, rice or beans.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Chilli peppers were domesticated in the Americas thousands of years before European contact and were central to Mesoamerican cooking, ritual and trade; the Nahuatl word “chilli” gives us “chilli.”

Vichyssoise — chilled leek & potato soup

Food / culinary • Makes 1300 g

A silky, cream-enriched leek-and-potato soup served cold — the refined French-American summer cousin of leek & potato soup. A cooling way to enjoy leek in warm weather.

INGREDIENTS

450 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leeks, white parts only, sliced and washed
350 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and diced
30 g	Butter
800 g	Stock — Light chicken or vegetable stock
150 g	Double cream
5 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
5 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>) — Chives, snipped, to garnish

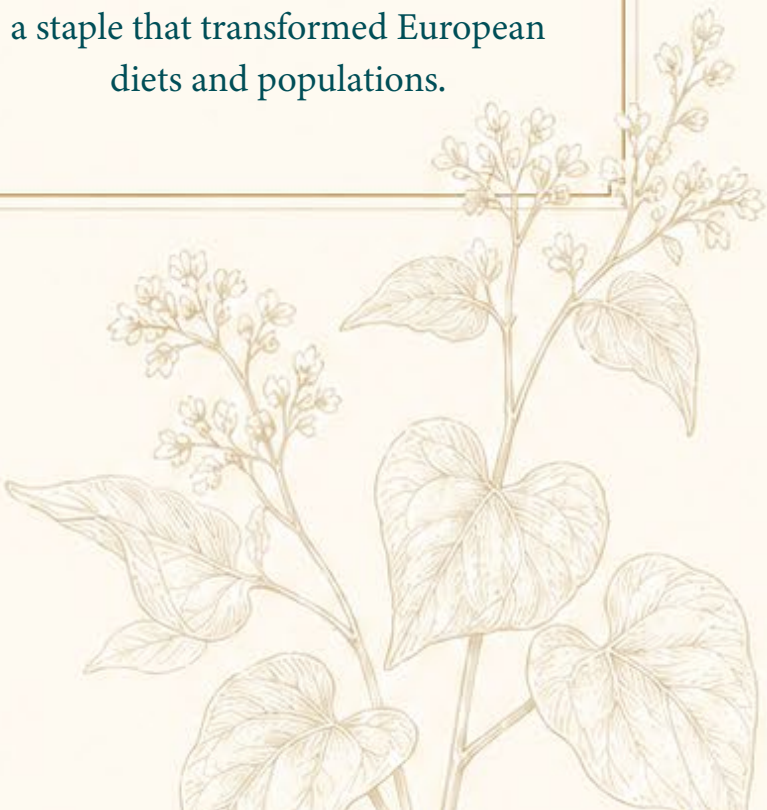
METHOD

1. Sweat the sliced leeks gently in the butter, covered, for about 10 minutes until soft but not coloured.
2. Add the potato and stock, simmer 18–20 minutes until very tender, then blend until completely smooth and pass through a sieve for a silky texture.
3. Cool, then stir in the cream and season generously (cold soup needs more salt). Chill for at least 4 hours.
4. Serve cold, topped with snipped chives.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long mistrusted as a strange nightshade and grown first as a curiosity, it was gradually championed (famously promoted in France by Parmentier) and became a staple that transformed European diets and populations.



Vichyssoise — classic leek and potato soup (hot or chilled)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A silky puree of leek and potato in a light stock, enriched with cream and served hot in winter or chilled in summer — the quintessential leek recipe. Leek provides folate, vitamin K, and gentle prebiotic fibre; potato contributes potassium and slow-release carbohydrate. Simple, deeply nourishing, and endlessly adaptable: add watercress for green colour, a swirl of yoghurt for tang, or top with crispy leek chips for drama.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Leek (shank and pale green part) (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i>) — About 4-5 medium leeks; reserve the dark green tops for stock
400 g	Potato (floury/starchy variety) (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — e.g. Maris Piper, King Edward, or Russet
100 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — 1 medium onion
40 g	Unsalted butter
1000 ml	Good vegetable or chicken stock — Use a light, clear stock
150 ml	Double cream — Stir in at the end; omit or use oat cream for dairy-free
	Fine sea salt and white pepper — White pepper preserves the pale colour

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a heavy-based pan over a medium-low heat. Add the leek and onion, season lightly with salt, and sweat gently for 10-15 minutes, stirring often, until very soft and sweet but not coloured.
2. Add the diced potato and stock. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover, and cook for 20-25 minutes until the potato is completely tender.
3. Remove from the heat. Blend until completely smooth — a high-speed blender gives the silkiest result; pass through a fine sieve for restaurant-quality texture.
4. Return to the pan. Stir in the cream and adjust seasoning with salt and white pepper. To serve hot, reheat gently without boiling. For chilled vichyssoise, cool and refrigerate at least 2 hours; re-season before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Oats were long thought fit only for horses, until the cold countries learned they were the quiet strength of their people.

Wakame Miso Soup (Wakame no Misoshiru)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A traditional Japanese broth soup combining rehydrated wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida*) with miso paste and dashi stock. This is one of the most culturally established and well-documented culinary preparations of wakame, consumed daily across Japan for centuries. It provides a gentle way to incorporate wakame’s mineral richness — particularly iodine, calcium, and magnesium — into the diet. Note: this is a culinary food preparation, not a medicinal extract or concentrated supplement.

INGREDIENTS

6 g Dried wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida*) — Dried wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida* fronds); soak in cold water 5-10 minutes before use; volume expands 5-8x on rehydration

METHOD

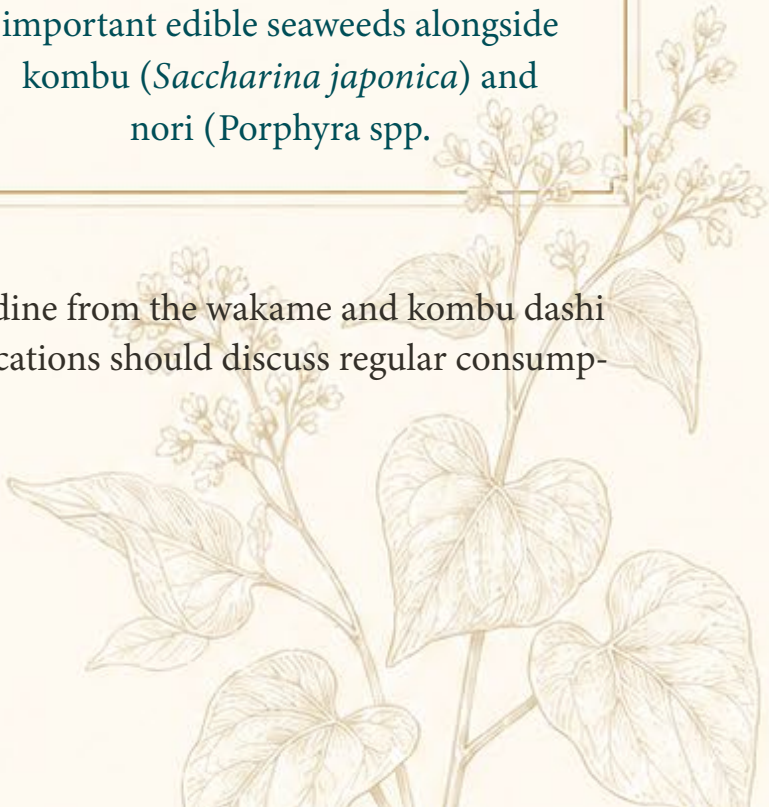
1. Place 5–8 g dried wakame in a bowl of cold water. Soak for 5–10 minutes until fully rehydrated (it will expand to roughly 5–8 times its dried volume). Drain, gently squeeze out excess water, and cut or tear into bite-sized pieces.
2. Warm 400 ml dashi stock (kombu and bonito, or kombu-only for vegetarian) in a saucepan over medium-low heat until steaming but not boiling.
3. Ladle about 60 ml of the warm stock into a small bowl. Add 2–3 tablespoons miso paste and stir until fully dissolved, then pour back into the saucepan. Do not allow the soup to boil after adding miso.
4. Add the rehydrated wakame pieces to the soup and warm gently for 30 seconds. Add optional additions (cubed silken tofu, thinly sliced spring onion) if desired.
5. Serve immediately in warmed bowls. IODINE REMINDER: A typical serving of this soup provides significant iodine from the wakame and kombu dashi combined. Individuals with thyroid conditions or on thyroid medications should discuss regular consumption with their clinician.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Undaria pinnatifida has been consumed as a food in coastal East Asia for over a thousand years.

In Japan, wakame (ワカメ) is considered one of the three most important edible seaweeds alongside kombu (*Saccharina japonica*) and nori (*Porphyra* spp.).



West African Bitter Leaf Soup (Ofe Onugbu)

Food / culinary • Makes ~950 g

A hearty, deeply savoury Nigerian soup in which well-washed bitter leaf balances rich meat and ground melon seed into a beloved everyday dish.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Fresh bitter leaf, washed and squeezed (<i>Vernonia amygdalina</i>) — Rinse and squeeze several times to reduce bitterness.
500 g	Assorted beef and tripe — Cut into pieces.
150 g	Ground melon (egusi) seed — Thickener.
100 ml	Palm oil (<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>)
100 g	Stockfish — Soaked until soft.
2 tablespoon	Ground crayfish
1 piece	Fresh chilli pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — To taste.
1 teaspoon	Seasoning and salt — Adjust to taste.
750 ml	Water or stock

METHOD

- Season and boil the beef, tripe and stockfish with a little onion until tender, keeping the stock.
- Add the palm oil, ground crayfish and chilli to the pot and simmer for a few minutes.
- Mix the ground egusi with a little water into a paste, add to the pot in lumps, and simmer 10 minutes.
- Stir in the washed bitter leaf and simmer gently for 5-10 minutes until the soup thickens and the flavours meld.
- Taste, adjust salt and seasoning, and serve hot with pounded yam or fufu.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The best seasoning is a hungry guest.

West African Scent Leaf Pepper Soup

Food / culinary

A fragrant, spicy broth finished with a generous handful of fresh clove basil leaves, eaten as both nourishment and gentle home remedy for colds.

INGREDIENTS

2 cup	Fresh clove basil leaves (<i>Ocimum gratissimum</i>) — Roughly chopped, 1.5-2 cups
1 tbsp	Pepper soup spice blend
1 piece	Scotch bonnet pepper (<i>Capsicum chinense</i>) — To taste
1 piece	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Sliced

METHOD

1. Simmer broth with onion and pepper soup spices until fragrant.
2. Add protein of choice and cook through.
3. Just before serving, stir in the chopped clove basil leaves.
4. Simmer briefly, taste for salt and heat, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known in West Africa as a household ‘fever plant’ (Yoruba: efinrin; Igbo: nchuanwu); leaves are hung or burned to repel insects and steeped as a first-response tea for colds, fevers, and stomach upset.

West Indian Bay-Leaf Vegetable Broth

Food / culinary

A savoury Caribbean-style broth scented with whole West Indian bay leaves, thyme and pepper. The leaves lend a warm, clove-like depth, then are lifted out before serving, just as with common bay.

INGREDIENTS

2 leaves	Dried West Indian bay leaves (<i>Pimenta racemosa</i>) — Removed before serving
1 whole	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Chopped
2 whole	Carrots (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Diced
2 cloves	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Sliced
3 sprigs	Fresh thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)
1 pinch	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — To taste
1 litre	Water or vegetable stock

METHOD

1. Gently soften the onion, carrots and garlic in a little oil in a large pot.
2. Add the water or stock, whole bay leaves, thyme sprigs and a pinch of pepper.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently for 25-30 minutes.
4. Remove and discard the bay leaves and thyme sprigs, adjust seasoning, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

West Indian bay leaves flavour
Caribbean souse, stews and
pepperpots, and the leaves distilled
with rum gave the famous ‘bay rum’
aftershave and cologne of the islands.

White Dead-Nettle Spring Green Soup

Food / culinary • Makes ~750 ml

A tender, mild wild-green soup made from young dead-nettle tops, a gentle cousin to nettle soup with no sting to handle.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Young white dead-nettle tops (<i>Lamium album</i>) — Leaves and flowering tips, washed.
1 medium	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Chopped.
1 medium	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Diced, to thicken.
750 ml	Vegetable stock
1 tbsp	Butter
1 pinch	Salt and pepper — To taste.

METHOD

1. Melt the butter and gently soften the chopped onion.
2. Add the diced potato and stock, and simmer for 12-15 minutes until the potato is tender.
3. Stir in the washed dead-nettle tops and cook for a further 3-4 minutes until just wilted and still bright.
4. Blend until smooth, season to taste, and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Called ‘dead-nettle’ because it looks like a stinging nettle but has no sting, and ‘archangel’ because it was said to bloom around the feast of an archangel; children have long sucked nectar from its white flowers.

Wild Cow Parsley & Spring Green Soup

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A simple spring soup that lets cow parsley's fresh aniseed-parsley note shine.

INGREDIENTS

2 handful Cow parsley (young leaves) (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), aerial parts — Add late in cooking. Aerial parts only.

METHOD

1. Melt butter in a pan and sweat the chopped onion and diced potato gently until soft, about 8-10 minutes.
2. Add the stock, bring to a simmer, and cook until the potato is tender.
3. Stir in the chopped young cow parsley leaves for the last 2-3 minutes of cooking to preserve their aroma.
4. Blend the soup smooth with a hand blender or in a jug blender.
5. Season to taste and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Parsley was scattered on the table not to be eaten but to freshen the breath and the air after a long feast.



Wild Garlic & Potato Soup (Bärlauchsuppe)

Food / culinary • Makes 1500 ml

A deeply comforting central European spring classic. Creamy, vivid green, with the sweet garlic heat of fresh ramsons — this soup is traditionally made in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (Bärlauchsuppe) and appears in similar forms across British, Irish and Scandinavian spring cooking. Blended smooth it makes an elegant starter; left chunky it's a nourishing family supper. Add a swirl of crème fraîche and a few wild garlic flowers or a few capers to serve.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Wild garlic leaves, washed (<i>Allium ursinum</i>) — Add after removing from heat to preserve colour and volatile compounds
500 g	Floury potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper, King Edward), peeled and diced (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
1 unit	Medium onion, finely chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — About 150 g
2 unit	Garlic cloves, crushed (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Optional — the wild garlic is the star, regular garlic deepens the base
1000 ml	Good vegetable or chicken stock — density_g_per_ml: 1.0; home_unit: 4 cups
30 g	Butter
100 ml	Crème fraîche — density_g_per_ml: 1.0; home_unit: 6 tbsp; add at end; omit if freezing
2 g	Salt, black pepper, nutmeg to taste (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Peel and dice the potatoes into approx. 2 cm cubes. Finely chop the onion. Crush the garlic.
2. Melt the butter in a large, heavy pan over medium heat. Add onion and sweat gently 5-7 minutes until soft and translucent.
3. Add the crushed garlic and cook 1 minute, then add the potato cubes. Pour in the stock, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 15-20 minutes until potatoes are completely tender.
4. Remove from heat. Add the wild garlic leaves (save a few for garnish). Blend the soup smooth with a hand-blender, or cool slightly first if using a jug blender and do not overfill.
5. Return to a gentle heat, stir in the crème fraîche, taste and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Moss has no roots; it drinks the whole sky through its leaves and asks the rain for everything.

6. Serve immediately with the reserved wild garlic leaves, wild garlic capers or a few flowers, and good bread.

Winter Savory & White Bean Stew

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

A rustic Mediterranean bean stew flavored with winter savory, traditionally valued for making legumes easier to digest.

INGREDIENTS

2 sprig	<i>Satureja montana</i> (winter savory), fresh sprigs — or 1/2 tsp dried
300 g	dried white beans, soaked (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>)
2 tbsp	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
2 clove	garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>)

METHOD

1. Drain soaked beans and place in a pot with fresh water to cover.
2. Add garlic, olive oil, and the winter savory sprig(s).
3. Simmer gently until beans are tender, 1-1.5 hours, topping up water as needed.
4. Remove the woody savory stems before serving.
5. Season with salt to taste.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The genus name *Satureja* has been folk-linked to satyrs and given an aphrodisiac reputation in antiquity. Ancient Greeks and Romans used it as a pungent seasoning before pepper was widely available in Europe.



Salads & Fresh Plates

Eat the garden young.

Alpine Cress Wild Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The young leaves of alpine rock-cress taste like a gentle, mustardy watercress — perfect raw. Tossed with tender salad leaves, a squeeze of lemon and good olive oil, and finished with the little white flowers, they make a fresh, peppery spring salad straight from the rockery or mountainside.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 handfuls Young alpine rock-cress leaves (*Arabis alpina*), leaf
- 1 tbsp Alpine rock-cress flowers (garnish) (*Arabis alpina*)
- 4 handfuls Mixed salad leaves
- 2 tbsp Olive oil + lemon juice (dressing) (*Citrus limon*)

METHOD

1. Rinse the young alpine rock-cress leaves and pat dry.
2. Toss the leaves through the mixed salad leaves in a bowl.
3. Dress with the olive oil and lemon juice just before serving.
4. Scatter the white alpine rock-cress flowers on top as a garnish and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

We are made of star-dust in the truest sense: the iron in your blood was forged in the heart of a dying star.



Bird’s-eye Speedwell Wildflower Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The vivid sky-blue flowers of germander speedwell are edible and make one of spring’s prettiest garnishes. Scatter the tiny “bird’s-eyes” — with a few tender young leaves — over a simple green or grain salad for colour and a mild, fresh, faintly bitter note.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp Fresh speedwell flowers (bird’s-eyes) (*Veronica chamaedrys*)
- 1 handful Tender young speedwell leaves (*Veronica chamaedrys*), leaf
- 4 handfuls Mixed salad leaves + your dressing

METHOD

1. Rinse the fresh speedwell flowers and young leaves gently and pat dry.
2. Toss the young leaves through the mixed salad leaves and dress as usual.
3. Scatter the sky-blue flowers over the top just before serving.
4. Serve immediately, as the flowers wilt quickly once picked.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cook with the season and the season will cook with you.



Black bean & corn salad with lime

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A bright, protein-rich salad of cooked black beans and sweet corn with tomato, onion, coriander and lime — the classic Mesoamerican beans-and-maize pairing in fresh, easy form.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Cooked black beans (drained; from ~150 g dried, soaked & boiled, or canned)
200 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Sweetcorn kernels, cooked
150 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomato, diced
50 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Red onion, finely chopped
12 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lime juice (fresh)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
2 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Combine the cooked black beans and sweetcorn in a large bowl.
2. Add the diced tomato, red onion and chopped coriander.
3. In a small bowl, whisk the lime juice with the olive oil and cumin, then season with salt.
4. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss well to combine.
5. Serve cold or at room temperature as a salad, side, or taco/ bowl topping.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach us, so every sunrise you see has, in truth, already happened.

Borage Flower & Cucumber Summer Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The simplest and most traditional way to enjoy borage: scatter the jewel-blue, five-pointed flowers over a cooling cucumber salad. Both share a mild cucumber flavour, and together they make an elegant, refreshing starter or side dish that has graced Mediterranean and English summer tables for centuries. Flowers can be eaten whole — petals have a subtle honey-cucumber sweetness and the striking colour makes any plate feel festive.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Borage flowers (fresh, fully open, calyx removed) (<i>Borago officinalis</i>)
300 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>)
10 g	Fresh mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
30 g	Spring onion (scallion) (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>)
30 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
20 g	Lemon juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
5 g	Honey
2 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Peel the cucumber in alternating stripes, then slice thinly (2–3 mm). Arrange on a flat serving platter.
2. Scatter the fresh mint leaves and thinly sliced spring onion over the cucumber.
3. Whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, honey, salt and a grind of black pepper until emulsified.
4. Drizzle the dressing over the cucumber and mint.
5. Immediately before serving, scatter the fresh borage flowers generously over the top. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The name may derive from the Latin *burra* (rough coat, for the hairy stems) or, according to John Gerard, from *corago* — courage — reflected in the rhyme he recorded: “Ego borago gaudia semper ago” (“I, borage, bring always courage”).

Broccoli sprout, avocado & lemon salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A fresh raw salad built on home-grown broccoli sprouts — among the most concentrated dietary sources of glucosinolates and sulforaphane — with creamy avocado, lemon and olive oil. Quick, raw and nourishing.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), sprout seedling — Broccoli sprouts, rinsed
150 g	Avocado (<i>Persea americana</i>) — Ripe avocado, sliced (~1)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1/2 lemon)
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
2 g	Flaky salt and pepper — Flaky salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Rinse the broccoli sprouts well and shake dry.
2. Arrange the sliced avocado on plates and pile the sprouts on top.
3. Whisk the lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper and spoon over. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Broccoli was developed in Italy from cabbage-family ancestors; its name comes from the Italian broccolo, “the flowering top of a cabbage” (diminutive of brocco, a sprout or shoot), itself from Latin bracchium, an arm or branch.

Canterbury Bell Petal Salad

Food / culinary

Like other true bellflowers, Canterbury bells have mild, faintly sweet edible leaves and pretty bell-shaped flowers that make a gentle, decorative addition to a spring salad.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Canterbury Bells (<i>Campanula medium</i>) — young Canterbury bell leaves and a handful of flowers
3 cups	Butterhead lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) — torn
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tbsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	Salt

METHOD

1. Gently wash the bellflower leaves and flowers and pat dry.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, and salt into a light dressing.
3. Toss the torn lettuce and young bellflower leaves with the dressing.
4. Arrange on plates and scatter the whole bell-shaped flowers over the top just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The common name “Canterbury Bells” refers to the bells rung by pilgrims and the bells of Canterbury Cathedral, immortalised by Geoffrey Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* (c.



Chilled asparagus salad with lemon-mustard vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 350 g

Blanched, refreshed asparagus served cold in a sharp lemon-mustard-olive-oil dressing — a clean, bright spring salad that lets the vegetable lead.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
5 g	Dijon mustard
3 g	Salt & pepper — Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Snap the woody ends off the asparagus. Blanch the spears in well-salted boiling water 2-3 minutes until just tender.
2. Drain and plunge immediately into iced water to stop cooking and set the colour; drain well and pat dry.
3. Whisk the lemon juice, mustard, salt and pepper, then whisk in the olive oil to make a thick vinaigrette.
4. Arrange the cold spears on a plate, spoon over the dressing, and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Asparagus has been valued as both food and folk remedy since antiquity.

Classic coleslaw — raw cabbage & carrot in a light dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

Crisp, fresh and quick: finely shredded raw cabbage and carrot in a light, tangy dressing. Eating cabbage raw keeps the most vitamin C and the myrosinase that forms isothiocyanates. A food-first salad for all year round.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>), leaf — White and/or red cabbage, very finely shredded
150 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, coarsely grated
50 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion or spring onion, very finely sliced (optional)
120 g	Mayonnaise or thick yoghurt — Dressing base
15 g	Lemon juice or cider vinegar — To season and keep colour
5 g	Dijon mustard — For lift (optional)

METHOD

1. Combine the shredded cabbage, grated carrot and onion in a large bowl.
2. Whisk the mayonnaise (or yoghurt), lemon juice and mustard with a pinch of salt and pepper into a pourable dressing.
3. Toss the dressing through the vegetables until lightly coated; taste and adjust acidity and seasoning.
4. Serve straight away, or chill briefly; dress just before serving if you want maximum crunch.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Greeks and Romans esteemed it both as food and as a folk remedy — Cato the Elder praised cabbage extravagantly in *De Agri Cultura*, recommending it for digestion and applying bruised leaves to wounds and swellings.

Cooled runner bean salad with parsley & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 550 g

Boiled young runner beans, cooled and dressed while still warm with olive oil, lemon, garlic and plenty of parsley — a fresh, food-first summer salad that lets the bean shine. Always cooked, then cooled, never raw.

INGREDIENTS

450 g	Runner bean (<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>), fruit — Young runner-bean pods, stringed and sliced
15 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, chopped
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely grated (1 small clove)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (about half a lemon)
3 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Top, tail and de-string the pods and slice into 3 cm pieces.
2. Boil in salted water 4–6 minutes until just tender, then drain and, if you like a brighter colour, refresh briefly in cold water and drain again.
3. While still warm, toss the beans with the olive oil, lemon juice, grated garlic and salt so they absorb the dressing.
4. Fold through the chopped parsley and leave to cool to room temperature before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried far from its Mesoamerican home, the scarlet runner was domesticated in the cool highlands of Mexico and Central America, where its mature seeds — the ayocote — have been a staple pulse for millennia and the plant a perennial of milpa gardens.

Cooling cucumber, peppermint & yoghurt salad

Food / culinary • Makes 450 g

A cooling raita-style salad of grated cucumber and fresh peppermint folded through yoghurt - the classic foil to spiced or rich dishes. Peppermint and cucumber are both cooling and refreshing, and the cool menthol lifts the whole dish.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Plain whole-milk yoghurt — The cooling base
150 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, coarsely grated and lightly squeezed
6 g	Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>), leaf — Fresh peppermint leaves, finely chopped
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely grated (optional)

METHOD

1. Coarsely grate the cucumber, then squeeze out excess water in a clean cloth.
2. Put the yoghurt in a bowl and stir until smooth.
3. Fold in the grated cucumber, chopped peppermint and garlic, if using.
4. Season with salt and chill before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A garden in the pot is summer kept
for winter.

Cucumber, yoghurt & dill salad

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

A cooling, garlicky cucumber-and-yoghurt salad in the tzatziki / mizeria spirit — crunchy cucumber, thick yoghurt, fresh dill and a little garlic and lemon. The perfect foil to anything spiced or grilled on a hot day.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, coarsely grated or diced
10 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Fresh dill, finely chopped
180 g	Thick plain yoghurt — Greek-style yoghurt
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
10 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
3 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Lightly salt the grated cucumber and leave in a sieve for 10–15 minutes, then squeeze out the excess water.
2. Stir the yoghurt with the crushed garlic, lemon juice and olive oil.
3. Fold in the drained cucumber and the chopped dill, season to taste, and chill before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

There are more stars in the sky than
there are grains of sand on all the
beaches of the Earth.

Cucumber-Scented Burnet Leaf Salad

Food / culinary

A fresh spring salad using the young cucumber-flavoured leaves of great burnet, light and green with a simple lemon dressing.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1 cup | Young great burnet leaves (<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)
— Tender spring leaves, washed. |
| 3 cups | Mixed salad leaves |
| 0.5 medium | Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Thinly sliced,
echoing the burnet flavour. |
| 2 tbsp | Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) |
| 1 tbsp | Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) |
| 1 pinch | Salt and pepper — To taste. |

METHOD

1. Tear the young burnet leaves and toss with the mixed salad leaves and cucumber.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper into a light dressing.
3. Dress the salad lightly just before serving and toss gently.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Great burnet has a long European folk history for staunching wounds (its name means ‘blood-absorber’), and in Chinese medicine the root di yu has been used for centuries for bleeding and burns.

Fresh Chickweed Spring Salad

Food / culinary

A bright, tender wild salad celebrating chickweed’s mild, fresh, faintly sweetcorn flavour.

INGREDIENTS

3 handfuls	Fresh chickweed tops (<i>Stellaria media</i>) — Tender upper aerial parts, washed
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	Salt and pepper — To taste
1 tbsp	Toasted seeds — Optional, for crunch

METHOD

1. Wash the chickweed gently and spin or pat dry.
2. Pile it loosely into a bowl.
3. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper into a light dressing.
4. Toss the chickweed lightly with the dressing, scatter over toasted seeds and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A classic ‘famine food’ and folk remedy across Europe, gathered as a free, nourishing spring green and made into cooling poultices and ointments for itchy skin, eczema and minor wounds; long valued as fodder for caged birds and poultry.

Fresh fig, prosciutto & rocket salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A classic late-summer Italian combination that needs almost no cooking — simply assemble ripe seasonal figs with salty prosciutto, peppery rocket and a drizzle of aged balsamic. The sweetness of the fruit balances the salt of the cured meat; the rocket cuts through richness. Serve as a starter or light lunch when figs are at peak ripeness.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Fresh ripe figs (<i>Ficus carica</i>)
60 g	Prosciutto crudo (or jamón)
60 g	Wild rocket (arugula) (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>)
20 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
15 g	Aged balsamic vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
25 g	Shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano or soft goat's cheese (optional)

METHOD

1. Wash figs gently and dry. Remove stems and cut each fig into halves or quarters (or into quarters lengthways for presentation). Wash hands after handling the cut stems.
2. Arrange rocket leaves on two plates. Lay prosciutto slices loosely over the rocket.
3. Nestle the fig pieces among the leaves and meat.
4. Drizzle olive oil then balsamic vinegar over the salad. Scatter shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano or crumbled goat's cheese if using.
5. Season with a little black pepper and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Figs are not truly a fruit but hundreds of flowers turned inward, blooming secretly in the dark.



Fresh kiwi and citrus vitamin-C salad

Food / culinary

A bright, five-minute fruit salad that pairs green kiwi with orange for a refreshing burst of vitamin C, gentle on digestion and pretty on the plate.

INGREDIENTS

3 whole	kiwifruit (<i>Actinidia deliciosa</i>) — Ripe green kiwifruit (<i>Actinidia deliciosa</i>), peeled and sliced
1 whole	Orange, peeled and segmented (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>) — Adds juice and extra vitamin C
1 tsp	Honey — Optional, to taste
4 whole	Fresh mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — For garnish and aroma

METHOD

1. Peel and slice the kiwifruit into rounds and place in a bowl.
2. Add the orange segments and any juice.
3. Drizzle with honey if using and toss gently.
4. Tear over the mint leaves and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long grown in China as ‘yang tao’, the vine was introduced to New Zealand in the early twentieth century, where it was renamed ‘kiwifruit’ after the national bird and became a global export crop.

Fresh Sea Lettuce Salad

Food / culinary • Makes ~65 g

A crisp, briny little salad that lets the tender green sheets of sea lettuce shine, dressed simply with sesame and citrus.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Sea lettuce (<i>Ulva lactuca</i>) — Fresh sea lettuce (<i>Ulva lactuca</i>), rinsed and torn into pieces
5 ml	Toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — For nutty aroma
10 ml	Rice vinegar (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Adds brightness
5 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh citrus lift
5 g	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — To garnish

METHOD

1. Rinse the fresh sea lettuce thoroughly in clean water to remove sand and grit, then drain well.
2. Tear or chop the fronds into bite-sized pieces and place in a bowl.
3. Whisk together the sesame oil, rice vinegar, and lemon juice.
4. Toss the sea lettuce in the dressing until lightly coated.
5. Scatter with toasted sesame seeds and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Coastal peoples across the world have gathered sea lettuce as a food and a fodder for centuries; it features in soups, salads, and condiments in East Asian, European, and other coastal cuisines.

Goldenberry & Avocado Salad with Lime Dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 2 portions

A bright, fresh salad that makes the most of the goldenberry's sweet-tart punch. The creamy avocado tames the tartness; lime and coriander lift the whole dish. This is the goldenberry at its most effortless — just eat it.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Cape gooseberries (ripe, husks removed) (<i>Physalis peruviana</i>) — All must be golden-orange; any green ones are too tart and under-ripe
1 piece	Ripe avocado (<i>Persea americana</i>)
30 ml	Lime juice (fresh, about 1 lime) (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
15 ml	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
10 g	Fresh coriander (cilantro), roughly chopped (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>)
2 g	Flaky sea salt

METHOD

1. Remove husks from goldenberries; halve and place in a bowl. Add the avocado cubes.
2. Whisk the lime juice, olive oil and salt together and pour over the fruit. Toss gently.
3. Scatter with coriander and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Native to the Andean highlands, goldenberry has been cultivated by indigenous Andean peoples for centuries. Archaeological remains suggest use in pre-Columbian Peru.

Green Papaya Salad

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Unripe (green) papaya is crisp and mild, and its natural papain enzyme is traditionally valued after heavy meals. Shredded into a fresh salad it is cooling and crunchy.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Papaya (<i>Carica papaya</i>) — green (unripe) papaya, peeled and shredded
2 tbsp	lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
1 tbsp	fish sauce or soy sauce
2 tbsp	roasted peanuts (<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>) — chopped
6 whole	cherry tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — halved

METHOD

1. Peel the green papaya and shred it into fine strips.
2. Whisk lime juice with fish or soy sauce to make a dressing.
3. Toss the shredded papaya and tomatoes with the dressing.
4. Top with chopped roasted peanuts and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Taste before you trust; stir before you judge.



Hollyhock Petal Salad Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes 20 g fresh petals

Hollyhock petals have been eaten as a mild, colourful edible garnish across Europe and Asia for centuries. Dark-flowered varieties — deep burgundy, purple, or near-black — contribute the most visual impact; all single-flowered types are usable. The flavour is mild and slightly mucilaginous. This simple preparation uses fresh petals as a seasonal salad garnish, as documented in folk culinary tradition and foraging literature.

INGREDIENTS

20 g Hollyhock petals (fresh, single-flowered — any colour) (*Alcea rosea*)

METHOD

1. Harvest fully open hollyhock flowers in the morning, choosing petals free from rust spots or pest damage.
2. Gently separate the petals from the staminal column and calyx (green cup); discard those parts.
3. Rinse petals briefly in cool water and pat dry on a clean cloth or paper towel.
4. Scatter petals over salads, desserts, or drinks immediately before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The scent of a single rose is woven from hundreds of separate notes, more than any perfume has ever been able to name.



Horiatiki — Greek village salad with cucumber

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The classic Greek summer salad: chunks of cucumber and ripe tomato with red onion, olives and feta, dressed simply with olive oil, oregano and a little vinegar. Cucumber at its freshest and most hydrating, raw and food-first.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>), fruit
350 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe
60 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
40 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
80 g	Kalamata olives (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
150 g	Feta cheese
15 g	Red wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — To taste
2 g	Dried oregano (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>)
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Cut the cucumber and tomatoes into rough chunks; thinly slice the red onion.
2. Combine in a bowl with the Kalamata olives.
3. Top with a slab of feta cheese, left whole rather than crumbled.
4. Dress with olive oil, red wine vinegar, dried oregano and salt.
5. Toss gently and serve at once with bread to mop up the juices.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A day on Venus is longer than its year; the planet turns more slowly than it flies around the sun.

Land cress salad with lemon, toasted walnuts & goat cheese

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A simple, vibrant salad showcasing young land cress leaves at their freshest. The peppery bite of the cress pairs beautifully with tart lemon dressing, rich toasted walnuts, and creamy goat cheese. Ready in under 10 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Land cress (<i>Barbarea verna</i>) — Young rosette leaves, washed and dried
30 g	Walnuts, shelled (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Toast in a dry pan 3–4 min until fragrant, cool before using
18 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Density ~0.91 g/ml; ~20 ml
15 g	Lemon juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Density ~1.05 g/ml; ~14 ml
40 g	Soft goat cheese (chèvre) — Crumble over salad at serving

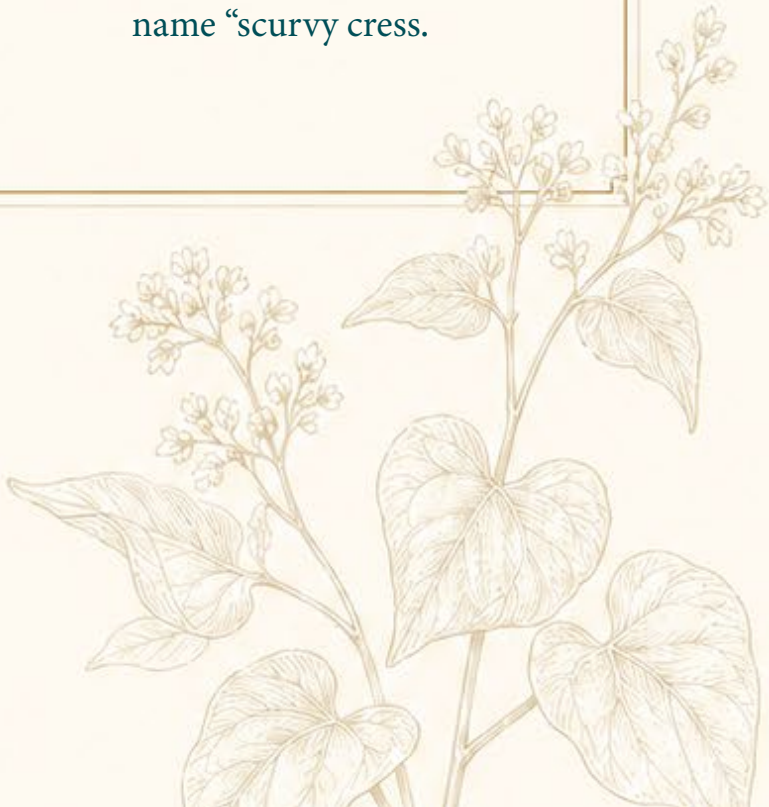
METHOD

1. Wash the land cress leaves and dry thoroughly in a salad spinner or pat dry with a clean cloth.
2. Toast the walnuts in a dry frying pan over medium heat for 3–4 minutes, stirring frequently, until golden and fragrant. Tip onto a plate and leave to cool.
3. Whisk together the olive oil and lemon juice with a pinch of fine salt and freshly ground black pepper to make the dressing.
4. Toss the cress leaves with the dressing in a large bowl. Pile onto plates and scatter over the cooled walnuts and crumbled goat cheese. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its high vitamin C content gave it practical value in late winter and early spring when scurvy was a real dietary concern among poorer populations — reflected in the folk name “scurvy cress.”



Mallow Flower & Young Leaf Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Fresh mallow flowers and tender young leaves make a beautiful, edible addition to salads and are a genuine traditional food across Europe and the Mediterranean. The flowers have a mild, pleasant flavour; the young leaves are mucilaginous and slightly spinach-like. The ‘cheeses’ — the disc-shaped unripe fruits — have a mild, nutty taste and are a long-standing forager’s snack. This is straightforward kitchen use, not a remedy.

INGREDIENTS

- 20 grams Fresh mallow flowers (*Malva sylvestris*) — Freshly picked, just-opened flowers; handle gently
- 30 grams Young mallow leaves (*Malva sylvestris*), leaf — Young, tender leaves only; rinse and pat dry
- 10 grams Mallow seed-fruits (cheeses) (*Malva sylvestris*) — Unripe disc-shaped fruits (‘cheeses’), optional — adds mild nutty flavour

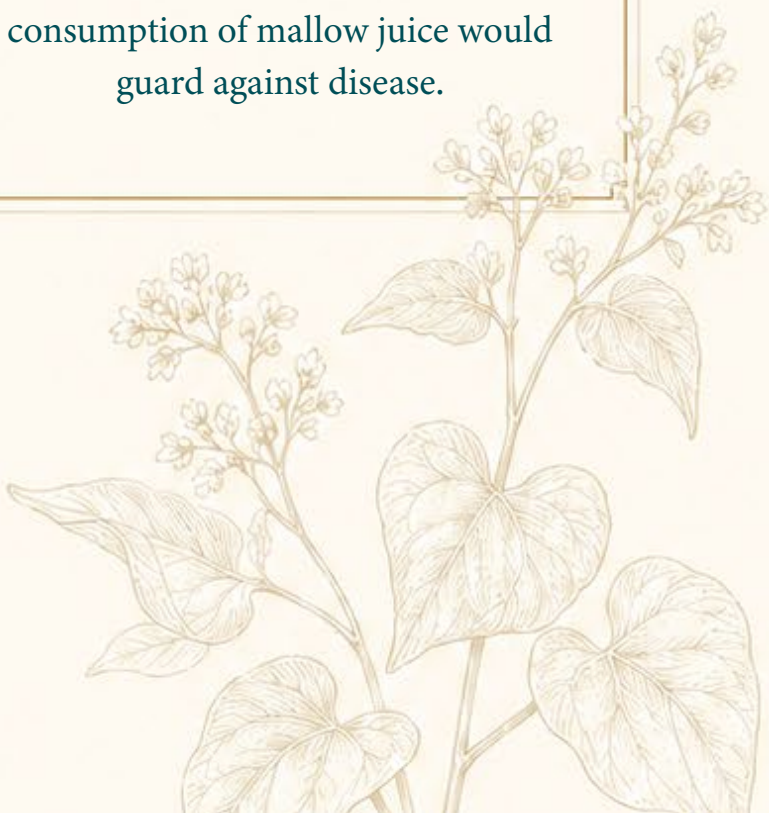
METHOD

1. Pick mallow flowers and young leaves just before preparing the salad — they wilt quickly once harvested. Choose flowers that have just fully opened, with vivid colour and no browning at the petal edges.
2. Gently rinse flowers and leaves in cool water and pat dry with a clean towel. Remove any visible insects.
3. Arrange young mallow leaves as the base of the salad. Scatter flowers over the top. If using the disc-shaped seed fruits (cheeses), add them whole — they have a mild, slightly nutty flavour.
4. Dress lightly with olive oil, a squeeze of lemon, and a pinch of salt, or leave undressed and combine with other salad leaves. Serve immediately — the flowers bruise and wilt within 1–2 hours.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mallow has been a garden, kitchen and healing plant since antiquity. The Roman statesman Cicero joked of his diet of mallows and olives; Pliny the Elder noted that daily consumption of mallow juice would guard against disease.



Moroccan Orange & Cumin Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic Moroccan salad — sliced fresh oranges dressed with cumin, cinnamon, a little honey, and fresh mint. A serving of 2 oranges provides well over the adult NRV for vitamin C, plus potassium, folate, and fibre. One of the oldest and simplest ways to eat an orange well.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Sweet oranges (approx. 4 large) (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>)
3 g	Ground cumin (½ tsp) (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
1 g	Ground cinnamon (¼ tsp) (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>)
10 g	Honey (1 tsp, optional)
10 g	Fresh mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)

METHOD

1. Peel the oranges, removing all the white pith. Slice into rounds approximately 0.5 cm thick and arrange on a wide plate or shallow bowl.
2. In a small bowl, combine the cumin, cinnamon, and honey (and orange flower water if using). Mix to a loose paste with a teaspoon of the juice that has collected on the plate.
3. Drizzle the spice mixture evenly over the orange slices.
4. Scatter the fresh mint leaves over the top. Allow to sit for 15–30 minutes at room temperature before serving to let the flavours develop. Serve as is — no further seasoning needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The sweet orange has been cultivated in southern China for over 2,000 years and was mentioned in Chinese literature by 314 BC.

Mâche, orange & avocado winter salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A bright, vitamin-C-rich winter salad: tender corn salad with juicy orange segments and creamy avocado, dressed with orange and olive oil. Hydrating, fresh and food-first — exactly the kind of real-food plate that delivers nutrition through the meal itself.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Lamb's lettuce (<i>Valerianella locusta</i>), leaf — Whole washed rosettes
240 g	Sweet Orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>) — About 2 oranges
150 g	Avocado (<i>Persea americana</i>) — About 1 avocado
25 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the mâche well and spin dry.
2. Cut the peel and pith from the oranges and slice into segments or rounds, catching the juice in a bowl.
3. Halve, stone and slice the avocado.
4. Whisk the caught orange juice with the olive oil and a pinch of salt to make a dressing.
5. Arrange the mâche with the orange and avocado, drizzle with the dressing and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Avocado has been cultivated in Mesoamerica for thousands of years — archaeological remains date its use back roughly 9,000–10,000 years in the Tehuacán Valley of Mexico, and it was a staple of the Maya and Aztec.

Mâche, pear & walnut salad with lemon dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A delicate winter salad of soft corn salad leaves with sweet ripe pear, toasted walnuts and a bright lemon dressing. Light, hydrating and food-first — the gentle mâche lets the pear and nut shine.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Lamb's lettuce (<i>Valerianella locusta</i>), leaf — Whole washed rosettes
180 g	Common Pear (<i>Pyrus communis</i>) — About 2 small pears
40 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice of about half a lemon
25 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
5 g	Honey
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the mâche well and spin dry, keeping the rosettes whole.
2. Quarter, core and thinly slice the pear; toss with a little of the lemon juice to stop browning.
3. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan until fragrant, then roughly chop.
4. Whisk the remaining lemon juice with the olive oil, honey and salt to make a dressing.
5. Just before serving, dress the mâche lightly, arrange with the pear slices and scatter the walnuts over.
6. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pear cultivation is among the oldest recorded in Europe and western Asia, with at least 3,000 years of documented cultivation. Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 8th century BCE) lists pears among the gifts of the gods in the orchard of Alcinous.

Northern-style potato salad with dill, chives & mustard

Food / culinary • Makes 750 g

Waxy potatoes boiled, cooled and dressed while still warm so they drink in a mustardy dressing, then folded with dill and chives. Cooling the cooked potato also builds resistant starch. A fresh, herby way with the potato that sits happily on any summer table.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Waxy potatoes (e.g. Charlotte, fingerling), scrubbed and boiled, then sliced
90 g	Mayonnaise or yoghurt — Mayonnaise or thick yoghurt (~6 tbsp)
10 g	Mustard (<i>Sinapis alba</i>) — Wholegrain or Dijon mustard (<i>Sinapis</i> / <i>Brassica</i>)
6 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>) — Fresh dill, chopped
6 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>) — Fresh chives, snipped
4 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Boil the scrubbed waxy potatoes in salted water until just tender; drain and slice while still warm.
2. Whisk together the mayonnaise or yoghurt with the mustard, salt and pepper to make the dressing.
3. Pour the dressing over the warm sliced potatoes and toss gently so they absorb the flavour as they cool.
4. Fold in the chopped dill and chives once the potatoes have cooled slightly.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning, then chill or serve at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every herb was once a stranger
someone dared to taste.



Nutty Wheat Berry Salad

Food / culinary

Whole wheat berries cooked until plump and chewy, then tossed with herbs, lemon and vegetables for a wholesome grain salad full of fibre and slow energy.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Whole wheat berries (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Rinsed
3 cups	Water or stock — For cooking the grain
1 cup	Cherry tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Halved
1 cup	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Diced
0.5 cup	Fresh parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Chopped
2 tbsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Freshly squeezed
3 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra virgin
1 to taste	Salt and pepper — To season

METHOD

1. Rinse the wheat berries and bring to the boil in the water or stock.
2. Reduce to a simmer and cook, partly covered, for 45-60 minutes until plump and chewy but tender; drain any excess liquid.
3. Let the grains cool slightly, then tip into a bowl.
4. Add the tomatoes, cucumber and parsley.
5. Whisk the lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper and toss through the salad.
6. Serve warm or chilled, adjusting seasoning before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Wheat is among the founding crops of civilisation, central to Neolithic agriculture and to countless myths of grain and harvest, from Demeter and Ceres to the sheaf as a symbol of plenty and resurrection.

Pear, Walnut & Blue Cheese Autumn Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Ripe pear eaten raw at its best — no cooking required. The sweetness of pear, the bitterness of walnuts, the tang of blue cheese and the pepperiness of rocket make this a perfect seasonal autumn salad. Ready in five minutes. Eat the peel — that is where much of the fibre and polyphenols are.

INGREDIENTS

220 g	Ripe pear (Conference, Comice or Williams), thinly sliced, unpeeled (<i>Pyrus communis</i>)
60 g	Rocket (arugula) leaves (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>)
40 g	Walnut halves (lightly toasted) (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
50 g	Blue cheese (Gorgonzola, Roquefort or Stilton), crumbled
24 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
10 g	Apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
7 g	Honey

METHOD

1. Whisk together olive oil, vinegar or lemon juice, honey, salt and black pepper to make a dressing.
2. Arrange rocket on two plates. Lay pear slices (leave the peel on) over the rocket. Scatter walnut halves and crumbled blue cheese.
3. Drizzle dressing over just before serving. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Eat immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Roman writers including Pliny the Elder described at least 40 pear varieties by the 1st century CE, noting the fruit was more digestible cooked than raw and was preserved in honey.

Raw broccoli & stalk slaw with lemon-yogurt dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A crunchy raw slaw that rescues the often-discarded broccoli stalk: peeled and grated with the florets and carrot, dressed with lemon-yogurt. Eating broccoli raw keeps the most vitamin C and sulforaphane.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), flower — Broccoli, stalk peeled and grated, florets finely chopped
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, grated (~2 medium)
120 g	Plain yogurt
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1/2 lemon)
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil
3 g	Salt and pepper — Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Peel the tough outer skin from the broccoli stalk, then grate the stalk and finely chop the florets. Grate the carrot.
2. Whisk the yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper into a dressing.
3. Toss the broccoli and carrot with the dressing and let sit 10 minutes before serving so the flavours meld.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It became prized in the Renaissance as an antiscorbutic — long before vitamin C was characterised, mariners and physicians observed that citrus juice prevented and cured scurvy.

Raw kohlrabi slaw with lemon & fresh herbs

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A bright, crunchy slaw that lets kohlrabi’s mild, sweet flavour shine. Ready in minutes, rich in vitamin C — an everyday way to get the full nutritional benefit of raw kohlrabi. Pairs beautifully with grilled fish, roast chicken, grain bowls or as a standalone lunch.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Kohlrabi (swollen stem) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — About 2–3 medium kohlrabi (5–7 cm diameter)
30 g	Spring onions (scallions) (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — About 3–4 spring onions
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — About 1 unwaxed lemon — juice and zest both used
30 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — ~2 tablespoons; density_g_per_ml 0.91
10 g	Fresh flat-leaf parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Or substitute dill, mint, or chives
	Salt and black pepper — Season to taste

METHOD

1. Peel the kohlrabi if larger than 5 cm, then julienne or coarsely grate into a large bowl.
2. Thinly slice the spring onions and add to the bowl.
3. Zest and juice the lemon directly over the kohlrabi.
4. Add the olive oil, salt and black pepper, and toss well.
5. Fold in the fresh herbs.
6. Taste and adjust lemon and salt, then rest 5–10 minutes before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mint spreads so freely that the old gardeners planted it in buried pots, to teach it a little modesty.



Raw Shredded Brussels Sprout Salad with Pecans & Grain Mustard Dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Raw Brussels sprouts, finely shredded, have a nutty, slightly peppery flavour quite different from their cooked counterpart. This makes a robust, transportable salad that improves the longer it sits in the dressing — ideal for packed lunches and Christmas buffet tables. The combination with toasted pecans, dried cranberries and a sharp grain-mustard dressing is a classic pairing that balances the slight bitterness of the raw sprout with sweetness and crunch.

INGREDIENTS

- 400 grams Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea* var. *gemmifera*)
- 60 grams Pecan halves, toasted (*Carya illinoensis*)
- 40 grams Dried cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*)
- 30 grams Parmesan or aged Pecorino, shaved
- 15 grams Wholegrain mustard
- 15 grams Apple cider vinegar (*Malus domestica*)
- 40 grams Extra-virgin olive oil (*Olea europaea*)
- 5 grams Honey
- Salt and black pepper (*Piper nigrum*)

METHOD

1. Remove any damaged outer leaves and the tough base from each Brussels sprout. Shred as finely as possible using a mandoline or a sharp knife — you want feathery ribbons.
2. Whisk together the mustard, apple cider vinegar, olive oil, honey, salt and a generous amount of black pepper to make the dressing.
3. Pour the dressing over the shredded sprouts and toss well. Leave for at least 10 minutes (up to 1 hour) so the sprouts soften slightly and absorb the dressing.
4. Add the toasted pecans, dried cranberries and shaved Parmesan. Toss gently to combine.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve on a large platter or in individual bowls.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Brussels sprouts are named for the city of Brussels in present-day Belgium, where they were cultivated and popularised from at least the 17th century.

Raw Sunchoke and Apple Salad with Lemon and Hazelnut

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Raw Jerusalem artichoke has a crisp, juicy texture — reminiscent of water chestnut or jicama — with a pleasant, mildly sweet, nutty flavour. Shaved thin and dressed immediately in lemon juice (which also prevents browning), it is delightful raw in a simple salad. Pair with sharp apple, toasted hazelnuts and peppery rocket for a bright, crunchy, nourishing autumn or winter salad.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Jerusalem artichoke tubers (<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>) — Drop slices immediately into lemon water to prevent browning
200 g	Crisp apple (e.g. Cox, Braeburn, Granny Smith) (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — 1 large apple
60 g	Rocket (arugula) leaves (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>)
50 g	Toasted hazelnut halves (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) — Toasted in a dry pan, roughly chopped
40 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — 3 tablespoons for dressing
30 g	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — 2 tablespoons; also use extra to acidulate soaking water
5 g	Dijon mustard — 1 teaspoon; for the dressing
40 g	Parmesan or aged hard cheese (optional) — Shaved; optional but excellent with the nutty sunchoke
3 g	Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Prepare a bowl of cold water with a good squeeze of lemon juice (acidulated water). Scrub sunchokes well. Using a mandoline or sharp knife, slice very thinly (2–3 mm); drop each slice immediately into the acidulated water to prevent browning.
2. Make the dressing: whisk together 30 g lemon juice, mustard, salt and pepper in a bowl. Slowly whisk in olive oil until emulsified.
3. Slice the apple thinly just before serving. Drain the sunchoke slices well and pat dry.
4. Combine sunchoke, apple, rocket and half the hazelnuts in a large bowl. Pour over the dressing and toss gently.
5. Pile onto plates. Top with the remaining hazelnuts and shaved Parmesan (if using). Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mustard grows from one of the smallest seeds into a plant a bird can shelter in, a favourite old image of great things from little.

Roasted beetroot, goat cheese & walnut salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Sweet, earthy roasted beetroot wedges tossed with peppery leaves, creamy goat cheese, toasted walnuts and an orange-balsamic dressing — a classic, simple way to enjoy beetroot as a whole food. Roasting concentrates the beet’s natural sugars.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
40 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
80 g	Mixed peppery salad leaves (rocket, baby chard)
100 g	Soft goat cheese
50 g	Walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
15 g	Balsamic vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
3 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Scrub the beetroot, cut into wedges, toss with a little olive oil and salt, and roast at 200°C for 35-45 minutes until tender and caramelised at the edges; cool slightly.
2. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan until fragrant.
3. Whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, citrus juice, salt and pepper to make the dressing.
4. Toss the salad leaves with most of the dressing.
5. Pile the dressed leaves onto plates, top with the warm roasted beetroot, crumble over the goat cheese and scatter with walnuts.
6. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and serve as a starter or light lunch.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Saturn is so light for its size that, given an ocean wide enough, the whole planet would float.

Rocket, Parmesan & lemon salad (insalata di rucola)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The classic Italian way with rocket: peppery leaves dressed simply in extra-virgin olive oil and lemon, finished with shavings of hard cheese. The fat and acid tame and lift the mustardy bite, and a little olive oil helps the fat-soluble vitamin K and carotenoids come along for the ride.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Rocket (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>) — Fresh young rocket leaves, washed and dried
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice (~½ lemon)
40 g	Parmesan / pecorino (shaved) — Parmesan or pecorino, shaved
2 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Pile the washed, well-dried rocket loosely in a wide bowl.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, a pinch of salt and a grind of pepper into a light dressing.
3. Pour the dressing over the leaves and toss gently with your hands just to coat — do not overdress.
4. Scatter the shaved cheese over the top and serve at once, while the leaves are still crisp.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The table is the first apothecary.

Rocket, walnut & pomegranate salad

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

A bright autumn salad where rocket's pepperiness meets sweet-tart pomegranate, toasted walnuts and a little olive oil and lemon. Walnuts and oil add good fats; the jewel-like pomegranate seeds bring colour, crunch and vitamin C.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Rocket (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>) — Fresh rocket leaves, washed and dried
40 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Walnut halves, toasted and roughly broken
60 g	Pomegranate (<i>Punica granatum</i>) — Pomegranate seeds (arils)
25 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
12 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
2 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan until fragrant, then cool and break into pieces.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice and a pinch of salt into a dressing.
3. Toss the rocket lightly with most of the dressing and pile onto a platter.
4. Scatter over the walnuts and pomegranate seeds, drizzle with the remaining dressing and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Rocket has been eaten and prized around the Mediterranean since antiquity.



Salade de mâche aux betteraves et noix — French corn salad with beetroot & walnuts

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The classic French winter salad: tender mâche (corn salad) heaped with sweet roasted beetroot and toasted walnuts, dressed simply with walnut oil and a little vinegar. Corn salad at its most traditional and food-first — a nourishing cold-season green when little else is fresh.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Lamb's lettuce (<i>Valerianella locusta</i>), leaf — Whole washed rosettes
250 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>) — Cooked, cooled, diced
40 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Toasted, roughly chopped
30 g	Walnut oil (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
10 g	Red wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — To taste
5 g	Dijon mustard
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the mâche well in several changes of water to remove grit; spin dry, keeping the rosettes whole.
2. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan until fragrant; roughly chop.
3. Whisk the walnut oil with the vinegar, mustard and a pinch of salt to make the dressing.
4. Just before serving, toss the mâche lightly with most of the dressing.
5. Pile onto plates, scatter over the diced beetroot and walnuts, and drizzle with the remaining dressing.
6. Serve at once, while the leaves are perky.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The light from some stars we see
tonight left them before humans had
learned to write.

Salade lyonnaise — frisée, lardons & soft-poached egg

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The definitive Lyon bistro salad: frilly, self-blanching pale frisée tossed in a warm, sharp Dijon vinaigrette, topped with crispy smoky lardons and a runny soft-poached egg. Bitter greens, pork fat and egg yolk are made for each other. A meal in itself.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Endive (<i>Cichorium endivia</i>), leaf — self-blanching inner frisée / curly endive, pale leaves; wash and dry well
100 g	Smoked lardons — smoked lardons or thick-cut smoked bacon cut into cubes
2 each	Eggs — very fresh; poached soft (3–4 min in simmering water + splash of white wine vinegar)
30 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra-virgin olive oil; density_g_per_ml 0.91; home_unit tbsp
15 ml	White wine vinegar — for dressing
5 g	Dijon mustard — 1 tsp Dijon mustard

METHOD

1. Separate the frisée into individual leaves, discarding any very dark bitter outer leaves. Wash well, spin dry and place in a large serving bowl.
2. Fry the lardons in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat until golden and beginning to crisp. Do not drain — you want the warm fat in the pan for the dressing.
3. Make the warm vinaigrette: remove the pan from the heat, add the Dijon mustard to the pan, then pour in the white wine vinegar and stir briskly to deglaze. Add the olive oil and whisk to combine. Taste and season.
4. Poach the eggs: bring a deep pan of water to a gentle simmer, add a splash of white wine vinegar, swirl the water and slide in the eggs one at a time. Poach 3–4 minutes for a runny yolk. Lift out with a slotted spoon and blot briefly on kitchen paper.
5. Pour the warm dressing and lardons over the frisée and toss immediately to wilt the leaves very slightly. Divide between two plates, top each with a poached egg, season with black pepper and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It appears in classical texts under names related to intybus/intybum — Pliny the Elder notes it used as a pot herb and salad plant in the Natural History (1st century CE).

Scarlet Sage Blossom & Citrus Salad

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

The slender red flowers of scarlet sage hold a drop of sweet nectar children love to sip. Scattered over a bright citrus salad, they add colour and a gentle herbal sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

20 flowers	Scarlet Sage (<i>Salvia coccinea</i>) — fresh scarlet sage blooms, green calyx removed
2 whole	Orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>) — peeled and sliced into rounds
100 g	Baby salad leaves — mild lettuce or rocket
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tsp	Honey

METHOD

1. Arrange the salad leaves and orange rounds on a wide platter.
2. Whisk the olive oil with the honey and a pinch of salt, and drizzle over.
3. Scatter the scarlet sage flowers generously across the top.
4. Serve at once so the blooms stay bright.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Salvia coccinea has been part of Mesoamerican and Caribbean culture for centuries.



Scurvy-Grass Fresh Cress Salad Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes ~70 g

The sharp, cress-like leaves of scurvy-grass are extraordinarily rich in vitamin C. Used raw and in small quantity, they add a peppery bite to a coastal salad, just as sailors once ate them to ward off scurvy.

INGREDIENTS

12 g	Common scurvygrass (<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>) — Fresh young scurvy-grass leaves, washed
60 g	Mixed salad leaves — Milder greens to balance the sharpness
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Wash the scurvy-grass and salad leaves well and pat dry.
2. Tear the milder salad leaves into a bowl and scatter the scurvy-grass leaves over them.
3. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice and a pinch of salt into a light dressing.
4. Toss gently and serve immediately while the leaves are crisp.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Common scurvygrass was for centuries the pre-eminent European remedy against scurvy, the vitamin-C-deficiency disease that plagued sailors, polar expeditions and northern populations through the long, fresh-food-poor winters.

Semizotu salatası — Turkish purslane & yoghurt salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A cooling Turkish summer salad of fresh purslane (semizotu) dressed with garlicky yoghurt, olive oil and lemon. The creamy yoghurt offsets purslane’s lemony tang and its calcium helps bind some of the oxalate, while the raw leaves deliver omega-3 ALA and vitamin C. A refreshing mezze.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Purslane (<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
250 g	Plain yoghurt (strained / Turkish-style) — Calcium helps bind oxalate
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the purslane and pick over the leaves and tender stems; pat dry.
2. Whisk the yoghurt with the crushed garlic, olive oil, lemon juice and salt.
3. Fold the purslane through the yoghurt dressing just before serving.
4. Serve cold as a mezze or side with grilled food and bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In ancient Greece the olive was sacred to Athena, who in myth gave the tree to Athens; victorious athletes at the Olympic Games were crowned with olive wreaths, and an olive branch has signified peace since antiquity.

Signet Marigold Petal Garnish for Salads & Grain Dishes

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

The edible ray petals of *Tagetes tenuifolia* (signet marigold, especially the ‘Lemon Gem’ and ‘Golden Gem’ cultivars) are a genuinely documented culinary ingredient — among the most palatable of all edible flower petals. They carry a bright citrus–lemon flavour with a hint of anise and mild spice, without the bitter aftertaste of African marigold (*T. erecta*). The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service confirms signet marigold petals as safe and pleasant for culinary use; they are widely documented as a garnish for salads, grain dishes, cheese, and desserts in horticultural and culinary literature.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 g Signet marigold ray petals (fresh) (*Tagetes tenuifolia*) — Remove green receptacle and white petal base; use Lemon Gem, Golden Gem, or Tangerine Gem cultivars

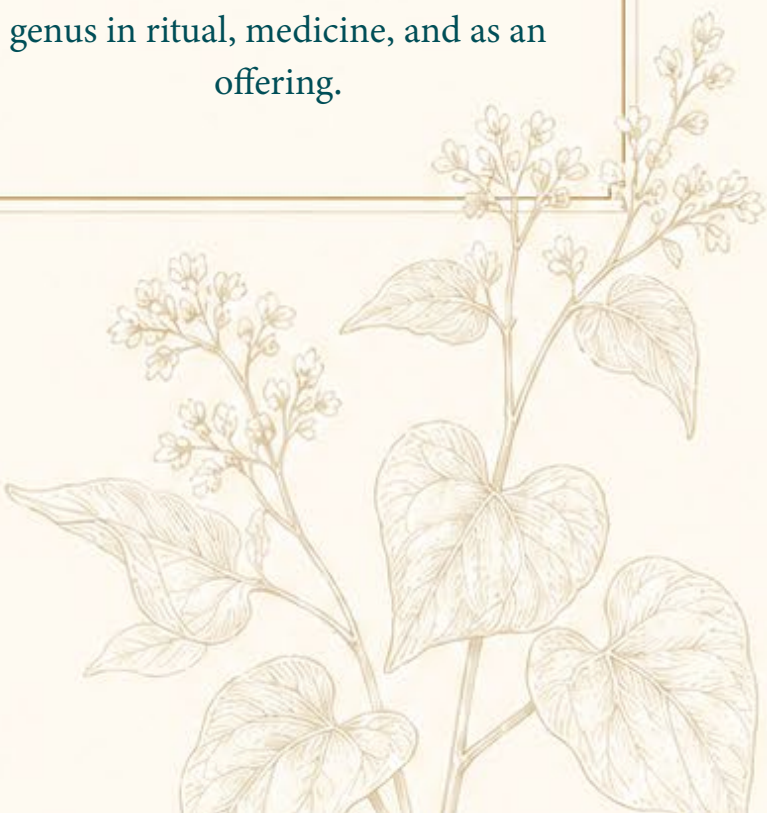
METHOD

1. Harvest signet marigold flowers in the morning once they have fully opened. Choose flowers with vivid, unfaded petals.
2. Gently pull each ray petal away from the flower head. Discard the green receptacle and pinch off the small white or pale tip at the base of each petal to reduce any residual bitterness.
3. Rinse petals briefly under cool water if needed; pat dry gently. Use immediately.
4. Scatter petals over a dressed green salad, grain bowl, couscous, or use to garnish desserts, cheese boards, or cold soups just before serving.
5. Serve at once — petals wilt quickly once separated from the flower head.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Tagetes species are deeply woven into Mexican and Mesoamerican culture. The Aztecs called marigolds cempasúchil (“flower of 400 lives” or “flower of the dead”) and used the genus in ritual, medicine, and as an offering.



Simple green salad with lemon & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The everyday way to eat lettuce as real food: crisp, freshly washed leaves dressed simply with good olive oil, lemon and a little salt. Dressing lettuce with oil helps the body absorb its fat-soluble carotenoids (vitamin A) and vitamin K.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) — Mixed lettuce leaves (loose-leaf, butterhead or cos), washed and torn
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Wash the lettuce leaves and spin or pat them dry.
2. Tear into bite-size pieces and put in a wide bowl.
3. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper together.
4. Pour the dressing over the leaves just before serving.
5. Toss gently with your hands so every leaf is lightly coated.
6. Serve at once, while crisp.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Clean food asks nothing of the body but thanks.

Simple mâche salad with walnut-oil vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The purest way to enjoy corn salad: a bowl of tender mâche rosettes dressed with nothing more than nutty walnut oil, a little vinegar and salt. This lets the soft, faintly sweet leaf speak for itself — the simplest food-first preparation.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Lamb's lettuce (<i>Valerianella locusta</i>), leaf — Whole washed rosettes
20 g	Walnut oil (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
8 g	Sherry or red wine vinegar — To taste
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the mâche in several changes of cold water to remove grit, keeping the rosettes whole.
2. Spin or pat dry gently.
3. Whisk the walnut oil, vinegar and salt together.
4. Just before serving, toss the leaves very lightly with the dressing, handling gently so they don't bruise.
5. Serve at once as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It was brought into French kitchen gardens and improved into a salad crop by the 17th–18th centuries, becoming especially prized in France (mâche) and Germany (Feldsalat) as a delicate winter salad.

Smashed cucumber salad with garlic & sesame (拍黄瓜)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A quick Chinese cold dish (*pai huang gua*): cucumbers are smashed and torn so the craggy surfaces drink up a garlicky, savoury, slightly sour-spicy dressing of soy, vinegar, sesame oil and chilli. Smashing (rather than slicing) makes the cucumber taste juicier and more flavourful. Fast, fresh and food-first.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>), fruit
3 count	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
6 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
2 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — To taste
20 g	Light soy sauce
15 g	Rice or black (Chinkiang) vinegar
8 g	Toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
3 g	Sugar — To taste
2 g	Fine sea salt — For salting

METHOD

1. Smash the cucumbers with the flat of a knife or a rolling pin until they crack.
2. Tear or cut into bite-sized pieces.
3. Salt and let sit 10 minutes, then drain off the released water.
4. Whisk together the crushed garlic, soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, sugar and chilli.
5. Toss the cucumber with the dressing.
6. Scatter with toasted sesame seeds and serve cold, soon after dressing.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The chilli's heat is a plant's clever bargain: it burns the mammal and spares the bird that carries its seed farther.

Snapdragon Petal Garden Salad

Food / culinary

Snapdragon blooms are one of the most widely used edible garnish flowers. They carry very little flavour of their own and are quite bitter if eaten in quantity, so they belong scattered over a plate as living colour rather than cooked into a dish.

INGREDIENTS

12 florets	Common Snapdragon (<i>Antirrhinum majus</i>) — Fresh unsprayed snapdragon blooms, separated into individual florets
4 handfuls	Mixed young salad leaves
2 tbsp	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tbsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Rinse the salad leaves and spin or pat them completely dry, then pile them loosely on a wide plate.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice and a pinch of salt into a light dressing and toss it through the leaves.
3. Gently check each snapdragon floret for insects and remove any green base that tastes bitter.
4. Scatter the florets over the dressed salad at the last moment so the colour stays bright, and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

An octopus has three hearts, and two of them stop when it swims, so it would rather walk.

Spring Dandelion Leaf Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A simple bitter spring salad of young dandelion leaves — one of the first wild greens of the year and a traditional tonic food, rich in potassium and a gentle bitter to wake up the appetite.

INGREDIENTS

100 g Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), leaf — young dandelion leaves (~2 servings)

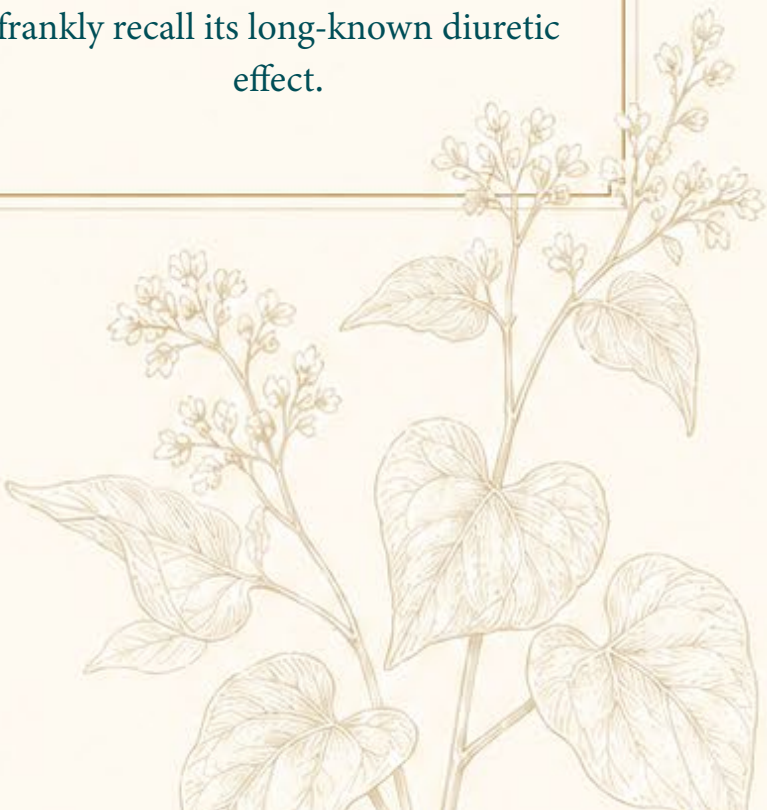
METHOD

1. Pick young, tender dandelion leaves before the plant flowers (blanched/pale leaves are mildest). Wash well and dry.
2. Tear into a bowl. If desired, soften the bitterness by tossing with a little salt and letting them sit briefly, or mixing with milder salad leaves.
3. Dress with olive oil, a squeeze of lemon or a splash of vinegar, and salt and pepper. A classic French version adds warm bacon lardons and a poached egg.
4. Toss and serve immediately as a bitter spring salad.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dandelion’s very name records its folk reputation — dent-de-lion, “lion’s tooth,” for the jagged leaves — while regional English names like “piss-a-bed” (French pissenlit) frankly recall its long-known diuretic effect.



Strawberry & peppermint fruit salad with lime

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

Ripe strawberries tossed with torn fresh peppermint and a squeeze of lime - the cool menthol makes the fruit taste even sweeter and more fragrant. A simple, naked-fruit dessert that puts the herb to work as food.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Strawberry (<i>Fragaria vesca</i>) — Ripe strawberries, hulled and halved
5 g	Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>), leaf — Fresh peppermint leaves, torn
15 ml	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice of about half a lime
8 g	Honey or sugar (optional) — Only if the fruit needs it

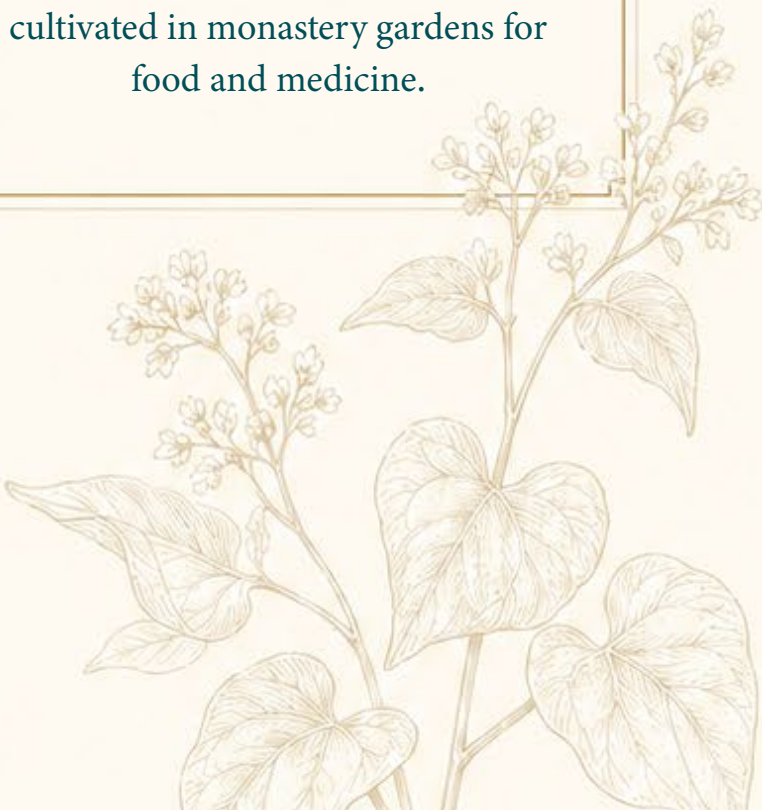
METHOD

1. Hull and halve the strawberries and put in a bowl.
2. Tear the fresh peppermint leaves and add to the strawberries.
3. Squeeze over the lime juice and toss gently.
4. Taste and add honey or sugar only if the fruit needs it.
5. Chill briefly, then serve on its own or with yoghurt, cream or ice cream.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fragaria vesca has been gathered from the wild since prehistory across Europe and Asia. Roman writers mention the fruit; it was a common garden plant in medieval Europe, cultivated in monastery gardens for food and medicine.



Strawberry, Basil & Balsamic Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Ripe strawberries, torn basil, a splash of aged balsamic and a little black pepper — a summer combination that needs nothing more. Serve as a light dessert, a starter with burrata, or alongside vanilla ice cream.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Ripe strawberries, hulled (<i>Fragaria x ananassa</i>)
20 g	Aged balsamic vinegar (di Modena) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
10 g	Runny honey or maple syrup
10 g	Fresh basil leaves, torn (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>)
1 pinch	Freshly ground black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Hull the strawberries and slice or quarter depending on size. Place in a wide, shallow bowl.
2. Drizzle over the balsamic vinegar and honey. Add a pinch of freshly ground black pepper and the torn basil leaves. Toss gently to coat.
3. Leave to macerate at room temperature for 15–20 minutes — the berries will soften slightly and release a fragrant, jewel-red syrup that mingles with the balsamic.
4. Serve as-is, or with thick yoghurt, whipped ricotta, burrata, crème fraîche, or vanilla ice cream alongside.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Basil was once exchanged as a token of love in old Italy, a single leaf meaning: come to the window.

Tabbouleh (Levantine Parsley Salad)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The classic Levantine herb salad in which flat-leaf parsley is the star, not a garnish — finely chopped by the bunch and lifted with mint, tomato, a little soaked bulgur, lemon and olive oil. A delicious everyday way to eat parsley as a vitamin-rich green.

INGREDIENTS

90 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>), leaf — flat-leaf parsley, very finely chopped (about 2 large bunches)
10 g	Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>), leaf — fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
60 g	fine bulgur wheat (<i>Triticum durum</i>) — fine bulgur wheat, soaked
200 g	ripe tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — ripe tomatoes, finely diced
40 g	spring onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — spring onion, finely sliced
45 g	extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
45 g	fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
3 g	salt — salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Soak the fine bulgur in a little cold water for 15–20 minutes until tender, then drain well and squeeze out excess water.
2. Wash the parsley thoroughly, dry it well, and chop very finely — discard the thickest stalks.
3. Finely chop the mint; dice the tomatoes and slice the spring onion.
4. Combine parsley, mint, tomato, spring onion and drained bulgur in a bowl.
5. Dress with olive oil, lemon juice and salt; toss and adjust seasoning. Serve fresh.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Peppermint is a relatively young plant, a cultivated hybrid first distinguished in England around the 1690s (described by John Ray) and soon valued as a digestive and flavouring herb; it was admitted to the London Pharmacopoeia in the 18th century.

Tabbouleh with spearmint — Levantine parsley & bulgur salad

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

The bright Levantine herb salad: masses of finely chopped parsley and fresh spearmint with a little fine bulgur, tomato, spring onion, lemon and olive oil. Spearmint is essential here, threading sweetness through the green. Food-first and herb-forward.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, very finely chopped
30 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh spearmint, finely chopped
150 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomato, finely diced
30 g	Welsh onion (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — Spring onion, thinly sliced
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1 lemon)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
50 g	Fine bulgur wheat (<i>Triticum durum</i>) — Soaked and drained
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Soak the fine bulgur in a little water until tender, then drain well.
2. Very finely chop the parsley and spearmint.
3. Dice the tomato and thinly slice the spring onion.
4. Combine the bulgur, parsley, mint, tomato and spring onion in a bowl.
5. Dress with lemon juice, olive oil and salt to taste.
6. Rest 10–15 minutes, then serve, often scooped with lettuce leaves.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Soup boils best in a quiet kitchen.

Tangy Wax Begonia Flower Salad

Food / culinary

The waxy leaves and bright blooms of wax begonia have a crisp, lemony-sour bite that lifts a simple green salad. Use them raw and sparingly as a garnish.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 small handful of petals | Wax Begonia (<i>Begonia cucullata</i>)
— wax begonia flowers, plus a few slivered young leaves |
| 4 cups | Mixed salad greens |
| 2 tbsp | Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) |
| 1 pinch | Sea salt |

METHOD

1. Gently rinse the begonia flowers and young leaves in cool water and pat dry.
2. Toss the salad greens with olive oil and a pinch of salt.
3. Slice a few young begonia leaves into thin slivers and fold them through the greens.
4. Scatter whole begonia petals over the top and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Wolves have a language of the tail and the ear so fine that a whole pack can move as a single thought.



Thai Pomelo Salad (Yam Som-O)

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Sweet-tart pomelo segments, which stay firm and pearly rather than collapsing, are tossed with a bright chilli-lime dressing, toasted coconut and peanuts for a refreshing salad that is all crunch and sparkle.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Pomelo (<i>Citrus maxima</i>) — Pomelo, peeled and broken into pearly segments
3 tbsp	Toasted shredded coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
3 tbsp	Roasted peanuts, chopped (<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>)
3 tbsp	Lime juice, palm sugar, fish sauce, chilli — Whisked into a dressing
2 tbsp	Fried shallots and coriander — To garnish

METHOD

1. Whisk the lime juice, palm sugar, fish sauce and chilli into a balanced sweet-sour-salty dressing.
2. Gently toss the pomelo pieces with the dressing, keeping them intact.
3. Fold through the toasted coconut and most of the peanuts.
4. Pile onto a plate and top with fried shallots, coriander and the remaining peanuts.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The pomelo holds deep cultural significance across East and Southeast Asia.

Tomato, cucumber & lovage summer salad

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

A bright raw salad where finely shredded lovage stands in for celery, giving ripe tomato and cucumber a savoury, aromatic lift. A quick, food-first way to enjoy the fresh leaf at its summer peak.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Lovage (<i>Levisticum officinale</i>) — Fresh lovage leaves, very finely shredded
400 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, cut into wedges
250 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, sliced or chunked
30 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Red onion, thinly sliced
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~1.5 tbsp)
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (a good squeeze)
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Combine the tomato wedges, cucumber and red onion in a bowl.
2. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper into a quick dressing.
3. Toss the salad with the dressing and the finely shredded lovage. Taste and adjust, and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long valued both as a savoury pot-herb and as a folk remedy “to warm the stomach” and to ease wind and water retention, it gathered country names such as love parsley and the “Maggi herb” for its stock-like aroma.

Vietnamese Fish Mint Herb Salad (Goi Diep Ca)

Food / culinary

A bright, cooling raw herb salad built around fresh fish mint leaves, a daily table staple in Vietnamese homes.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Fresh fish mint leaves (<i>Houttuynia cordata</i>) — Loosely packed, 1-1.5 cups
0.5 cup	Mixed soft herbs (mint, perilla, cilantro) (<i>Houttuynia cordata</i>) — Optional additions
1 tbsp	Fish sauce
1 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
1 tbsp	Roasted peanuts, crushed (<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>) — Optional garnish

METHOD

1. Wash fish mint and other herb leaves well and pat dry.
2. Whisk fish sauce, lime juice, a little sugar, and chili to taste for the dressing.
3. Toss herbs gently with the dressing just before serving.
4. Garnish with crushed peanuts and serve alongside the main dish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Called dokudami (‘poison blocker’) in Japan, where dried leaf tea is a folk detox and skin-health remedy; known as diep ca in Vietnam, where it is eaten fresh daily as a table herb believed to cool the body and aid digestion.

Waldorf salad — celery, apple & walnut

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

The classic New York salad celebrating raw celery’s crisp, refreshing crunch alongside sweet-tart apple and rich walnut, bound in a light yogurt-mayonnaise dressing with a squeeze of lemon. A simple way to enjoy celery as a fresh, hydrating food.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery stalks, diced (~4 stalks)
150 g	Apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Crisp apple, diced (~1 large)
60 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Walnuts, roughly chopped
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~half a lemon)
75 g	Yogurt + mayonnaise — Yogurt and mayonnaise, mixed (dressing)

METHOD

1. Mix the yogurt and mayonnaise together to make the dressing.
2. Dice the celery and apple into bite-sized pieces just before serving.
3. Toss the celery, apple and walnuts with the dressing and lemon juice until evenly coated.
4. Spoon onto a bed of salad leaves and serve immediately while crisp.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every apple seed carries a slightly different tree, so no two wild apples have ever tasted quite the same.

Warm artichoke heart & lemon salad with parsley (alcachofas salteadas)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A quick Spanish-style sauté: tender artichoke hearts pan-fried in olive oil with garlic until golden at the edges, finished with lemon and lots of parsley. Bright, simple and nourishing — a weeknight way to enjoy the artichoke as food.

INGREDIENTS

6 count	Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), plant — Artichoke hearts (fresh-cooked or well-drained jarred), halved
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, to finish
12 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, chopped
3 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan over medium-high heat.
2. Add the halved artichoke hearts and sauté, turning occasionally, until golden at the edges, about 5-7 minutes.
3. Add the sliced garlic in the last minute of cooking and sauté until fragrant, taking care not to burn it.
4. Remove from the heat, squeeze over the lemon juice, and season with salt and black pepper.
5. Scatter with chopped parsley and serve warm as a tapa, side or light lunch.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Snails can sleep for three years, waiting in their shell until the world grows kind and wet again.



Warm mâche salad with mushrooms & soft egg (Lyonnaise style)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A more substantial corn-salad supper in the Lyonnaise tradition: tender mâche barely warmed by pan-seared mushrooms and a soft egg, with a splash of warm vinegar dressing. The leaf stays mostly raw and food-first while the warm toppings make it a light meal.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Lamb's lettuce (<i>Valerianella locusta</i>), leaf — Whole washed rosettes
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — About 2 cloves
200 g	Chestnut/button mushrooms
2 g	Eggs — 2 eggs
20 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
10 g	Red wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
4 g	Dijon mustard
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the mâche well, dry gently, and divide between two plates.
2. Soft-boil or fry the eggs to your liking.
3. Sauté the sliced mushrooms in the olive oil over high heat with the garlic until golden.
4. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the vinegar and mustard to make a quick warm dressing.
5. Spoon the hot mushrooms and dressing over the mâche so the leaves just wilt.
6. Top each plate with a soft egg, grind over black pepper, and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A hummingbird's heart beats over a thousand times a minute, and it remembers every flower it has ever visited.

Watermelon, feta & fresh mint salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A simple, deeply refreshing summer salad that celebrates watermelon as food. The interplay of sweet, salty, creamy and herbal makes this one of the great summer combinations. Takes five minutes to assemble. Rich in lycopene, vitamin C, and potassium.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Watermelon flesh (<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>) — Choose a ripe, deep-red-fleshed variety; chill before using
150 g	Feta cheese
15 g	Fresh mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
30 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
15 g	Lime juice (freshly squeezed) (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
	Flaky sea salt & black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Remove the rind and seeds from the watermelon and cut the flesh into 3–4 cm cubes. Arrange on a large, flat serving platter.
2. Scatter the feta cheese over the watermelon.
3. Tear the mint leaves and distribute them over the salad.
4. Drizzle with olive oil and lime juice. Season lightly with flaky salt and a grind of black pepper.
5. Serve immediately — do not toss. The salad is best when the elements remain distinct on the plate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

What is sown with care is eaten with joy.

White Mustard Microgreen & Grain Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A nutritious, vibrant salad celebrating the fresh, spicy bite of white mustard microgreens (*Sinapis alba*) tossed with warm farro or spelt, roasted root vegetables, and a honey-lemon dressing. Mustard microgreens contain the same glucosinolate chemistry as the seeds — just expressed as fresh, peppery young shoots — along with vitamin C, B-vitamins, iron, calcium, and magnesium. This is nutrient-dense comfort food that comes together in 25 minutes. ALLERGEN: Contains mustard (EU Regulation 1169/2011 major allergen).

INGREDIENTS

80 g	White mustard (<i>Sinapis alba</i>), sprout seedling — White mustard microgreens or baby mustard greens, rinsed and dried
200 g	Farro or pearl spelt — Dry farro (emmer wheat) or pearl spelt; cook per pack instructions until tender, approx. 25–30 min
300 g	Roasted root vegetables (carrot/parsnip) — Carrots and/or parsnips, cut into 2 cm pieces, roasted with olive oil at 200 °C for 25 min
10 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 1 large clove, finely grated into the dressing
45 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
30 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice (approx. 1 lemon)
14 g	Honey — Runny honey
60 g	Toasted seeds — Toasted pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds for crunch
5 g	Salt and pepper — Fine sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Cook the farro or pearl spelt per packet instructions until tender but with a slight bite (al dente). Drain if necessary and set aside warm.
2. Toss the diced carrots/parsnips with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Roast at 200 °C (180 °C fan) for 20–25 minutes until golden and caramelised.
3. Whisk together the extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, honey, grated garlic, and a generous pinch of salt and



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

White mustard has been cultivated as a condiment and food plant for at least 3,000 years. Egyptian papyri and Sanskrit writings document mustard cultivation from approximately 2000–1500 BCE.

pepper to make the dressing.

4. In a large bowl, toss the warm farro with two-thirds of the dressing and allow to cool to just-warm (this allows the grain to absorb the dressing).
5. Add the roasted vegetables and toasted seeds to the bowl. Toss gently to combine.
6. Just before serving, add the mustard microgreens and drizzle with the remaining dressing. Toss lightly — the warmth of the grain will gently wilt the microgreens. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve immediately.

Wild autumn hawkbit bitter salad

Food / culinary

Picked young from a clean meadow, the tender rosette leaves of autumn hawkbit bring a pleasant dandelion-like bitterness to a spring or autumn salad, the kind of gentle wild bitter that quietly wakes up the appetite before a meal.

INGREDIENTS

2 handful	Autumn hawkbit (<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>) — Young autumn hawkbit rosette leaves, washed
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — For the dressing
1 tbsp	Cider vinegar (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — For the dressing
1 tsp	Honey — To balance the bitterness
1 pinch	Salt and pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young leaves well and spin or pat dry.
2. Whisk the olive oil, cider vinegar and honey with a little salt and pepper into a light dressing.
3. Toss the leaves gently in just enough dressing to coat.
4. Serve at once as a fresh bitter salad.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Gathered casually as a wild salad and potherb alongside dandelion and cat's-ear; related hawkbits were used in country districts as diuretics and for jaundice and dropsy, but autumn hawkbit itself carries little distinct folk-medicinal reputation.

Winged Bean Ulam Salad with Sambal Belacan

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

Crisp, young winged bean pods sliced thin and served raw with a fiery shrimp-paste sambal, a classic Malay and Indonesian ulam (raw vegetable) dish.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Young winged bean pods (<i>Psophocarpus tetragonolobus</i>) — Sliced thin on the diagonal
2 tbsp	Sambal belacan
1 piece	Lime (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — Wedged, for squeezing

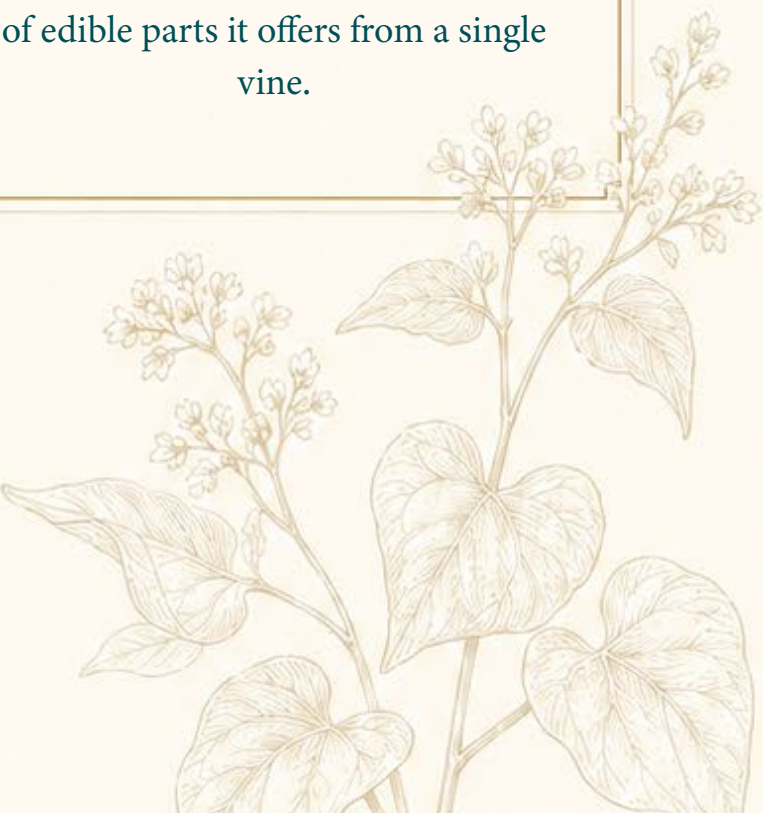
METHOD

1. Wash the winged bean pods and trim the stem ends.
2. Slice thinly on the diagonal to show off the frilled wing shape.
3. Arrange on a plate with a small bowl of sambal belacan.
4. Squeeze lime over just before eating, dipping pods into the sambal.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Traditionally grown as a dooryard and subsistence crop across Southeast Asia and Papua New Guinea; sometimes called a ‘one-species supermarket’ for the range of edible parts it offers from a single vine.



Yellow Monkeyflower Leaf Salad Green

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The young leaves of *Erythranthe guttata* (Yellow Monkeyflower) have a traditional use as an edible green, recorded by foragers and ethnobotanists across western North America. The slightly bitter, mild leaves can be added to mixed salads or used as a lettuce substitute. This is a simple, opportunistic foraging use — not a cultivated culinary crop — but it is genuinely documented. Harvest only from unsprayed, unpolluted plants growing in clean water environments.

INGREDIENTS

30 grams Yellow Monkeyflower leaves (fresh) (*Erythranthe guttata*), leaf — Young leaves, freshly harvested, washed; before or just after first bloom for best flavour

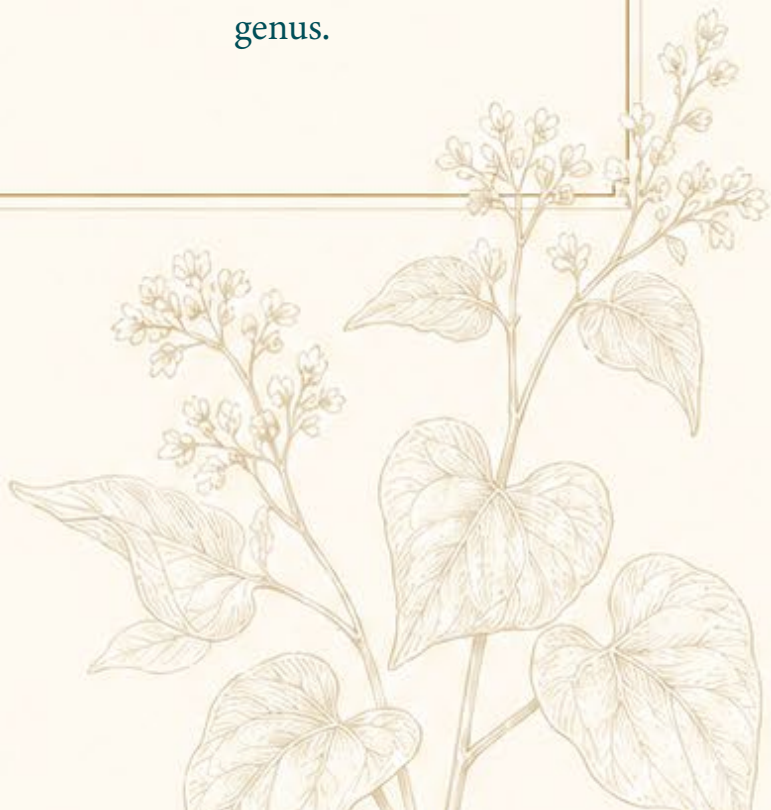
METHOD

1. Harvest a small handful of young, tender leaves from a healthy, unsprayed *Erythranthe guttata* plant growing in clean water. Avoid older, tougher leaves closer to the base.
2. Wash the leaves thoroughly in cold clean water to remove any mud, debris, or aquatic invertebrates.
3. Tear or roughly chop and add directly to a mixed green salad for a mildly bitter, fresh accent. Alternatively, use as a lettuce substitute in a wrap or sandwich.
4. For a less bitter result, blanch leaves in boiling water for 30 seconds, then plunge into ice water, drain, and serve as a simple cooked green with a little olive oil and lemon.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The common name “monkeyflower” refers to the fancied resemblance of the spotted, open-mouthed flower to a monkey face — a name shared by the whole *Mimulus* / *Erythranthe* genus.



Young Mallow Leaves & Flowers — Salad and Potherb

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

Like its mallow cousins, annual or royal mallow (*Malva trimestris*, syn. *Lavatera trimestris*) yields tender young leaves and pretty flowers that are mildly mucilaginous and edible. Young leaves go into salads raw or are wilted as a soft, soothing potherb; the showy flowers make an edible garnish. A gentle, demulcent green in the mallow tradition.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 handful Rose Mallow (*Malva trimestris*), leaf — young tender mallow leaves
- 6 flowers Rose Mallow (*Malva trimestris*), flower — fresh mallow flowers, as edible garnish

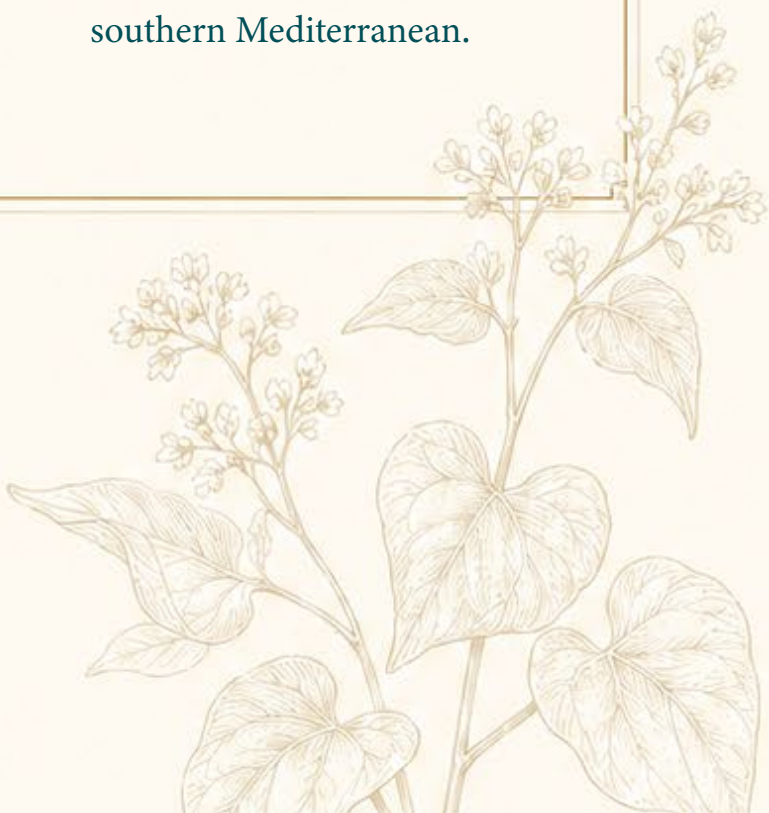
METHOD

1. Pick young, tender mallow leaves and freshly opened flowers from unsprayed plants.
2. Wash well and pat dry.
3. Use the young leaves raw in mixed salads, or wilt briefly in a little oil or stock as you would spinach.
4. Scatter the fresh flowers over salads as an edible garnish just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Lavatera trimestris has been cultivated in European gardens since at least the 17th century. It appears in early botanical literature as a handsome ornamental from the southern Mediterranean.





Beans, Peas & Lentils

Small seeds keep large promises.

Ayocote pot beans (frijoles de la olla)

Food / culinary • Makes 1200 g

In its Mesoamerican homeland the large mature runner-bean seed is the ayocote — a prized pot bean. Here the dried beans are soaked, then simmered gently with onion, garlic and a little epazote (or bay) into a brothy pot of beans to eat with their cooking liquor. A nourishing, protein- and fibre-rich whole food. The dried beans *MUST* be boiled, never undercooked.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Runner bean (<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>), seed — Dried ayocote (runner-bean) seeds, soaked overnight and drained
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — White onion, halved (or roughly chopped)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, lightly crushed (about 3 cloves)
1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Bay leaf (or a sprig of epazote where available)
8 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, added near the end
1800 g	Water — Fresh water for cooking

METHOD

1. Soak the dried beans in plenty of cold water overnight (8–12 hours). Drain and discard the soaking water.
2. Put the soaked beans in a large pot with the fresh water, onion, garlic and bay (or epazote). Bring to a brisk, rolling boil and boil hard for at least 10 minutes.
3. Reduce to a gentle simmer, partly covered, and cook 1–2 hours, topping up with hot water as needed, until the beans are completely soft and creamy inside (older beans take longer).
4. Add salt only once the beans are tender, and simmer 5–10 minutes more. Serve hot in their broth.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bay leaves were woven into crowns for poets and victors; to be praised was, quite literally, to be laurelled.

Braised green beans with tomato, garlic & olive oil (fasolakia)

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

Tender young green (snap) bean pods slow-braised with tomato, onion, garlic and plenty of olive oil — a Greek and wider Mediterranean ladera dish that celebrates the other edible part of the common bean.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh green (snap) bean pods, trimmed
250 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, grated or chopped
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, sliced
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced
60 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Fresh parsley, chopped
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a wide pot; soften the onion 5 minutes, then add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
2. Add the trimmed green beans and stir to coat well in the oil.
3. Add the grated tomato and a splash of water; season with salt.
4. Cover and simmer gently 35-45 minutes, stirring occasionally and topping up with a little water if it dries out, until the beans are very tender and the sauce has thickened.
5. Stir in the parsley, taste and adjust seasoning. Serve warm or at room temperature with bread and feta.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried from the Andes and Mesoamerica, the common bean was domesticated thousands of years ago and was a cornerstone of indigenous American agriculture, classically intercropped with maize and squash as the “three sisters”.

Braised lettuce with peas & spring onion (petits pois à la française)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Proof that lettuce is not only for salads: gentle braising turns outer leaves and whole little gem hearts silky and sweet. A French spring classic of lettuce, peas and spring onions stewed in a splash of stock and butter — a lovely way to use heading-lettuce hearts or leaves that are past their crispest.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) — Little gem hearts halved, or cos/outer leaves shredded
250 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Petits pois
60 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Spring onions, sliced
25 g	Butter — Or 2 tbsp olive oil for dairy-free
100 g	Vegetable stock — A splash
5 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint, chopped
2 g	Sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a wide pan over gentle heat. Add the sliced spring onions and soften 2-3 minutes without colouring.
2. Add the peas and stock, then pile the shredded lettuce (or halved little gem hearts) on top.
3. Cover and braise gently 8-10 minutes until the lettuce is meltingly tender and the peas are cooked.
4. Season with salt and pepper and stir in the chopped mint. Serve warm as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The simplest dish carries the longest memory.

Broad bean & dill purée with lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 450 g

A silky Eastern-Mediterranean purée of cooked broad beans whipped with olive oil, lemon, garlic and dill — somewhere between a dip and a side. Spread on bread, spoon beside grilled vegetables, or thin into a soup. A food-first way to use a glut of beans. (Contains fava beans — not for those with G6PD deficiency / favism.)

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Broad bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>) — Broad beans, cooked and skinned (fresh or dried-then-cooked)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~3 tbsp), plus more to finish
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~ $\frac{2}{3}$ lemon)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic (~2 cloves)
8 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>) — Fresh dill, chopped
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. If using fresh broad beans, boil in salted water 3-5 minutes until tender; drain, reserving a little cooking water, and slip off the tough outer skins once cool enough to handle.
2. Put the beans in a food processor with the garlic and lemon juice.
3. Blend, drizzling in the olive oil and a splash of cooking water as needed, until smooth and creamy.
4. Stir in the chopped dill and season with salt.
5. Spoon into a bowl and drizzle with a little more olive oil and dill. Serve at room temperature with warm flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Domesticated in the Near East in the Neolithic, the broad bean was a dietary mainstay of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome and remained the principal pulse of Europe until the runner and haricot beans arrived from the Americas.

Buttered fresh peas with spearmint

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

A simple English spring side: just-tender peas tossed with butter and plenty of fresh spearmint. The sweet pea and sweet mint are a natural pair — food-first comfort.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Fresh or frozen peas
6 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh spearmint, finely chopped
20 g	Butter — Or olive oil
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, or set up a steamer.
2. Boil or steam the peas 2-3 minutes until just tender; drain well.
3. Return the hot peas to the pan, add the butter and toss until melted and glossy.
4. Stir in the chopped spearmint and salt. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The heart of a blue whale is so vast that a child could crawl through its great arteries.



Buttered minted spring peas (petits pois à la menthe)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A simple British/French spring classic — sweet young peas finished with butter and fresh mint. Cooking peas only briefly keeps them bright, sweet and nutrient-rich; mint lifts their natural sweetness. A nourishing, fibre- and vitamin-C-rich way to eat peas as food.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>), seed
5 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
25 g	Butter
5 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Bring a pan of lightly salted water to a rolling boil.
2. Add the peas and cook 2–3 minutes until just tender and bright green; do not overcook.
3. Drain well and return to the warm pan.
4. Toss with the butter and chopped mint; season with salt and pepper.
5. Add a squeeze of lemon if liked and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Greeks and Romans strewed mint, scented bath water and banqueting tables with it, and used it as a stomach-soothing herb and a flavouring for foods and wine.



Buttered runner beans with garlic

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

The classic British summer-allotment way with runner beans: young pods sliced, boiled until just tender, then tossed in butter with a little garlic. Food-first and simple — the bean at its freshest, always cooked.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Runner bean (<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>), fruit — Young runner-bean pods, stringed and sliced diagonally
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely chopped (about 2 cloves)
30 g	Butter
3 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Top, tail and de-string the runner-bean pods, then slice them diagonally into 2–3 cm pieces.
2. Bring a pan of salted water to a rolling boil and cook the beans for 4–6 minutes, until just tender but still bright green. Drain well.
3. Melt the butter in the warm pan over gentle heat, add the chopped garlic and cook 30–60 seconds until fragrant but not browned.
4. Return the drained beans to the pan, toss to coat in the garlic butter, season with salt and pepper and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Butterflies taste the world with their feet before they will ever drink from it.



Classic Lima Bean and Corn Succotash

Food / culinary

A traditional North American dish combining thoroughly cooked lima beans with corn, a preparation with roots in Indigenous American cooking.

INGREDIENTS

2 cup	dried lima beans (<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>) — soaked overnight, or substitute 3 cups fresh-shelled lima beans
2 cup	corn kernels (<i>Zea mays</i>) — fresh or frozen
2 tbsp	butter
0.5 cup	onion, diced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 tsp	salt and pepper — to taste

METHOD

1. Soak dried lima beans overnight in plenty of fresh water, then drain and discard the soaking water.
2. Place beans in a pot with fresh water, bring to a full rolling boil uncovered, and boil hard for at least 10-15 minutes.
3. Discard this boiling water, cover beans with fresh water again, and simmer 45-60 minutes until tender.
4. Meanwhile, sauté onion in butter until soft.
5. Add cooked lima beans and corn to the pan, simmer together 8-10 minutes, season with salt and pepper, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Green on the plate, light in the body.



Fresh broad beans with mint, lemon & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

A bright Italian-style spring dish celebrating young broad beans at their sweetest. Double-podded beans are dressed warm with good olive oil, lemon, mint and a little garlic — a simple food-first way to eat the season’s first beans. (Contains fava beans — not for those with G6PD deficiency / favism.)

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Broad bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>) — Young broad beans, shelled (then double-podded after blanching)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~½ lemon)
5 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint leaves, torn
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, very finely sliced (~1 clove)
20 g	Pecorino, shaved (optional) — To finish
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Blanch the shelled broad beans in boiling salted water for 1–2 minutes, then drain and refresh in cold water.
2. Slip off the tough outer skins to double-pod the beans.
3. Warm the olive oil gently in a pan with the sliced garlic until just fragrant.
4. Add the beans and toss to warm through, then remove from the heat.
5. Stir in the lemon juice and torn mint, season with salt, and serve warm or at room temperature, scattered with shaved pecorino if using.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Elephants comfort one another with the gentlest touches, and they mourn their dead for years.

Frijoles refritos — Mexican refried beans

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

Pinto (or black) beans simmered until soft, then fried with onion and garlic and mashed into a creamy, savoury spread — a staple of Mexican home cooking and a simple, nourishing way to eat the common bean.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Dried pinto or black beans, soaked, soak water discarded (or 600 g cooked/canned)
100 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
10 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, minced
2 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin
30 g	Lard or neutral oil — For frying
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
120 g	Bean cooking liquid or water — To loosen while mashing

METHOD

1. Simmer the soaked, drained beans in fresh water until soft, then drain, reserving the cooking liquid.
2. Heat the lard or oil in a pan and fry the onion until soft, then add the garlic and cumin and cook briefly until fragrant.
3. Add the cooked beans and mash with a potato masher or the back of a spoon.
4. Stir in bean cooking liquid a little at a time, frying and mashing until creamy and thick.
5. Season with salt and serve warm as a side, taco filling or spread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sea otters hold hands as they sleep,
so that the drifting current will not
carry them apart.

Golden Red Lentil Dal

Food / culinary

A comforting, spiced red lentil dal that cooks down to a soft golden purée, gently warming and deeply nourishing, ready in about half an hour.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Red lentils (<i>Lens culinaris</i>) — Rinsed until the water runs clear
3 cups	Water — For simmering
1 medium	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Finely chopped
2 cloves	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Minced
1 tbsp	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Grated
1 tsp	Ground turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — For colour and warmth
1 tsp	Ground cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Toasted flavour
2 tbsp	Oil or ghee — For the tempering
1 to taste	Salt — To season

METHOD

1. Rinse the lentils, then simmer with the water and turmeric for 15-20 minutes until soft and collapsing, skimming any foam.
2. In a separate pan, heat the oil or ghee and soften the onion until golden.
3. Add the garlic, ginger and cumin and fry for a minute until fragrant.
4. Stir the tempering into the cooked lentils, season with salt, and simmer a few minutes more to bring together.
5. Loosen with a little hot water if needed and serve hot with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A recipe is a letter from someone who ate well.

Pea & mint smash (crushed pea dip on toast)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A fresh, vivid green dip of lightly cooked peas crushed with mint, lemon and a little garlic and olive oil — lovely on toast, with crudités, or stirred through pasta. A quick, fibre- and vitamin-C-rich way to enjoy peas.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>), seed
8 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Cook the peas 2–3 minutes in boiling water until just tender; drain.
2. Crush with a fork or pulse briefly with the mint, lemon juice, garlic and olive oil.
3. Keep it textured, not smooth; season with salt and pepper.
4. Spread on toast or serve as a dip; eat the same day.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Your body renews itself so completely that few of the atoms in you now were there ten years ago.

Rajma — North Indian red kidney bean curry

Food / culinary • Makes 1400 g

A beloved North Indian home dish of red kidney beans simmered in a spiced tomato-onion gravy, eaten with rice (rajma-chawal). A perfect food-first showcase of the common bean — and of the golden rule that kidney beans must be soaked and boiled hard before eating.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Dried red kidney beans, soaked overnight, soak water discarded
300 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, pureed
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
15 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, minced
3 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Cumin seeds
2 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Ground coriander
12 g	Fresh ginger, grated (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Aromatic
3 g	Garam masala — Warming spice blend
2 g	Ground turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
30 g	Ghee or neutral oil — For the tarka (tempering)
6 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
700 g	Water — For simmering

METHOD

1. Soak the dried kidney beans overnight in plenty of water; drain and discard the soak water.
2. Boil the beans in fresh water at a rolling boil for at least 10 minutes, then simmer until tender, about 45–60 minutes; drain, reserving some cooking liquid.
3. Heat ghee or oil and temper the cumin seeds until fragrant; add the onion and cook until golden.
4. Stir in the garlic, ginger, turmeric and ground coriander, then add the pureed tomatoes and cook until the oil separates.
5. Add the cooked beans and enough water or reserved cooking liquid to make a thick gravy; simmer 15–20 minutes, mashing a few beans to thicken.
6. Stir in the garam masala and season with salt; serve hot over steamed rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The human heart beats near a hundred thousand times a day, and never once waits to be asked.

Runner beans braised with tomato, garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A Mediterranean-style braise: sliced runner-bean pods slow-cooked with tomato, onion, garlic and good olive oil until meltingly soft and savoury — the bean dish to make late in the summer when both beans and tomatoes are abundant. A nourishing food-first one-pot vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Runner bean (<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>), fruit — Young runner-bean pods, stringed and sliced
400 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, chopped (or chopped tinned tomatoes)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely sliced
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (about 3 cloves)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
2 g	Oregano (wild marjoram) (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>) — Dried oregano (or a little fresh summer savory)
5 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Top, tail and de-string the runner-bean pods and slice them into 3–4 cm pieces.
2. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat and soften the onion gently for 6–8 minutes; add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
3. Add the tomatoes and oregano, season lightly, and simmer 5 minutes to a loose sauce.
4. Stir in the beans with a splash of water, cover and braise gently 25–35 minutes, stirring now and then, until the beans are completely soft and the sauce is rich.
5. Adjust salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature with bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The eye can tell apart some ten million colours, yet no two people ever see quite the same red.

Silky Classic Hummus

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 g

Cooked chickpeas blended until impossibly smooth with tahini, lemon and garlic. The trick is warm chickpeas and plenty of ice-cold water whipped in at the end for a cloud-light texture.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Chickpea (<i>Cicer arietinum</i>) — Dried chickpeas, cooked soft (or 2 tins, drained)
4 tbsp	Tahini (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
3 tbsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
5 tbsp	Ice water, salt, olive oil, cumin — Ice water to loosen; the rest to taste

METHOD

1. If using dried chickpeas, soak overnight and simmer with a pinch of baking soda until very soft, then drain warm.
2. Blend the warm chickpeas, tahini, lemon, garlic and salt until thick.
3. With the motor running, trickle in ice water a spoon at a time until pale and whipped.
4. Spread in a bowl, swirl the top, drizzle with olive oil and dust with cumin.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A newborn knows its mother's voice
from the very first hour, having
listened for months from within.

Stir-fried sugar snap peas with garlic & ginger

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Crisp, sweet sugar-snap pods flash-fried with garlic and ginger — a quick Asian-style side that keeps the pods bright green and crunchy. Edible-podded peas let you eat the whole vegetable, fibre, vitamin C and all.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
10 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
15 g	Neutral oil (for stir-frying)
15 g	Soy sauce
3 g	Toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Trim the stem ends and any strings from the pods.
2. Heat a wok or large pan until very hot; add the oil.
3. Add the garlic and ginger and stir a few seconds until fragrant.
4. Add the pods and stir-fry over high heat 2–3 minutes until bright green and crisp-tender.
5. Splash with soy sauce and sesame oil, toss, and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried westward along the spice routes, it was known to the Greeks and Romans and became one of the most traded and costly spices of medieval Europe, where it flavoured wine, sweetmeats and the original gingerbread.

Ta'miya — Egyptian fava-bean falafel

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

The original falafel of the Nile valley, made from dried fava beans rather than chickpeas — soaked, blitzed raw with herbs and spice, then fried to a green-flecked, crisp-shelled, fluffy-centred patty. A protein-rich food-first street food. (Contains fava beans — not for those with G6PD deficiency / favism.)

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Broad bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>) — Dried split skinless fava beans, soaked overnight (not cooked)
80 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, roughly chopped
25 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley
20 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic (~3 cloves)
4 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin (~2 tsp)
3 g	Ground coriander seed (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Ground coriander seed (~1½ tsp)
6 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
200 g	Neutral oil, for frying — For shallow or deep frying

METHOD

1. Drain the overnight-soaked, uncooked fava beans well.
2. Blitz the beans in a food processor with the onion, parsley, coriander, garlic, cumin, ground coriander and salt to a coarse, sticky green paste (do not add water).
3. Rest the paste in the fridge for 30–60 minutes to firm up.
4. Shape into small patties.
5. Heat the oil and shallow- or deep-fry the patties until deep golden and crisp on both sides.
6. Drain on paper and serve hot in flatbread with salad, tahini and pickles.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Laughter is one of the first languages we speak, understood in every country before a single word.

Vignarola — Roman spring braise of artichokes, broad beans & peas

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A green Roman spring stew that brings together the season’s young vegetables — artichokes, shelled broad beans (fava) and peas — gently braised with spring onion, olive oil and mint. A celebration of fresh, fibre-rich vegetables eaten together; food-first nourishment at its best.

INGREDIENTS

3 count	Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), plant — Globe artichokes, trimmed to hearts and quartered
200 g	Broad bean (<i>Vicia faba</i>) — Broad (fava) beans, shelled and cooked — never raw (see favism caution)
200 g	Pea (<i>Pisum sativum</i>) — Fresh peas, shelled
60 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Spring onions, sliced
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~3 tbsp)
6 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint leaves, torn
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, to finish and to hold artichokes
4 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan and soften the sliced spring onions over low heat.
2. Add the artichoke hearts and a splash of water; cover and braise gently 5-8 minutes.
3. Add the shelled broad beans and peas, season with salt, and braise gently, adding a little water as needed, 10-15 minutes until all vegetables are tender.
4. Stir through the torn mint leaves and lemon juice off the heat.
5. Taste, adjust seasoning, and serve warm with good bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every drop of water you drink has fallen as rain countless times, and been the sea and the cloud between.



Grains, Pasta & Bread

Grain is patience made edible.

Asparagus & lemon risotto

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

A creamy spring risotto in which asparagus tips and stems flavour the rice through and through, lifted with lemon and finished with butter and Parmesan. Comforting yet fresh.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
300 g	Risotto rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Risotto rice (Arborio or Carnaroli)
100 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
900 g	Vegetable stock — Hot vegetable stock
40 g	Unsalted butter
40 g	Parmesan cheese — Parmesan, grated
10 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
18 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice and grated zest
4 g	Salt & pepper — Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Snap the woody ends off the asparagus. Cut off the tips; slice the stems into 1 cm pieces. Keep the stock hot in a separate pan.
2. Soften the finely chopped onion in the olive oil and half the butter over medium heat for 6-8 minutes without colouring.
3. Add the risotto rice and stir 1-2 minutes until glossy. Add hot stock a ladle at a time, stirring, letting each addition be absorbed before the next.
4. After about 12 minutes add the asparagus stems; after about 16 minutes add the tips. Continue until the rice is creamy and al dente (about 18-20 minutes total).
5. Off the heat beat in the remaining butter, the grated Parmesan and the lemon juice and zest. Season and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Give the roots winter and they will
give you spring.

Black Locust (Robinia) Flower Fritters

Food / culinary • Makes ~620 ml

A traditional European spring delicacy made from the fragrant white flower clusters of *Robinia pseudoacacia*, lightly battered and fried while still fresh.

INGREDIENTS

10 clusters	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> flowers, fully opened, stems removed — about 1 packed cup of flowers
100 g	all-purpose flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)
120 ml	sparkling water or light beer — for the batter
500 ml	neutral frying oil — amount varies by pan size
1 tbsp	powdered sugar — for dusting, optional

METHOD

1. Harvest fully opened, fragrant flower racemes, avoiding any green unopened buds or developing pods.
2. Gently rinse and shake dry; check for insects.
3. Whisk the flour and sparkling water (or beer) into a light, lump-free batter.
4. Hold each raceme by its stem, dip the flower cluster into the batter, then trim away the stem before frying.
5. Fry in hot oil (about 180C/350F) until golden, turning once, roughly 1-2 minutes per side.
6. Drain on paper towels, dust with powdered sugar, and serve immediately while warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The water in your body has been a glacier, a river, and someone’s tears long before ever it was yours.



Cardo con almejas — Spanish cardoon with clams & almonds

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A festive dish of northern Spain (Navarra, Aragón, La Rioja), traditional at Christmas: tender blanched cardoon simmered in a light almond-thickened sauce with clams, garlic and parsley. The cardoon's gentle bitterness and the briny sweetness of the clams meet in a comforting, food-first winter stew.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Cardoon (<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
40 g	Almond (<i>Prunus dulcis</i>)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
8 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>)
15 g	Bread wheat (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
500 g	Fresh clams (almejas), purged
80 g	Dry white wine
4 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. String and cut the cardoon, soak in lemon water, then simmer in salted water 30–40 minutes until tender; reserve a little of the cooking water and drain.
2. Gently fry the chopped garlic in the olive oil; stir in the flour to cook for a minute, then the ground almonds, parsley and a ladle of the cardoon water to make a smooth sauce.
3. Add the wine and the drained cardoon; simmer a few minutes to marry the flavours.
4. Add the purged clams, cover and cook just until they open (3–5 minutes); discard any that stay shut, adjust salt and serve hot with bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The almond is among the most anciently cultivated nuts, woven through the cultures of the Mediterranean and Near East.

Classic Scottish Porridge

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The everyday nourishing oat breakfast of cool northern Europe — oats simmered with water and a pinch of salt into a warm, sustaining porridge. A simple demulcent, mineral-rich food traditionally valued as a gentle restorative.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Oat (<i>Avena sativa</i>), caryopsis — rolled or pinhead (steel-cut) oats
480 g	Water / milk — water (or part milk)
2 g	Salt — pinch of salt

METHOD

1. Bring the water (or water and milk) to a simmer in a saucepan.
2. Stir in the oats and a pinch of salt.
3. Simmer gently, stirring often, 5 minutes for rolled oats or 15–20 minutes for pinhead oats, until thick and creamy.
4. Serve warm with milk, honey, fruit or seeds as you like.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Oats have been a staple grain of cool northern Europe for millennia — the everyday porridge, oatcake and gruel of Scotland, Ireland and Scandinavia, where wheat grew poorly.



Corn tortillas from masa harina

Food / culinary • Makes 12 tortilla

Soft, pliable corn tortillas pressed from masa harina — nixtamalized maize flour. The alkali (lime) treatment behind masa is the ancient Mesoamerican technique that makes maize’s niacin available and gives tortillas their flavour.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Masa harina (nixtamalized maize flour)
300 g	Warm water — Adjust to a soft, non-sticky dough
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Mix the masa harina with the salt, then work in the warm water until a soft, non-sticky dough forms; rest, covered, 10 minutes.
2. Divide the dough into about 12 balls.
3. Press each ball flat between two sheets of plastic in a tortilla press, or roll thin.
4. Griddle on a hot, dry pan about 45-60 seconds a side until puffed and lightly speckled.
5. Keep warm, wrapped in a cloth, while you cook the rest.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The Indigenous technique of nixtamalization (soaking and cooking the grain in alkali, e.g. lime or wood-ash water) made it possible to grind maize into masa for tortillas and tamales and, crucially, released its bound niacin.

Courgette fritters with mint, garlic & feta (mücver-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

A summer way to enjoy a glut of courgettes (zucchini), grated and pan-fried into golden fritters in the Eastern-Mediterranean mücver / kolokithokeftedes tradition, brightened with fresh mint, spring onion and garlic.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Courgette (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>) — Courgettes (zucchini), coarsely grated, salted and squeezed dry
50 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Spring onions / onion, finely sliced
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, ~2 cloves, minced
6 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint, chopped
100 g	Plain flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Plain flour (~ to bind)
100 g	Feta cheese — Feta cheese, crumbled (optional)
50 g	Egg — Egg, beaten (~1 egg)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil for frying
4 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Salt the grated courgette and leave 10 minutes in a colander, then squeeze out as much liquid as possible in a clean cloth.
2. In a bowl, combine the courgette with the spring onion, garlic, mint, flour, feta and beaten egg; season with salt and pepper.
3. Mix to a thick batter that holds together.
4. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and drop in spoonfuls of the mixture, flattening slightly.
5. Fry 2-3 minutes each side until golden and cooked through.
6. Drain briefly on paper and serve warm with a spoon of yoghurt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Somewhere on the Earth it is always raining, and somewhere it is always the first light of dawn.

Creamy Parmesan polenta

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

Slow-cooked cornmeal stirred to a soft, creamy porridge enriched with butter and Parmesan — northern Italy’s great maize dish, polenta, the comforting base for stews and braises.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Polenta / coarse cornmeal
900 g	Water or stock — Roughly 4–5x the polenta by volume
50 g	Parmesan, grated — Stirred in at the end
30 g	Butter — For richness
6 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Bring the water or stock to a boil with the salt.
2. Reduce to a bare simmer and add the polenta in a thin, steady stream, whisking constantly to prevent lumps.
3. Switch to a wooden spoon and cook, stirring often, for 30–40 minutes over low heat, until thick and no longer grainy (add a splash more liquid if it stiffens too much).
4. Off the heat, stir in the butter and grated Parmesan until melted and creamy.
5. Serve hot and soft immediately, or spread onto a tray to cool, set, slice and grill or fry later.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The traditional “Three Sisters” planting paired maize with beans and squash. After 1492 maize spread rapidly worldwide and became a staple in parts of Africa, southern Europe (polenta) and Asia.

Fluffy Herb Quinoa Pilaf

Food / culinary

A light, protein-rich pilaf that shows quinoa at its best: rinsed to shed its bitter saponin coat, toasted for a nutty depth, then simmered until each seed uncurls its little tail.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Quinoa (<i>Chenopodium quinoa</i>) — White quinoa, rinsed until water runs clear
2 cups	Water or vegetable stock
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
3 tbsp	Fresh parsley and mint, chopped — Stirred in at the end
1 tbsp	Lemon juice and salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Rinse the quinoa in a fine sieve under cold water for 30 seconds to wash away saponins.
2. Warm the olive oil in a saucepan and toast the drained quinoa for 2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the water or stock, bring to a boil, then cover and simmer on low for 15 minutes.
4. Turn off the heat and let it sit, covered, for 5 minutes; fluff with a fork.
5. Fold through the herbs, lemon juice and salt just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Quinoa (from Quechua kinwa) was a sacred staple of the Andean civilisations and was called chisaya mama, the “mother grain,” by the Inca. The Inca emperor ceremonially broke the first ground for the season’s sowing with a golden implement.

Hemp Seed & Oat Morning Porridge

Food / culinary

Hulled hemp seeds (hemp hearts) are a nutritious food ingredient with a mild, nutty flavour and no psychoactive effect. Stirred into oats they add plant protein and a soft creaminess.

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp	Cannabis (<i>Cannabis sativa</i>) — hulled hemp seeds (hemp hearts)
0.5 cup	rolled oats (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
1 cup	milk or plant milk
1 tsp	honey — to taste
0.25 cup	fresh berries — for topping

METHOD

1. Combine oats and milk in a small pot and bring to a gentle simmer, stirring.
2. Cook 4-5 minutes until thick and creamy.
3. Remove from heat and stir in 2 tablespoons of the hemp seeds.
4. Spoon into a bowl, top with berries, the remaining hemp seeds and a drizzle of honey.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

He who has herbs in the garden has
medicine in the kitchen.

Korean Pine Nut Porridge (Jatjuk)

Food / culinary • Makes ~700 ml

A smooth, comforting rice-and-pine-nut porridge traditionally served to the young, the elderly and the recovering. Mild, creamy and gently nourishing, it is a soothing breakfast or convalescent food.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Shelled Korean pine nuts (<i>Pinus koraiensis</i>)
100 g	Short-grain white rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Soaked 1 hour, then drained
700 ml	Water — Plus more to adjust
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Blend the soaked rice with about 300 ml of the water until smooth, then set aside.
2. Blend the pine nuts with another 200 ml of water until you have a smooth cream, reserving a few whole nuts to garnish.
3. Pour the rice mixture into a pot with the remaining water and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until it thickens.
4. Stir in the pine nut cream and simmer gently, stirring, for 5 more minutes; loosen with water if too thick.
5. Season with a pinch of salt, ladle into a bowl, and top with the reserved pine nuts.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Korean pine nuts (jat) are a prized traditional food and tonic in Korean and Chinese cuisine, valued for stamina, moistening the lungs and easing constipation, and used in porridges, sweets and the classic pine-nut gruel.

Lovage-seed savoury crackers

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

Thin, crisp wholemeal crackers studded with warm, celery-aromatic lovage seed — a food-first use of the harvested seed. Lovely with cheese, soups and dips.

INGREDIENTS

6 g	Lovage (<i>Levisticum officinale</i>) — Lovage seed, lightly crushed (~2 tsp)
180 g	Wholemeal (whole-wheat) flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Plus extra for rolling
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
80 g	Water — Cold, to bind (~80 ml)
4 g	Fine sea salt — In the dough, plus a little to scatter

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C. Mix the flour, salt and crushed lovage seed.
2. Stir in the olive oil, then add cold water a little at a time to form a firm but workable dough; knead briefly.
3. Roll out very thinly on a floured surface, prick all over with a fork, scatter with a little salt and cut into squares or shards.
4. Bake on lined trays for 12–16 minutes until crisp and lightly golden. Cool on a rack before storing.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Olive oil fuelled sacred lamps, anointed kings and athletes, and was pressed into food and skin care across the classical world. The dove returning to Noah with an olive leaf (Genesis) made the olive branch an enduring emblem of reconciliation.

Mexican street corn (elote) with lime & chilli

Food / culinary • Makes 4 cob

Grilled sweetcorn on the cob slathered with a little crema, lime and a dusting of chilli — Mexico’s beloved street snack, elote, celebrating maize in its home cuisine.

INGREDIENTS

4 cob	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Fresh sweetcorn cobs, husked
60 g	Crema or mayonnaise — Thin coating
40 g	Cotija or feta cheese, crumbled — Crumbled over
20 g	Lime (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — Lime juice (fresh), plus wedges
2 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Chilli powder / Tajín to dust
6 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander, chopped (optional)

METHOD

1. Grill or char the husked corn cobs over high heat, turning, until lightly blackened in spots and tender.
2. While hot, brush or roll each cob in the crema or mayonnaise to coat evenly.
3. Roll the coated cob in the crumbled cotija or feta to stick.
4. Dust with chilli powder or Tajín and squeeze over fresh lime juice.
5. Scatter with chopped coriander if using, and serve hot with extra lime wedges.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The lime travelled the trade routes of the Old World and was among the citrus fruits carried by Arab traders and later by Iberian explorers to the New World, becoming naturalised across the tropical Americas.

Old-Fashioned Lemon Barley Water

Food / culinary • Makes ~1000 ml

Lemon barley water is one of the gentlest kitchen classics: pearl barley simmered until its starch clouds the water, then brightened with lemon into a soft, nourishing drink long given to invalids and thirsty summer gardeners alike.

INGREDIENTS

50 g	Barley (<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>) — pearl barley, rinsed
1000 ml	water
1 whole	lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — zest and juice
2 tbsp	honey or sugar — to taste

METHOD

1. Rinse 50 g pearl barley under cold water until the water runs clear.
2. Add to a pot with 1 litre of water and the pared zest of the lemon.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently 30 minutes until the water is cloudy.
4. Strain the hot liquid into a jug (reserve the barley for soups).
5. Stir in the lemon juice and honey or sugar to taste; serve warm or chilled over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Barley’s antiquity as a cultivated grain is extraordinary: it appears in the archaeological record of the Near East by 8500 BCE and is among the seven agricultural products praised in the Hebrew Bible (Deuteronomy 8:8).

Pork & garlic chive jiaozi — Chinese dumplings (猪肉韭菜饺子)

Food / culinary • Makes 40 dumplings (approx.)

The classic northern Chinese dumpling, stuffed with a fragrant filling of fatty pork mince and garlic chives. Jiaozi are eaten year-round and are essential at Chinese New Year. The filling can be boiled (*shuijiao*), steamed, or pan-fried into potstickers (*guotie*). Garlic chives give the filling a characteristic garlicky perfume and vibrant colour.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Garlic chives (<i>Allium tuberosum</i>) — Garlic chives — essential filling flavour
400 g	pork mince (20% fat) — Ground/minced pork shoulder or belly
300 g	plain wheat flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Or use 40 store-bought round wrappers
20 g	fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — ~2 cm piece; adds warmth
20 g	light soy sauce — 1½ tbsp
15 g	Shaoxing rice wine — 1 tbsp; substitute dry sherry
10 g	sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — 2 tsp; finishing fragrance
2 g	white pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — pinch
15 g	neutral cooking oil — for pan-frying potsticker version

METHOD

1. Mix the pork mince with grated ginger, soy sauce, Shaoxing wine, sesame oil, white pepper and sugar; stir vigorously in one direction for 2 minutes until sticky.
2. Fold in the finely chopped garlic chives and refrigerate the filling for 30 minutes.
3. Make the dough: mix flour with a pinch of salt, gradually add just-boiled water, knead until smooth, then rest covered for 30 minutes (or use 40 store-bought wrappers).
4. Divide the dough into 40 pieces and roll each into a thin 8 cm circle.
5. Place a heaped teaspoon of filling in the centre of each wrapper; fold and pleat to seal.
6. To boil: cook in batches in salted boiling water until they float, then 2–3 minutes more until translucent.
7. To pan-fry (potstickers): fry flat-side down until golden, add water, cover and steam, then uncover and crisp the base again.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cultivated in China for at least 3,000 years; among the earliest recorded *Allium* crops. The first-century BCE Chinese pharmacopeia *Shennong Bencao Jing* lists *jiǔ cài* as warming and nourishing.

8. Serve hot with a dipping sauce of soy sauce, rice vinegar and chilli oil.

Risotto alla Milanese (Saffron Risotto)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The definitive Italian saffron dish: a golden, velvety Milanese risotto where saffron threads steep in warm stock before being stirred into creamy carnaroli rice. A little saffron goes a long way — this recipe uses the traditional pinch that delivers authentic golden colour and floral aroma without overpowering the dish.

INGREDIENTS

0.3 g	Saffron threads (<i>Crocus sativus</i>)
320 g	Carnaroli or arborio rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>)
1200 g	Hot chicken or veal stock
120 g	Dry white wine — Pinot grigio or similar
60 g	Unsalted butter
80 g	White onion, finely diced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
60 g	Parmesan (Parmigiano-Reggiano), grated

METHOD

1. Steep saffron: place 0.3 g (a generous pinch) of saffron threads in a small bowl with 3 tbsp of the hot stock. Leave to infuse for at least 20 minutes — the liquid will turn deep golden.
2. Soffritto: melt 30 g butter in a wide heavy pan over medium heat. Add the diced onion and cook gently, stirring, for 8–10 minutes until soft and translucent but not coloured.
3. Toast the rice: add the rice and stir well to coat in the butter. Toast for 2 minutes, stirring, until the grains are slightly translucent at the edges.
4. Wine: pour in the white wine and stir until fully absorbed.
5. Add stock ladle by ladle: add the hot stock one ladle at a time, stirring constantly and waiting until each addition is absorbed before adding the next. Continue for 16–18 minutes until the rice is al dente.
6. Saffron: add the saffron infusion (threads and liquid) about 5 minutes before the rice is done. Stir well — the risotto will turn a vivid golden yellow.
7. Mantecatura: remove from heat. Add the remaining 30 g butter and the Parmesan. Stir vigorously until emulsified into a creamy sauce. Season with salt. Rest, covered, 2 minutes. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Saffron's history reaches back at least 3,500 years. Minoan frescoes at Akrotiri (Santorini, c. 1600 BCE) depict young women gathering saffron flowers, suggesting ritual significance.

Stovetop popcorn

Food / culinary • Makes 80 g

Whole popcorn kernels burst into a light, wholegrain snack with nothing but a little oil and heat — maize at its simplest, a genuine wholegrain treat.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Popcorn kernels
25 g	Neutral oil (high smoke point) — To coat the pan base
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a heavy-lidded pot over medium-high heat with a few kernels dropped in.
2. Once those test kernels pop, add the rest of the kernels in an even layer and cover.
3. Shake the pot occasionally over the heat as the corn pops.
4. When popping slows to a few seconds between pops, remove from the heat.
5. Tip into a large bowl, season with salt (and butter or spices if you like), and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Rainbows are full circles; we see only the upper half because the ground quietly hides the rest.

Succotash — corn & beans

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A simple skillet of sweetcorn and beans with onion and a little butter — the classic Indigenous North American pairing of maize and beans, two of the “Three Sisters”, that together give a fuller balance of plant protein.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — Sweetcorn kernels, cooked
250 g	Common bean (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — Cooked beans (lima, butter or borlotti), drained
80 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
100 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomato, diced (optional)
20 g	Butter or olive oil — To sweat the onion
4 g	Fine sea salt & pepper — To taste
6 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Parsley, chopped, to finish

METHOD

1. Melt the butter (or heat the oil) in a skillet over medium heat and sweat the chopped onion until soft.
2. Add the sweetcorn kernels and cooked beans and stir to combine.
3. Add the diced tomato, if using, and cook, stirring occasionally, until everything is heated through and tender, about 8–10 minutes.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Stir through the chopped parsley and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Slow fire, deep flavour.

Toasted Buckwheat Kasha

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 ml

Buckwheat is not a wheat at all but a nourishing, gluten-free seed. Toasting the groats before simmering gives the classic nutty, comforting kasha eaten across Eastern Europe and Russia.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Buckwheat (<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i>) — raw hulled buckwheat groats
400 ml	water or stock
1 tbsp	butter or oil
0.5 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Toast the dry groats in a hot dry pan for 3-4 minutes until nutty and fragrant, stirring.
2. Add the water or stock (mind the steam), the butter and salt.
3. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer on low for about 12-15 minutes until the liquid is absorbed.
4. Turn off the heat and let stand, covered, 5 minutes.
5. Fluff with a fork and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Buckwheat has been a food staple in Central Asia and China for at least 4,000 years. Archaeological seeds and pollen records from Yunnan, Sichuan, and the Himalayan foothills date its cultivation to the Neolithic.

Traditional Andean Maca Porridge (Mazamorra)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A warming Andean breakfast porridge made from dried maca root — one of the oldest traditional ways maca has been eaten in the Peruvian highlands as a nourishing, energising staple food.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Maca (<i>Lepidium meyenii</i>), hypocotyl — dried maca powder
500 g	Water or milk — water or milk of choice
	Sweetener (to taste) — honey, panela or fruit to sweeten, to taste

METHOD

1. Whisk the dried maca powder into the cold water or milk in a small pan until smooth and lump-free.
2. Bring gently to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly to prevent sticking.
3. Cook for 8–12 minutes, stirring, until thickened to a smooth, pourable porridge and the raw, malty smell mellows.
4. Sweeten to taste with honey, panela or mashed fruit. Serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Maca has been cultivated in the central Peruvian Andes for some two thousand years and is deeply woven into highland Andean life.

Ugali / sadza — East & Southern African maize porridge

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

A firm maize-meal porridge stirred to a smooth, stiff dough — ugali (East Africa), sadza (Zimbabwe), pap or nshima elsewhere. The everyday staple of much of sub-Saharan Africa, scooped by hand to eat with stews and greens.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Sweetcorn (<i>Zea mays</i>) — White maize meal (mealie-meal)
700 g	Water — Added in stages
3 g	Salt — Optional, to taste

METHOD

1. Bring about two-thirds of the water to the boil in a heavy pot, with the salt if using.
2. Mix a portion of the maize meal with the remaining cold water to a smooth slurry and stir into the boiling water to form a thin porridge.
3. Cook a few minutes, then gradually add the rest of the dry maize meal, beating continuously with a wooden spoon to prevent lumps.
4. Keep adding meal and beating vigorously until the mixture becomes very thick and pulls away from the sides of the pot.
5. Reduce the heat and cook, turning and pressing the stiff dough, 5-10 minutes more until smooth and fully cooked.
6. Turn out onto a plate, shape into a mound, and serve hot alongside stew, beans or cooked greens.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The garden forgives every year;
begin again.

Warm Rye Flake Breakfast Porridge

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 ml

A hearty, nutty northern-style porridge of rye flakes simmered until creamy. Rye’s deep, slightly tangy flavour and generous fibre make a sustaining, slow-burning start to a cold morning.

INGREDIENTS

50 g	Rye flakes (<i>Secale cereale</i>) — About 1/2 cup
300 ml	Water or milk
1 pinch	Salt
1 tsp	Honey — <i>Optional, to serve</i>
1 handful	Fresh berries — <i>Optional, to serve</i>

METHOD

1. Combine the rye flakes, liquid and a pinch of salt in a small pan.
2. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring, then cook over low heat for 8-10 minutes until thick and creamy.
3. Spoon into a bowl and top with honey and fresh berries if liked.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The bread grain of the cold north, rye built the dark sourdough loaves, crispbreads and rye beers/whiskies of northern Europe. Its darker history is ergotism (‘St Anthony’s Fire’), the medieval affliction caused by the ergot fungus on infected rye.

A photograph of a garden bed. In the foreground, there are several lavender plants with purple flowers and some rosemary plants with silvery-green leaves. The plants are growing in a bed of dark soil, with some straw or mulch visible at the bottom. In the background, there are various other green plants, including some with large, broad leaves and some with thin, upright stems. A black plastic pot is visible on a wooden surface behind the plants. The overall scene is a lush, green garden.

The Vegetable Table

Arranged as the garden grows — plant by plant, dish by dish.

Bamia bi-zeit — okra in olive oil (Levantine, vegan)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A Levantine vegetarian classic: okra slow-cooked in good olive oil with garlic, tomato and coriander, brightened with lemon. Eaten warm or at room temperature as a mezze with bread — proof that the plant on your plate can be the whole meal.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>) — Trim caps in a cone; keep the pods whole.
60 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Be generous — it is the bi-zeit (in oil).
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
18 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
350 g	Ripe tomatoes, chopped (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
20 g	Tomato paste (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
200 g	Water
25 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>)
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
3 g	Ground coriander seed (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>)
8 g	Sea salt and black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Trim the okra caps in a cone without cutting into the pods, keeping the pods whole.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pot and soften the onion until golden; add the garlic and ground coriander and cook 1 minute.
3. Stir in the tomato paste, then the chopped tomatoes and water; season and simmer 5 minutes.
4. Add the okra, cover, and simmer gently for 25–30 minutes until tender, stirring as little as possible.
5. Off the heat, fold through the fresh coriander and lemon juice.
6. Serve warm or at room temperature with flatbread as a mezze or light main.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Snowflakes fall by the trillion, and in all that falling no two alike have ever been found.

Roasted Okra-Seed Coffee (caffeine-free)

Decoction • Makes 4 cups

A historical thrift drink: mature okra seeds, dried, roasted dark and ground, brew into a caffeine-free coffee-like beverage. It was a documented coffee substitute in the American South and elsewhere during shortages, and remains a pleasant roasted, nutty hot drink.

INGREDIENTS

40 g	Okra (<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>), seed
800 g	Water

METHOD

1. Dry the mature okra seeds thoroughly.
2. Roast in a dry pan or oven, stirring often, until deep brown and fragrant; cool completely.
3. Grind the roasted seeds.
4. Brew like coffee: about 10 g grounds per cup of just-boiled water, steep or perk 4-5 minutes.
5. Strain and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Roasted seeds have long served as a coffee substitute in times of scarcity.



Aibika Sautéed Greens (Island Cabbage)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A simple Pacific Islands everyday dish using the tender young leaves of *Abelmoschus manihot* (aibika/bele), one of the region’s most important traditional leafy vegetables — mild, slightly mucilaginous greens, nutritious and quick to cook.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Aibika (<i>Abelmoschus manihot</i>), leaf — young aibika leaves, washed and shredded
15 g	Cooking oil
60 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — onion, sliced
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — garlic, chopped

METHOD

1. Wash the young aibika leaves well, remove tough stalks, and shred.
2. Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced onion and chopped garlic.
3. Add the shredded leaves along with a splash of water or coconut milk.
4. Cook, stirring, for 3–5 minutes until just wilted and tender.
5. Season to taste and serve hot as a side with rice, root vegetables or fish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Across its range *Abelmoschus manihot* carries a double identity: a prized food and a folk remedy.



Silver Fir Tip Sugar

Food / culinary • Makes 220 g

A fragrant flavoured sugar made from young silver fir tips — a citrus-resinous woodland note for baking, desserts and drinks, in the spirit of traditional Alpine spring-tip cookery.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 30 g | European silver fir (<i>Abies alba</i>), shoot tips — fresh young fir shoot tips, finely chopped |
| 200 g | Sugar — caster or granulated sugar |

METHOD

1. Finely chop the fresh fir tips (or briefly pulse with a little of the sugar).
2. Layer the tips and sugar in a clean dry jar, or blitz together and spread to dry slightly.
3. Seal and leave 1–2 weeks, shaking occasionally, for the sugar to take on the aroma.
4. Sieve out the tips if you prefer a fine sugar, or leave them in. Store sealed and dry.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Eat the rainbow the soil paints.

Grand Fir Tip Infused Sugar

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

Young grand fir tips have a bright, citrus-resin flavour. Blitzed into sugar, they make a fragrant “forest sugar” for baking, rimming drinks, or sprinkling on shortbread.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Grand fir (<i>Abies grandis</i>), leaf — fresh fir tips
200 g	Caster sugar — base — carries and preserves the flavour

METHOD

1. Pulse the fresh fir tips with the sugar in a food processor until finely chopped and evenly distributed.
2. Spread the mixture out on a tray and leave to dry for a day at room temperature.
3. Sieve out any larger woody pieces.
4. Store in a sealed jar in a cool, dry cupboard.
5. Use in shortbread, cakes, whipped cream, or to rim a glass.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Grand fir was long valued by Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest.



Gum Arabic Fruit Pastilles

Food / culinary • Makes ~230 g

Acacia senegal yields gum arabic (gum acacia), a classic food-grade thickener and the traditional setting agent for soft fruit pastilles and Turkish-style sweets. Fully dissolved, it gives a tender, glossy chew.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	gum arabic (<i>Acacia senegal</i>), food-grade powder — the setting agent
200 ml	fruit juice (e.g. pomegranate or apple)
150 g	caster sugar
10 ml	lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
20 g	icing sugar — for dusting

METHOD

1. Warm the fruit juice gently and whisk in the gum arabic powder until fully dissolved and smooth; strain if needed.
2. Add the caster sugar and lemon juice and cook over low heat, stirring, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture thickens to a heavy syrup.
3. Pour into a small lined tray and leave at room temperature, uncovered, for 24-36 hours until firm enough to cut.
4. Turn out, cut into small squares, and toss in icing sugar.
5. Rest the pastilles a further day to firm before storing.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mountains are rising still, grain upon grain, more slowly than a fingernail grows.



Indian Nettle Greens (Kuppaimeni Saag)

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

The young leaves and shoots of *Acalypha indica* are a traditional cooked pot-herb across rural India (kuppaimeni) and Indonesia. Thorough cooking is essential: it tames the bitterness and reduces the plant’s cyanogenic and oxidative compounds. This is a cooked green, never eaten raw.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Indian acalypha (<i>Acalypha indica</i>) — young <i>Acalypha indica</i> leaves and tender shoots, washed
1 medium	onion, finely sliced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
2 cloves	garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 whole	green chilli, chopped (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — optional
15 ml	coconut or vegetable oil
2 g	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Wash the leaves and shoots thoroughly in several changes of water.
2. Blanch in boiling water for 2-3 minutes, drain, and discard the water.
3. Heat the oil and soften the onion, then add garlic and chilli.
4. Add the blanched greens and cook down over medium heat, stirring, for at least 8-10 minutes until fully tender and any bitterness has mellowed.
5. Season with salt and serve in a small portion with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Acalypha indica is one of the best-known household medicinal weeds of southern India and Sri Lanka, where in Tamil it is called kuppaimeni (‘dooryard/rubbish-heap herb’) and is a staple of Siddha home medicine.

Sneezewort Tingle Leaf Seasoning

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

The young leaves of *Achillea ptarmica* (sneezewort) have a warm, peppery bite and a tingling, numbing effect on the tongue reminiscent of Sichuan pepper. Used sparingly, finely shredded fresh, they make a lively raw seasoning for salads, soft cheese and butter.

INGREDIENTS

6 leaves	Sneezewort (<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>) — young fresh sneezewort leaves, finely shredded
100 g	soft fresh cheese or unsalted butter
1 tsp	lemon zest (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	flaky salt

METHOD

1. Wash and dry the young sneezewort leaves and shred them very finely.
2. Fold the shredded leaves, lemon zest and salt through the soft cheese or softened butter.
3. Taste a tiny amount: it should give a warm peppery tingle. Adjust with a few more shreds if you like.
4. Chill briefly to firm, then spread on bread or crackers and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The smell of rain on dry earth has a name, petrichor, from the old Greek for the blood of stones.



Baobab Breakfast Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~270 ml

The dry, naturally powdery pulp of the baobab fruit (*Adansonia digitata*) is tangy and citrus-like, exceptionally rich in vitamin C and soluble fibre. Whisked into a smoothie it dissolves into a bright, slightly sherbet-like tartness.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	baobab fruit pulp powder (<i>Adansonia digitata</i>) — roughly 1.5 tablespoons
1 whole	ripe banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>)
120 ml	plain yoghurt
150 ml	milk or plant milk
1 tsp	honey — optional, to balance the tartness

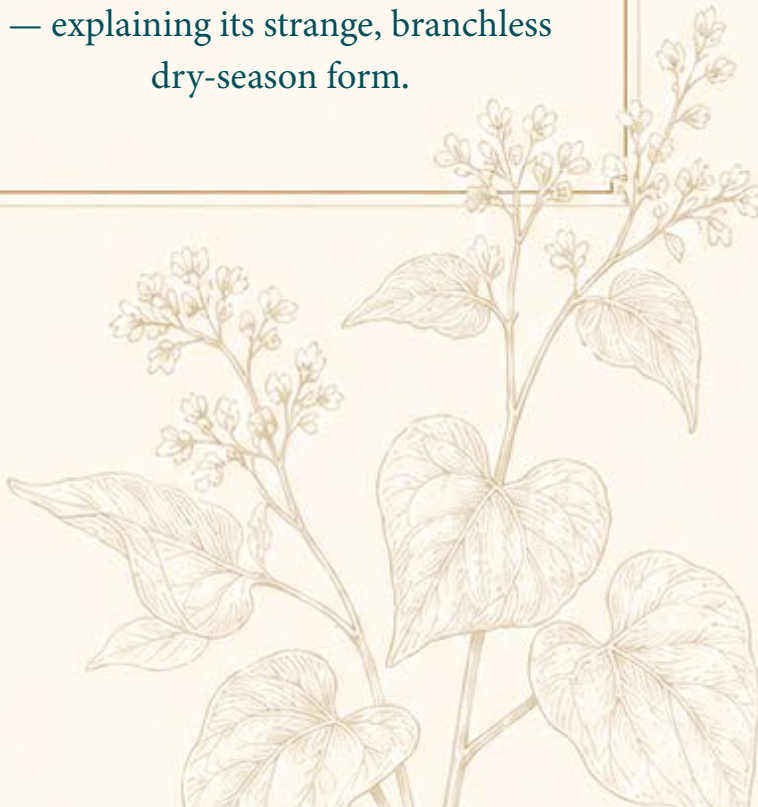
METHOD

1. Add the baobab powder, banana, yoghurt and milk to a blender.
2. Blend on high until completely smooth and frothy.
3. Taste and add honey if you want to soften the citrusy tartness.
4. Pour into a tall glass and drink straight away.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Across Africa the baobab is steeped in legend as a sacred and “magic” tree. A widespread story tells that the gods planted it upside-down, leaving its roots waving in the air — explaining its strange, branchless dry-season form.



Fresh Agastache Leaf Dipping Sauce

Food / culinary • Makes ~10 g

A fresh herb condiment in the Korean culinary tradition, mixing finely chopped Korean mint leaves into a savoury dipping sauce.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	fresh <i>Agastache rugosa</i> leaves — about a small handful, finely chopped
2 tbsp	soy sauce
1 tbsp	rice vinegar (<i>Oryza sativa</i>)
1 tsp	sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

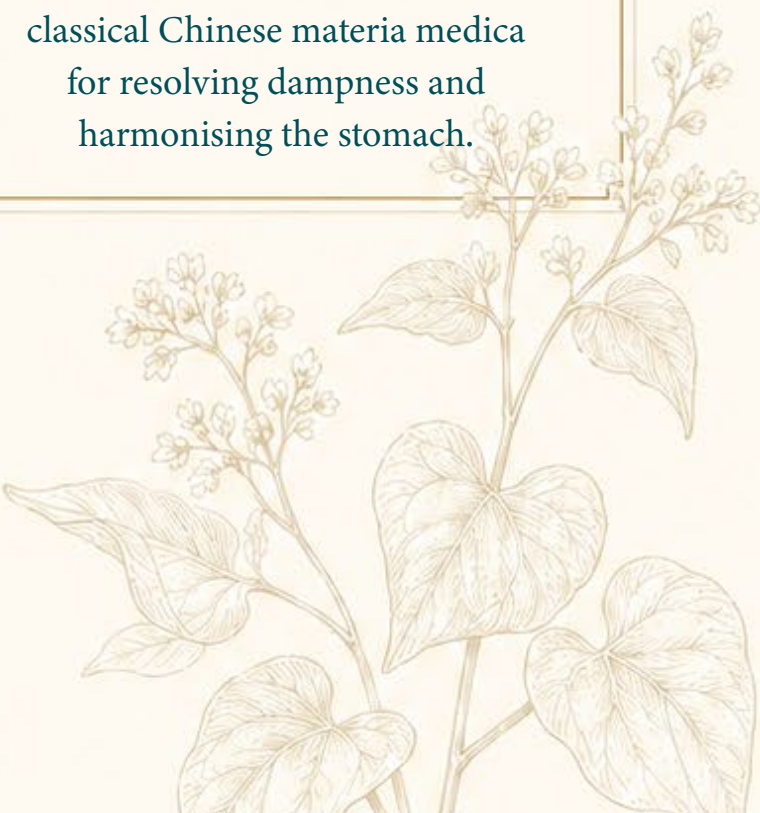
METHOD

1. Finely chop the fresh Korean mint leaves
2. Whisk together the soy sauce, rice vinegar and sesame oil
3. Stir the chopped leaves into the sauce and let sit for 10 minutes before serving
4. Serve as a dipping sauce alongside grilled meats or vegetables



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long-standing culinary and medicinal use in Korea (where fresh leaves are eaten as a herb known locally as ‘banga’ or ‘gwakhyang’), China and Japan; recorded in classical Chinese materia medica for resolving dampness and harmonising the stomach.



Agave-Lime Agua Fresca

Food / culinary • Makes ~480 ml

The blue agave of Mexico (*Agave tequilana*) is the source of agave syrup, made by cooking the plant’s fructan-rich sap into a mild, honey-clear sweetener. Whisked with fresh lime it makes a clean, thirst-quenching agua fresca.

INGREDIENTS

30 ml	agave syrup (from <i>Agave tequilana</i>) — about 2 tablespoons
45 ml	fresh lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — about 2 limes
400 ml	cold water
1 handful	ice
4 leaves	fresh mint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — optional garnish

METHOD

1. Stir the agave syrup into the lime juice until fully dissolved.
2. Add the cold water and mix well; taste and adjust sweetness or lime.
3. Fill a glass with ice and pour over.
4. Garnish with mint and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

An acorn holds an entire forest within it, waiting only on time and a little rain.



Roasted Couch Grass Root ‘Coffee’

Food / culinary • Makes ~330 ml

The creeping rhizomes of couch grass (*Agropyron repens*, now *Elymus repens*), the bane of gardeners, are a genuine wild food. Cleaned, roasted and simmered, the fructan-rich roots give a mild, malty, caffeine-free coffee-substitute brew used across rural Europe in lean times.

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp	Couch grass (<i>Agropyron repens</i>) — cleaned, dried and roasted couch grass rhizome, coarsely ground
300 ml	water
30 ml	milk or plant milk — optional
1 tsp	honey — optional

METHOD

1. Scrub the rhizomes very clean, dry them fully, then roast in a dry pan or low oven until browned and fragrant.
2. Grind the roasted root coarsely.
3. Simmer the ground root in the water for 8-10 minutes.
4. Strain into a cup, add milk and honey to taste, and drink warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A shared meal is counted twice.



Young Lady’s Mantle Spring Leaves

Food / culinary

In spring the youngest, softest lady’s mantle leaves are mild and pleasant — a traditional foraged green to scatter, lightly dressed, through a salad, adding a subtle green astringency.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 handful Lady’s Mantle (*Alchemilla xanthochlora*) — Young, tender lady’s mantle leaves, washed.
- 1 bowl Mixed salad leaves — As a base.
- 1 drizzle Olive oil & lemon — Simple dressing.

METHOD

1. Wash the young lady’s mantle leaves well and pat dry.
2. Tear any larger leaves and toss with the mixed salad leaves.
3. Dress lightly with olive oil and a squeeze of lemon.
4. Serve straight away as a fresh spring side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The moon drifts a little farther from us each year, so tonight’s full moon is the nearest it will ever be again.



Fully Ripe Bladder-Cherry Berries — Fresh Eating

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

The Chinese-lantern or bladder cherry (*Alkekengi officinarum*, syn. *Physalis alkekengi*) hides a single soft orange-red berry inside each papery lantern. When FULLY RIPE — bright deep orange and soft — this berry is edible, tart and rich in vitamin C, eaten fresh in small amounts in European and Asian tradition. CRITICAL: only the fully ripe berry is edible. The unripe (green/pale) fruit, the papery calyx/lantern, the leaves and the stems are TOXIC.

INGREDIENTS

1 small handful Chinese lantern (*Alkekengi officinarum*), fruit — FULLY RIPE orange berries only — husk/ calyx removed and discarded (toxic)

METHOD

1. Select only berries that are fully ripe — deep, even orange-red and soft to the touch.
2. Peel away and discard the entire papery calyx or lantern, which is toxic.
3. Rinse the ripe berry.
4. Eat fresh in small quantity, or add as a tart accent to a fruit salad.
5. Discard any berries that are green, pale or hard — do not eat them.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Alkekengi officinarum has been known to European and Asian herbalists for over two thousand years.



Leeks vinaigrette (poireaux vinaigrette)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A cornerstone of the French bistro table: whole leeks poached until meltingly tender, then dressed warm or at room temperature with a sharp Dijon mustard vinaigrette and scattered with chopped herbs. Elegant in its simplicity — leek at its purest. Serve as a starter, a side dish alongside roast chicken or fish, or as a light lunch with hard-boiled eggs and crusty bread. The leek’s natural sweetness and silky texture shine without distraction.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Leeks (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i>) — About 8 medium leeks; use the shank and pale green part; reserve dark tops for stock
60 ml	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Use the best oil you have — it is the base of the dressing
15 g	Dijon mustard — 1 heaped teaspoon
20 ml	Red wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — Or sherry vinegar for a nuttier flavour
5 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Half a small clove; optional but classical
10 g	Flat-leaf parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>)
	Fine sea salt and black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add the whole leeks and simmer for 8-12 minutes (depending on thickness) until a knife slides through the centre without resistance. They should be very tender but still hold their shape.
2. Lift the leeks out carefully and drain on a clean cloth or rack. Do not press them — they bruise easily. Allow to cool until you can handle them (2-3 minutes).
3. Meanwhile, whisk together the mustard, vinegar, garlic (if using), salt and pepper in a bowl. Slowly whisk in the olive oil to form a thick, emulsified vinaigrette.
4. Arrange the leeks in a single layer on a serving platter or individual plates. Pour over the vinaigrette while the leeks are still warm so they absorb the dressing. Scatter with chopped parsley. Serve warm or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Astronauts say that from space there are no borders at all, only one blue and breathing home.

Leek-top vegetable stock (zero-waste)

Food / culinary • Makes 1500 g

A thrifty, flavour-rich vegetable stock that puts the tough dark-green leek tops (usually discarded) to good use alongside the classic mirepoix of onion, carrot and celery. Food-first, zero-waste cooking that turns kitchen trimmings into the backbone of soups and braises.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leek green tops, well washed and roughly chopped
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, quartered (skin on for colour)
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, roughly chopped
100 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery stalks, roughly chopped
1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Bay leaf
5 g	Black peppercorns (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)
1800 g	Water — Cold water

METHOD

1. Put all the vegetables, bay and peppercorns in a large pot and cover with the cold water.
2. Bring slowly to a gentle simmer (do not boil hard, which makes stock cloudy) and cook uncovered for about 45–60 minutes.
3. Strain through a sieve, pressing the solids gently, and discard the vegetables.
4. Cool quickly, then refrigerate or freeze in portions. Do not salt the stock until you use it in a dish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The universe is mostly empty space, so you have never truly touched a thing, only ever come very close.

Zeytinyağlı pırasa — Turkish braised leeks in olive oil (vegan)

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A classic Turkish zeytinyağlı (‘with olive oil’) vegetable dish: thick rounds of leek braised slowly with carrot, a little rice and olive oil, finished with lemon and eaten warm or at room temperature. A wholesome, plant-only way to make leek the centre of the plate.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leeks, white & light-green, cut into thick rounds and washed (~5 medium)
120 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, sliced into rounds
50 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
30 g	Short-grain rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Short-grain rice, rinsed
8 g	Sugar — Sugar (traditional, balances the leek)
30 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
200 g	Water — Hot water
5 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan. Add the carrot and leek rounds and turn gently to coat; cook a few minutes without browning.
2. Stir in the rice, sugar, salt, lemon juice and hot water. Bring to a gentle simmer.
3. Cover and braise on low heat for about 30–35 minutes, until the leeks are meltingly soft and the rice has cooked into the juices, adding a splash more water if needed.
4. Cool in the pan. Serve warm or at room temperature with extra lemon.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The leek is the national emblem of Wales, worn on St David’s Day; tradition links it to a battle in which Welshmen wore leeks in their caps to tell friend from foe, and Shakespeare alludes to the custom in Henry V.

Marjoram & onion bratkartoffeln — German pan-fried potatoes

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

A homely German skillet of golden pan-fried potatoes with onion and a generous lift of sweet marjoram (Majoran) — the herb most associated with German potato and sausage cookery. Food-first comfort: marjoram’s warm, gently carminative aroma is a classic partner to starchy, savoury dishes.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Waxy potatoes, pre-boiled and sliced (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Cooked the day before for the best crisp
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely sliced (~1 medium)
2 g	Marjoram (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) — Dried marjoram, rubbed in (or 1 tbsp fresh, added near the end)
30 g	Lard, butter or oil for frying — For pan-frying
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, freshly ground
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat the fat in a wide heavy skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering.
2. Add the sliced pre-boiled potatoes in a single layer and fry, turning occasionally, until golden and crisp at the edges, 8–12 minutes.
3. Add the onion and continue frying until soft and lightly browned, 5–6 minutes.
4. Scatter in the marjoram, season with salt and pepper, toss for 1 minute so the herb releases its aroma, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The stars do not really twinkle; it is only our restless air that makes them seem to tremble.

Cantonese ginger & scallion sauce (薑蔥醬)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The classic Cantonese cold relish — finely minced Welsh onion and fresh ginger bound by hot oil into a bright, savoury sauce. Served with poached chicken (Hainanese-style), steamed fish, tofu or rice; a fast, food-first way to use plenty of green onion.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Welsh onion (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — Welsh onion / scallions, very finely minced (whites and greens)
40 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, peeled and very finely minced
90 g	Neutral oil — Heat until shimmering
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
10 g	Light soy sauce (optional)

METHOD

1. Mince the Welsh onion and ginger as finely as you can and combine in a heatproof bowl with the salt.
2. Heat the oil in a small pan until it shimmers and is just about to smoke.
3. Carefully pour the hot oil over the scallion and ginger — it will sizzle and bloom. Stand back to avoid splatter.
4. Stir in the optional soy sauce. Taste and adjust salt. Let it sit a few minutes for the flavours to meld.
5. Serve at room temperature; refrigerate the rest in a sealed jar.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every night half the world is asleep and dreaming, and no one has ever seen inside another's dream.

Chinese scallion oil (cong you) — fragrant infused oil

Food / culinary • Makes 200 ml

A cornerstone of Chinese home cooking: Welsh onion (cong) greens and whites slowly fried in oil until golden and fragrant, leaving a deeply savoury scallion oil and crisp frizzled bits. The food-first heart of this plant — turn a glut of green onions into a flavour base for noodles, rice and vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Welsh onion (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — Welsh onion / scallions (about 2 large bunches), whites and greens separated
200 ml	Neutral oil (e.g. groundnut or sunflower) — Enough to submerge the scallions

METHOD

1. Wash and dry the Welsh onion well, then cut into roughly 5 cm lengths, keeping the white parts separate from the green.
2. Put the oil and the white parts into a cold pan or wok and heat gently over low-medium heat so the scallions slowly sizzle rather than fry hard.
3. After a few minutes add the green parts. Cook gently, stirring now and then, for 10–15 minutes until everything is deep golden-brown and the oil is very fragrant. Do not let it burn (it turns bitter).
4. Turn off the heat and let it cool a little. Strain the oil into a clean jar; reserve the crisp scallion bits to scatter over dishes.
5. Cool completely, then refrigerate. Use the oil and the crispy bits to dress noodles, rice and vegetables.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Water remembers the herb long after the leaf is gone.

Refrigerator Garlic Confit (Slow-Cooked Garlic in Oil)

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

Sweet, mellow whole garlic cloves slow-cooked in olive oil until soft and golden — a versatile culinary preparation for spreading on bread, stirring into dressings or folding into cooked dishes. Cooked deliberately and stored cold and brief to stay safe.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), bulb
150 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Peel about 150 g whole garlic cloves and place them in a small saucepan; cover completely with olive oil.
2. Cook very gently over low heat (oil barely bubbling, about 90 °C) for 30–45 minutes until the cloves are soft and pale gold. Do not let them brown hard.
3. Cool, then transfer cloves and oil to a clean jar with the cloves submerged.
4. Refrigerate at once. Use within 4 days, or freeze in small portions for up to 3 months. Never store at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Where soup steams, no one is a stranger.



Chive blossom vinegar

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

A beautiful rose-pink vinegar made by steeping chive flowers in white wine vinegar — gently oniony and lightly floral, lovely in vinaigrettes, drizzled over tomatoes, or splashed into potato salad. A pretty way to use the early-summer flush of chive blossoms.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), flower — Fresh chive flower heads
500 g	White wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — About 480 ml, warmed not boiled

METHOD

1. Pick freshly opened chive flower heads on a dry day; shake out any insects and pull off any green stalk.
2. Pack the blossoms loosely into a clean glass jar and pour over the warmed (not boiling) white wine vinegar to cover.
3. Seal with a non-metallic lid, label, and leave in a cool dark place 1-2 weeks, shaking occasionally, until the vinegar turns pink.
4. Strain out the flowers and bottle. Use in vinaigrettes, over salads and tomatoes, or in marinades.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A crow can hold a human face in memory for years, and will tell its children who was kind and who was not.



Chive butter (beurre à la ciboulette)

Food / culinary • Makes 130 g

A simple compound butter that captures the fresh, sweet onion flavour of chives — wonderful melted over steak, baked potatoes, grilled fish, corn or steamed vegetables, or spread on warm bread. The classic way to keep chive flavour beyond the cutting season.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf — Fresh chives, finely snipped
115 g	Unsalted butter, softened — Room temperature
1 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

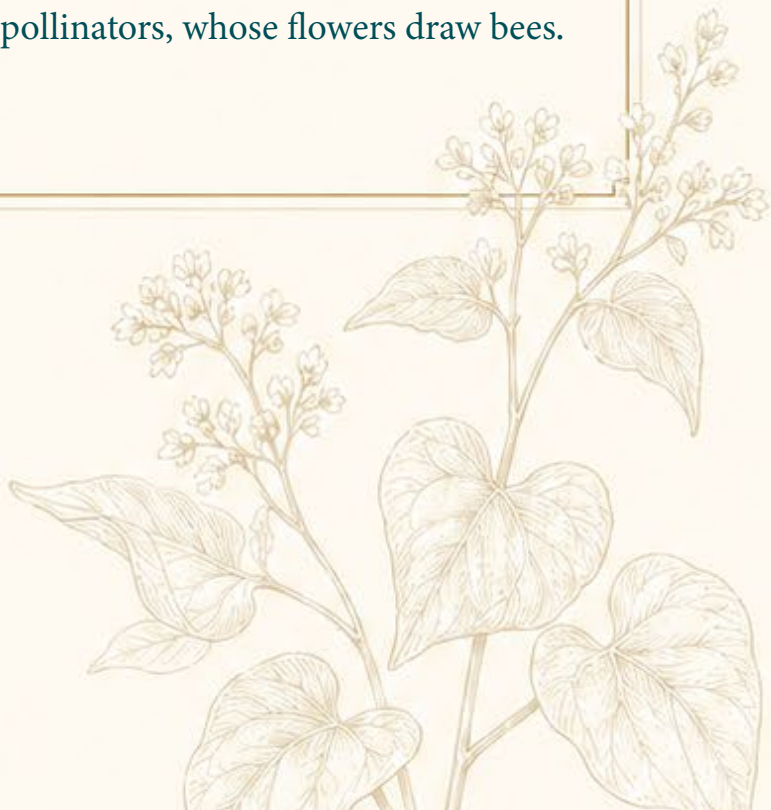
METHOD

1. Soften the butter to room temperature.
2. Snip the chives finely and beat them into the butter with the salt.
3. Roll into a log in baking paper or press into a small pot; refrigerate or freeze. Slice coins onto hot food just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Folk tradition regarded chives, like other alliums, as mildly cleansing and appetite-stimulating, and they remain a staple of cottage and herb gardens for both kitchen and pollinators, whose flowers draw bees.



Fresh quark (or cottage cheese) with chives

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

A wholesome Northern-European staple — fresh quark or cottage cheese simply stirred with snipped chives, salt and pepper. A high-protein, fresh way to eat chives on rye bread, with boiled potatoes, or as a quick savoury breakfast or snack.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf — Fresh chives, finely snipped
230 g	Quark or cottage cheese — Base

METHOD

1. Stir the quark or cottage cheese until creamy, loosening with a splash of milk if stiff.
2. Fold in the finely snipped chives, salt and black pepper to taste.
3. Spread on dark rye bread, spoon over hot boiled potatoes, or eat as a savoury snack.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The knife divides; the meal unites.



Soft scrambled eggs with chives & fines herbes

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Creamy, slow-scrambled eggs finished with the French fines herbes — chives, parsley, chervil and tarragon (chives leading). One of the simplest and most delicious ways to eat chives, on hot buttered toast.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf — Fresh chives, snapped
5 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>), leaf — Fresh parsley, chopped
200 g	Eggs — 4 eggs
15 g	Butter — A knob, for the pan

METHOD

1. Beat the eggs with a pinch of salt.
2. Melt the butter in a non-stick pan over low heat.
3. Add the eggs and stir slowly and continuously until just softly set and creamy.
4. Off the heat, fold through the snapped chives and chopped parsley.
5. Serve at once on hot buttered toast.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dolphins name themselves, each with a signature whistle it answers to for the whole of its life.



Sour cream & chive dip

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

The classic cool, creamy chive dip for crudités, crisps, baked potatoes and grilled vegetables — fresh chives folded through sour cream with a little garlic, dill and lemon. Quick, raw and bright.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf — Fresh chives, finely snipped
250 g	Sour cream (or thick Greek yoghurt) — Base
5 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Fresh dill, finely chopped
4 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), bulb — 1 small garlic clove, grated
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice of about half a lemon

METHOD

1. Stir the sour cream until smooth.
2. Fold in the snipped chives, chopped dill, grated garlic and lemon juice.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Rest in the fridge 15–20 minutes for the flavours to meld.
5. Taste, adjust seasoning, and serve chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It was long valued as a gentle settling herb for the digestion and for soothing fretful, colicky babies — the original ‘gripe water’ of the nursery tradition was flavoured with dill (and fennel) seed.

Jiǔ cài chǎo jīdàn — Garlic chives & egg stir-fry (韭菜炒鸡蛋)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

One of the most beloved everyday home-cooked dishes across China: a lightning-fast stir-fry of garlicky chive leaves and fluffy scrambled egg. Ready in under 15 minutes, it is eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, served alongside steamed rice. The fresh chives need only seconds of heat — the goal is vivid green, lightly wilted leaves wrapped in barely-set egg.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Garlic chives (<i>Allium tuberosum</i>) — Garlic chives — the star; vivid green, fresh only
150 g	eggs (large) — approx. 3 medium eggs; 150 g total
30 g	neutral cooking oil — 2 tbsp; high smoke-point oil for wok cooking
10 g	light soy sauce — 2 tsp; adds savoury depth
5 g	sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — 1 tsp; added to beaten egg for fragrance
1 g	ground white pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — pinch; traditional seasoning

METHOD

1. Wash the garlic chives and pat dry; trim any tough bases and cut into 4-5 cm pieces.
2. Beat the eggs with a pinch of salt and a few drops of sesame oil.
3. Heat a wok or large skillet over high heat until very hot; add the neutral oil and swirl to coat.
4. Pour in the egg mixture, let it set 5 seconds, then gently scramble to large, just-set curds, about 30 seconds; transfer to a plate immediately.
5. Return the wok to high heat, add a little more oil if needed, and stir-fry the garlic chives 60-90 seconds until bright green and just wilted.
6. Return the egg to the wok, season with soy sauce, white pepper and a pinch of sugar if using, and toss together for 20 seconds.
7. Taste, adjust seasoning, and serve immediately over steamed rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bees dance to tell one another where the flowers are, giving distance and direction in the dark of the hive.

Wild Garlic Butter (Maitre d'hôtel-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

Compound butter is one of the most versatile ways to use spring's first ramsons harvest. A log of wild garlic butter, sliced straight from the fridge or freezer onto hot grilled steak, fish, new potatoes, pasta or toast, transforms a simple meal instantly. It freezes perfectly, so a big batch made in April delivers the flavour of spring through autumn.

INGREDIENTS

50 g	Wild garlic leaves, finely chopped (<i>Allium ursinum</i>) — Completely dry before chopping
200 g	Unsalted butter, softened — Good quality; room temperature before mixing
5 g	Lemon zest (about 1 lemon) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
10 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — density_g_per_ml: 1.04; home_unit: 2 tsp
3 g	Sea salt and black pepper — Season to taste

METHOD

1. Leave butter at room temperature 30 minutes until very soft but not melted.
2. Wash wild garlic leaves, spin or pat completely dry, and chop finely.
3. In a bowl, beat the softened butter until pale. Mix in the wild garlic, lemon zest, lemon juice and salt until evenly combined and vivid green.
4. Taste and adjust seasoning.
5. Tip the mixture onto baking parchment. Roll into a cylinder about 4 cm in diameter, twisting the ends to seal. Refrigerate 1 hour until firm before slicing.
6. Serve sliced onto hot steak, grilled fish, new potatoes, pasta, grilled asparagus or warm bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

First we plant, then we wait, then
we feast — in that order lives all
wisdom.

Wild Garlic Pesto (Bärlauch-Pesto)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

A brilliant spring green: fresh wild garlic leaves blended with good olive oil, parmesan, pine nuts and a squeeze of lemon — bolder and more aromatic than basil pesto, with a sweet herbal garlic depth. Ready in minutes. Use immediately on pasta, spread on sourdough, stir through risotto, dollop on grilled vegetables, or freeze in ice-cube portions to capture spring all year.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Wild garlic leaves (<i>Allium ursinum</i>) — Washed, dried, pre-flower leaves — discard any without strong garlic scent
80 ml	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — density_g_per_ml: 0.91; home_unit: 6 tbsp
40 g	Parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano), finely grated — Omit if freezing portions
30 g	Pine nuts, lightly toasted (<i>Pinus pinea</i>)
15 ml	Lemon juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — density_g_per_ml: 1.04; home_unit: 1 tbsp
3 g	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Wash the wild garlic leaves well and spin dry, then roughly chop.
2. Toast the pine nuts lightly in a dry pan until golden, then cool.
3. Place the wild garlic, pine nuts, parmesan and salt in a food processor and pulse to a rough paste.
4. With the motor running, pour in the olive oil in a steady stream until a loose, vibrantly green pesto forms.
5. Taste, adjust the salt, and stir in the lemon juice.
6. Transfer immediately into a sterilised jar, press down and top with a thin film of olive oil to seal from air; refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The scientific epithet *ursinum* (Latin: of the bear) reflects the same legend.

Wild Garlic Salt — Year-round Green Seasoning

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

The simplest, most useful preservation of the spring ramsons season: fresh wild garlic leaves and coarse sea salt ground together until the salt turns vivid green, then dried low and slow into a fragrant, shelf-stable seasoning. Use it through the year wherever you would use garlic salt or finishing salt — on eggs, pasta, roasted vegetables, grilled fish, potatoes, or even rimming a cocktail glass.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Wild garlic leaves (<i>Allium ursinum</i>) — Completely dried after washing — moisture causes spoilage
100 g	Coarse sea salt (non-iodised) — 1:1 with leaves by weight; non-iodised to preserve colour

METHOD

1. Wash wild garlic leaves and shake or spin completely dry.
2. Weigh the leaves and measure out an equal weight of coarse sea salt (1:1 by weight).
3. Combine the leaves and salt in a food processor or high-powered blender and process to a bright-green, moist paste, about 30-60 seconds.
4. Spread thinly, no deeper than 5 mm, across parchment-lined baking trays.
5. Dry at 40-50°C in a fan oven for 2-3 hours, turning once, until crumbly and dry to the touch, or air-dry 24-48 hours in low humidity.
6. Crumble any clumps and transfer to sealed dry glass jars.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Ireland and Wales the plant was a celebrated spring tonic: the 13th-century Welsh Physicians of Myddfai used it, and an Irish Brehon law imposed a fine of two-and-a-half milch cows for theft from a private ramson patch, reflecting its high value.

Fresh Aloe Vera Inner-Fillet Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 ml

A cooling drink made only from the clear inner leaf fillet, carefully rinsed to remove the bitter yellow latex. Refreshing and mildly soothing, this is a modern take on aloe as a food.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Aloe vera (<i>Aloe barbadensis</i>) — Clear inner fillet of <i>Aloe barbadensis</i> , latex removed and rinsed
150 g	Ripe mango or pineapple, chopped
200 ml	Coconut water (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
1 tsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)

METHOD

1. Slice a thick aloe leaf lengthwise, then trim off the green skin and the yellow layer just beneath it.
2. Rinse the clear inner fillet thoroughly under cold running water until no yellow residue or slippery bitterness remains.
3. Cube about 30 g of the clean fillet and add to a blender with the mango, coconut water and lime juice.
4. Blend until smooth and pour over ice; drink fresh.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Penguins propose with a pebble,
choosing the smoothest they can find
to lay at their beloved's feet.

Smoky Black Cardamom Dal

Food / culinary • Makes ~700 ml

Black cardamom brings a deep, resinous smokiness quite unlike its green cousin, perfect for a comforting lentil dal in the North Indian style.

INGREDIENTS

1 pod	Black cardamom (<i>Amomum subulatum</i>) — Whole black cardamom pod, lightly cracked
200 g	Red lentils (masoor dal), rinsed (<i>Lens culinaris</i>)
700 ml	Water
1 medium	Onion, finely chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 tbsp	Garlic and ginger, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 tsp	Turmeric and cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
2 tbsp	Ghee or oil
1 tsp	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Simmer the lentils with water, turmeric and the cracked black cardamom pod until soft, about 20 minutes, skimming any foam.
2. In a separate pan, heat the ghee and fry the onion until golden, then add garlic, ginger and cumin until fragrant.
3. Stir this tempering into the cooked lentils, season with salt, and simmer 5 minutes more.
4. Fish out the cardamom pod, then serve hot with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cardamom has been prized in the Indian subcontinent since antiquity, valued in Ayurveda and Unani medicine as a warming digestive and aromatic.

Grilled Pineapple Salsa

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Charring fresh pineapple deepens its sweetness and tames its bright acidity, making a lively salsa full of the fruit’s juicy, bromelain-rich flesh.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Pineapple (<i>Ananas comosus</i>) — Fresh <i>Ananas comosus</i> flesh, cut into thick rings or slabs
0.5 small	Red onion, finely diced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 small	Red chilli, finely chopped (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)
3 tbsp	Fresh coriander, chopped (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>)
1 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
1 pinch	Salt

METHOD

1. Grill the pineapple slabs on a hot griddle or barbecue for 2-3 minutes per side until char lines form.
2. Let cool slightly, then dice into small pieces.
3. Toss the diced pineapple with red onion, chilli, coriander, lime juice and salt.
4. Rest 10 minutes for the flavours to mingle, then serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A New World fruit unknown to the Old World until 1493, when Columbus’s crew found it on Guadeloupe; the Spanish called it piña (“pine cone”) and the English “pineapple” for the same resemblance.

Gravadlax — Scandinavian dill-cured salmon

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

The classic Nordic cure: a side of salmon buried in salt, sugar and a thick blanket of fresh dill, pressed for a couple of days until silky and translucent. Dill is the essential partner to salmon, and this is its most famous dish.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Salmon fillet (very fresh, skin on, pin-boned) — Sashimi-grade salmon, previously frozen for safety
40 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Fresh dill, roughly chopped (stalks and all)
60 g	Coarse sea salt
50 g	Sugar
4 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Coarsely crushed white or black pepper
15 g	Aquavit or vodka (optional) — Optional splash for the cure

METHOD

1. Mix the salt, sugar and crushed pepper. Lay the salmon skin-side down on a sheet of cling film and rub all over with the optional spirit.
2. Press the salt-sugar mix onto the flesh, then pile the chopped dill thickly over the top.
3. Wrap tightly in the cling film, set in a dish, lay a board and a weight on top and refrigerate for 36–48 hours, turning once a day and draining off the liquid that forms.
4. Unwrap, scrape off the dill and cure, pat dry, and slice thinly on the diagonal away from the skin. Serve with fresh dill and rye bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In medieval Europe pepper was a luxury weighed against silver, and the search for a direct sea route to its source was a major spur to the European age of exploration.

Candied Angelica Stems

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

The classic confection: young angelica stems candied in sugar syrup to a translucent green — a traditional sweetmeat and the bright-green decoration for cakes and trifles, with a warm, musky-aromatic flavour.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Garden Angelica (<i>Angelica archangelica</i>), stem — young tender stems, cut in 8–10 cm lengths
400 g	Sugar — caster or granulated sugar (candying medium)
300 g	Water — water (for the syrup)

METHOD

1. Cut young, tender angelica stems into 8–10 cm lengths; blanch briefly in boiling water, then peel off the outer stringy skin.
2. Dissolve the sugar in the water to make a syrup; add the stems and simmer gently until they turn translucent and bright green.
3. Leave the stems to steep in the syrup 24 hours, then reheat and simmer again; repeat over 2–3 days to candy them through.
4. Lift out, drain, roll in a little extra sugar and dry on a rack. Store airtight.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Angelica has carried an aura of protection and healing since the Middle Ages.



Candied Wild Angelica Stems

Food / culinary • Makes ~450 g

A traditional European sweetmeat, tender young angelica stems are simmered in syrup until translucent and jewel-green, used to decorate cakes and puddings much like garden angelica.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Wild angelica (<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>) — Young tender stems of correctly identified <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> , cut into lengths
200 g	Granulated sugar
200 ml	Water
50 g	Extra caster sugar (for coating)

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, wash the young stems and cut into 5 cm lengths, peeling away any tough stringy outer skin.
2. Blanch the stems in boiling water for 2-3 minutes, then drain.
3. Dissolve the sugar in the water, add the stems and simmer very gently for about 20 minutes until they turn translucent and green.
4. Lift out, drain, roll in caster sugar, and dry on a rack in a warm place before storing.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A cook's best tool is a walk through the garden.



Fresh Soursop Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

A traditional Caribbean and Latin American beverage made from ripe soursop fruit pulp.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Soursop (<i>Annona muricata</i>) ripe fruit pulp, seeds removed — use only fully ripe pulp; discard all seeds and fibrous core
250 ml	Plant-based milk or water
1 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — optional, to taste
1 tbsp	Honey or maple syrup — optional, to taste

METHOD

1. Cut the ripe soursop in half and scoop out the white pulp, carefully removing every black seed.
2. Discard the seeds and the fibrous central core entirely — do not blend or chew seeds.
3. Combine pulp with plant-based milk or water in a blender.
4. Add lime juice and sweetener to taste and blend until smooth.
5. Serve immediately over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Honey never truly spoils; sealed jars three thousand years old have been found still golden and sweet.



Soursop Sorbet

Food / culinary • Makes ~480 g

A refreshing frozen dessert made from ripe soursop pulp, popular throughout the tropics.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Soursop (<i>Annona muricata</i>) ripe fruit pulp, seeds removed — seeds fully removed
150 ml	Water
80 g	Sugar — or to taste
2 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)

METHOD

1. Puree the seeded ripe soursop pulp with water and lime juice until smooth.
2. Dissolve sugar into the puree, tasting to adjust sweetness.
3. Strain the mixture through a sieve to remove fibrous strands.
4. Churn in an ice cream maker per manufacturer instructions, or freeze in a shallow container, stirring every 30 minutes until firm.
5. Scoop and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Butter loves bread as summer loves hay.

Fresh Sugar Apple (seeds removed)

Food / culinary

The simplest way to enjoy sugar apple: ripe, sweet, custardy flesh eaten straight from the fruit, with every seed carefully removed.

INGREDIENTS

1 fruit *Annona squamosa* (sugar apple), ripe fruit pulp only — seeds fully removed and discarded

METHOD

1. Select a fully ripe fruit (segments slightly separated, skin pale and yielding).
2. Cut the fruit in half.
3. Scoop the flesh from each segment with a spoon.
4. Discard every seed as it is encountered — do not chew or crush any seed.
5. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A cat’s purr hums at a pitch that helps bone to heal; it may be mending itself, and us as well.

Sugar Apple Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

A creamy tropical smoothie made from deseeded sugar apple pulp, milk, and a touch of lime.

INGREDIENTS

1 fruit	<i>Annona squamosa</i> (sugar apple), ripe pulp, fully deseeded — all seeds removed by hand before blending
250 ml	milk or plant-based milk
1 tsp	lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)

METHOD

1. Scoop the ripe sugar apple flesh from the rind, removing and discarding every seed by hand.
2. Place the deseeded pulp in a blender with milk and lime juice.
3. Blend until smooth.
4. Pour into a glass and serve chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

What ripens slowly spoils slowly.

Cow Parsley Fresh Spring Herb (wild chervil)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 handful

Young cow parsley is one of spring’s most useful wild herbs — a grassy, aniseed-tinged stand-in for garden chervil or parsley. Best raw or added at the very end of cooking, as its delicate aroma fades with heat.

INGREDIENTS

1 handful Cow parsley (young leaves) (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), aerial parts — Young, freshly picked aerial parts only. Never the root.

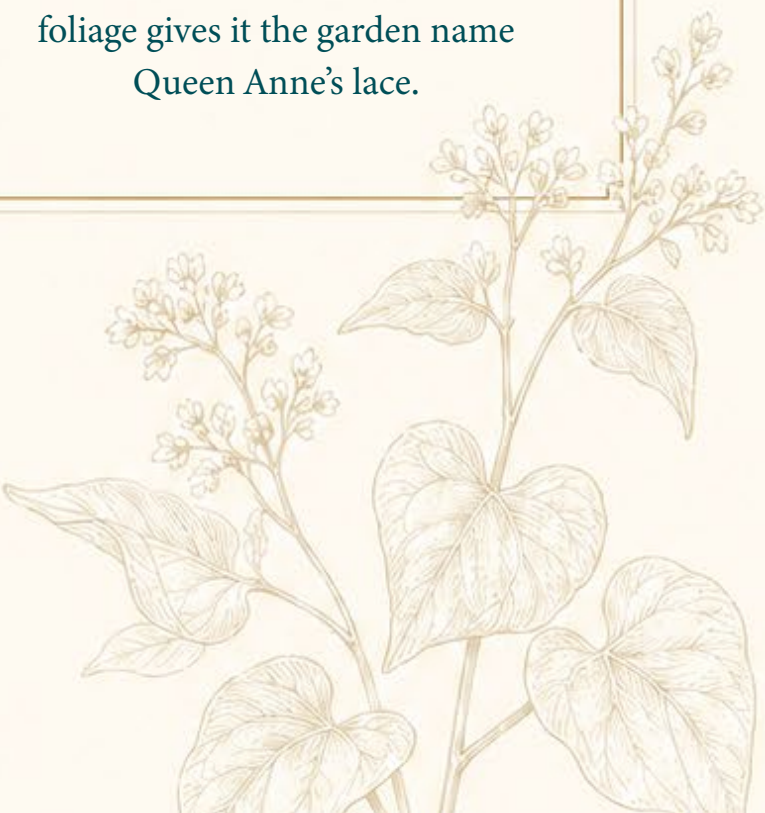
METHOD

1. Pick young, freshly opened cow parsley leaves only, never the root; wash and pat dry.
2. Finely chop the leaves just before using, as the delicate aroma fades quickly.
3. Stir into scrambled eggs, omelettes, soup, salads or herb butter at the very end of cooking or off the heat.
4. Use the same day for best flavour.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its frothy white umbels lining the May lanes are a classic emblem of late English spring. The plant has long been gathered as a wild pot-herb across Europe, and its fern-like foliage gives it the garden name Queen Anne’s lace.



Cow Parsley Herb Butter

Herbal butter • Makes 100 g

A green spring butter for fish, eggs, new potatoes, steamed vegetables and warm bread.

INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp Cow parsley (young leaves, chopped) (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), aerial parts — Aerial parts only.

METHOD

1. Finely chop the young cow parsley leaves.
2. Beat the softened butter with a wooden spoon or fork until smooth.
3. Work in the chopped cow parsley, a pinch of salt and a squeeze of lemon juice.
4. Turn out onto baking paper and roll into a log, twisting the ends to seal.
5. Chill until firm, then slice rounds off the log as needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Season lightly: you can always add,
you can never take away.



Céleri rémoulade — celeriac in mustard dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 450 g

The French bistro classic showcasing celery’s root form: celeriac grated raw into matchsticks and dressed in a tangy mustard-mayonnaise with lemon. Crisp, nutty and refreshing — proof that the whole celery plant, root and all, is good food.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celeriac (celery root), peeled and grated into matchsticks
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1 lemon)
90 g	Mayonnaise + Dijon mustard — Mayonnaise mixed with Dijon mustard (dressing)
5 g	Salt and black pepper — Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Peel the celeriac and cut or grate into fine matchsticks.
2. Toss immediately with the lemon juice to stop it browning.
3. Fold through the mustard mayonnaise until evenly coated.
4. Season with salt and pepper; rest 30 minutes for the flavours to mingle before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It appears in Homer and in the works of classical writers, and was valued as a strong-flavoured pot-herb and folk remedy long before the mild, fleshy salad celery existed.



Everyday vegetable stock with celery, onion & bay

Food / culinary • Makes 1500 g

A clear, savoury homemade vegetable stock built on celery, onion, carrot and aromatic herbs. Celery is indispensable here — its phthalides give stock its rounded, almost “meaty” savour. A thrifty way to use celery trimmings and leaves.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery stalks and leaves, roughly chopped (~3-4 stalks)
200 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, halved (skin on for colour)
150 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, roughly chopped
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, smashed (~3 cloves)
1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Bay leaves (2)
2 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Thyme sprigs (a few)
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Parsley stalks (a small handful)
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black peppercorns (~10)

METHOD

1. Put the celery, onion, carrot, garlic, bay, thyme, parsley stalks and peppercorns into a large pot.
2. Add about 1.8 litres of cold water and bring to a gentle simmer.
3. Simmer uncovered 45–60 minutes, skimming any foam.
4. Strain through a sieve, pressing lightly on the vegetables, and discard the solids.
5. Cool quickly and store, or use straight away as a base for soups, risottos and sauces.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The leaf that survives the north wind
earns its place in the pot.



Homemade celery salt

Food / culinary • Makes 110 g

A simple two-ingredient seasoning: aromatic celery seed ground with sea salt. Celery salt is the traditional finish for a Bloody Mary, for boiled eggs, coleslaw, brines and the Chicago-style hot dog. The purest way to taste celery’s warm, savoury seed.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery seed, lightly ground
90 g	Sea salt — Fine or flaky sea salt

METHOD

1. Lightly toast the celery seed in a dry pan for 30-60 seconds until fragrant.
2. Coarsely grind the seed in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder.
3. Mix the ground seed with the sea salt, about 1 part seed to 4-5 parts salt.
4. Transfer to an airtight jar away from light and moisture.
5. Sprinkle over eggs, tomatoes, salads, soups and savoury drinks, or use in brines and rubs.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Whales sing songs that carry for hundreds of miles, and a whole ocean learns the season’s new tune.

Mirepoix — the celery, onion & carrot base

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

The classic French aromatic base: celery, onion and carrot diced and gently sweated in a little fat. This trio is the savoury foundation of countless soups, stocks, stews, braises and sauces — the food-first heart of how celery earns its place in the kitchen.

INGREDIENTS

75 g	Celery (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Celery stalks, finely diced (~2 stalks)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely diced (~1 large)
75 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, finely diced (~1 medium)
15 g	Olive oil or butter — Olive oil or butter for sweating

METHOD

1. Finely dice the celery, onion and carrot to a similar small size.
2. Warm the olive oil or butter in a heavy pan over low-medium heat.
3. Add the diced vegetables and sweat gently, stirring occasionally, for 8–12 minutes until soft and fragrant but not browned.
4. Use immediately as the aromatic base for a soup, stock, stew or sauce, or cool and store for later use.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ravens play purely for the joy of it,
sliding down snowy roofs and rolling
in the wind for no reason but delight.



Rock-cress & Almond Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes 1 jar

A punchy green pesto that turns a handful of peppery rock-cress leaves into a sauce for pasta, potatoes or bread. The mustardy bite of the leaves stands in for rocket (arugula) — blend with toasted almonds, garlic, hard cheese, lemon and olive oil.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Young alpine rock-cress leaves (<i>Arabis alpina</i>), leaf
40 g	Toasted almonds (<i>Prunus dulcis</i>)
1 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
40 g	Hard cheese (e.g. Parmesan), grated
100 ml	Olive oil + squeeze of lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Toast the almonds lightly in a dry pan; cool.
2. Combine the rock-cress leaves, toasted almonds and garlic in a mortar or food processor.
3. Pound or pulse to a coarse paste.
4. Work in the grated cheese.
5. Gradually add the olive oil to loosen to a spoonable sauce; season with a squeeze of lemon.
6. Store with a film of olive oil on top; stir through pasta, spread on toast, or spoon over vegetables and eggs.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Peel with gratitude; the skin fed the root all year.



Wilted Alpine Greens with Garlic

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Older or more robust leaves lose their heat and turn mellow when cooked. A quick wilt in olive oil with a little garlic makes a simple potherb side — the old mountain way of eating rock-cress as a cooked green.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Alpine rock-cress leaves (<i>Arabis alpina</i>), leaf
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 clove	Garlic, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 pinch	Salt + a squeeze of lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan over medium heat and add the sliced garlic.
2. Add the alpine rock-cress leaves and toss to coat in the oil.
3. Cook, stirring, 1-2 minutes until just wilted.
4. Season with a pinch of salt and a squeeze of lemon.
5. Serve warm as a side, folded through grains, or on toast with a poached egg.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A full pantry is a calm mind.



Two-Ingredient Roasted Peanut Butter

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 g

The peanut is a legume that behaves like a nut in the kitchen. Roasting the shelled seeds and grinding them long enough releases their own oil into a smooth, glossy butter that needs nothing but a little salt.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 400 g | Peanut (<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>) — Shelled raw peanuts, skins on or removed |
| 0.5 tsp | Fine salt — Optional, to taste |

METHOD

1. Spread the peanuts on a tray and roast at 175 C for 8 to 12 minutes until fragrant and lightly golden, shaking once.
2. Let them cool slightly, then rub off the papery skins if you prefer a smoother butter.
3. Tip the warm nuts into a food processor and blend, scraping down the sides, for 4 to 6 minutes; they pass through a crumbly stage before turning into flowing butter.
4. Add salt to taste, blend once more, then spoon into a clean jar.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fireflies flash in a private language of light, each kind with its own rhythm of longing.

Kinpira Gobō (Sautéed Burdock Root)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Burdock root is a beloved East Asian vegetable (gobō). This classic Japanese home dish — kinpira — slivers the fresh root and stir-fries it with soy and a little sweetness, giving an earthy, slightly sweet, crunchy side that delivers burdock’s inulin-rich nourishment as food.

INGREDIENTS

200 g Burdock (*Arctium lappa*), root — fresh burdock root (gobō), scrubbed and slivered

METHOD

1. Scrub 200 g fresh burdock root, then cut into thin matchsticks (or shave); keep in cold water 5 minutes to reduce browning, then drain.
2. Heat 1 tbsp oil (and a pinch of chilli if liked) in a pan; stir-fry the burdock 3–4 minutes until just tender-crisp.
3. Add 1 tbsp soy sauce and 1 tsp each mirin and sugar; toss until the liquid glazes the root.
4. Finish with toasted sesame seeds. Serve warm or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A stranger’s smile lights the same part of the mind as a small gift; kindness is truly received as a present.

Kinpira-Style Burdock Root

Food / culinary

Common burdock has the same crisp, earthy first-year root as its cultivated cousin gobo. Cut into fine matchsticks and stir-fried until glazed, it becomes the classic Japanese side dish kinpira, savoury and lightly sweet.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups	Lesser burdock (<i>Arctium minus</i>) — Young first-year burdock root, scrubbed and cut into fine matchsticks
1 medium	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Cut into matchsticks
1 tbsp	Sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
2 tbsp	Soy sauce
1 tbsp	Mirin
1 tsp	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Soak the burdock matchsticks in cold water for 10 minutes to reduce bitterness, then drain well.
2. Heat the sesame oil in a pan and stir-fry the burdock over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Add the carrot and continue stir-frying for another 2 minutes until both begin to soften.
4. Pour in the soy sauce and mirin and cook, stirring, until the liquid glazes the vegetables.
5. Finish with a scatter of toasted sesame seeds and serve warm or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Burdock’s clinging burrs are woven through folklore and language: the hooked heads that catch on fur and clothing inspired the Swiss engineer George de Mestral to invent Velcro in the 1940s.

Chrain — Ashkenazi beetroot & horseradish relish

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

A cornerstone of Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine: freshly grated horseradish root combined with roasted or cooked beetroot, vinegar and sugar. Red chrain (roite chrain) is the familiar crimson version; white chrain uses no beetroot. Eaten at the Passover Seder as maror (one of the ritual bitter herbs), and year-round with gefilte fish, smoked fish, cold meats and sandwiches. Horseradish displaced the traditional lettuce-based maror in Ashkenazi communities as they migrated to the cold climates of Eastern Europe where fresh bitter herbs were unavailable in spring.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Horseradish (<i>Armoracia rusticana</i>)
200 g	Cooked beetroot (roasted or boiled, peeled), grated or finely chopped (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>)
30 g	Red wine vinegar or cider vinegar
10 g	Caster sugar
4 g	Fine salt

METHOD

1. Cook the beetroot: roast whole at 190 °C for 60–90 min until tender, or boil for 45–60 min. Allow to cool, then peel (use gloves; beetroot stains). Grate or very finely chop.
2. In a ventilated space, peel and finely grate the horseradish root into a bowl. Work quickly.
3. Immediately add the vinegar to the grated horseradish and stir to combine — this halts oxidation and locks in pungency.
4. Add the grated beetroot, sugar and salt. Stir to combine thoroughly. Taste and adjust vinegar, sugar and salt to preference — chrain should be sharp, pungent, lightly sweet and earthy.
5. Pack into a sterilised glass jar, seal, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving to allow flavours to meld. The relish intensifies over the first 24 hours.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The stew tastes of the day it was made — make it a good day.

Creamed horseradish sauce — British classic

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

The quintessential British accompaniment to roast beef and smoked fish: freshly prepared (or good-quality bought) horseradish folded into lightly whipped cream with a hint of mustard and lemon. The cream tempers the raw heat to a warm, satisfying pungency without killing it. A ready condiment in minutes.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Horseradish (<i>Armoracia rusticana</i>)
120 g	Double cream (heavy cream)
8 g	Dijon or English mustard
5 g	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
3 g	Fine sea salt and white pepper, to taste

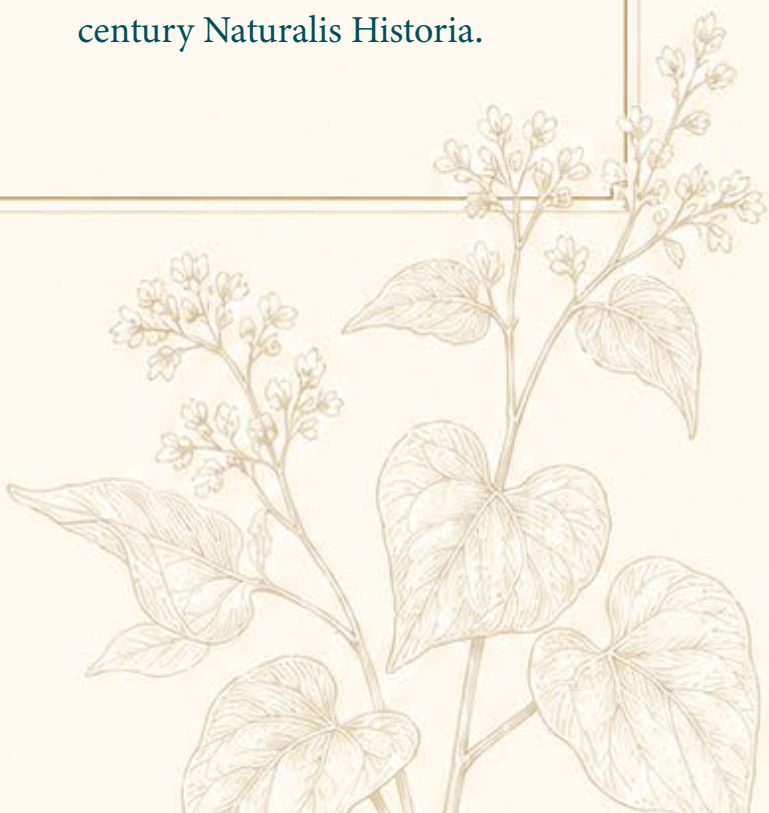
METHOD

1. Whip the double cream to soft peaks — it should hold shape but not be stiff.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the prepared horseradish with the mustard, lemon juice, salt and white pepper.
3. Gently fold the horseradish mixture into the whipped cream until just combined. Do not overmix or the cream will deflate.
4. Taste for seasoning and pungency; adjust horseradish or lemon to preference. Transfer to a serving bowl or jar and chill until needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Horseradish has been cultivated and used in Europe for at least two millennia; Pliny the Elder mentioned a root called “radicula” possibly referring to horseradish in his first-century *Naturalis Historia*.



Aronia & Balsamic Meat Glaze

Food / culinary • Makes 150 ml

A rich, glossy glaze drawing on aronia’s deep tannins and natural fruit acidity — the polyphenol structure that makes raw berries so astringent becomes a complex, wine-like depth when reduced with balsamic vinegar and honey. Extraordinary over roast duck, venison, lamb, or pork. The anthocyanin pigment gives the finished meat a lacquer-red sheen. A tablespoon of this glaze puts an exceptional density of plant polyphenols onto your plate with no effort at all.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Aronia berry juice (cold-pressed or strained) (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>)
60 g	Balsamic vinegar (aged) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
40 g	Raw honey
5 g	Fresh thyme (2 sprigs) (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>)
1 g	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Combine aronia juice, balsamic vinegar, honey, and fresh thyme in a small, heavy saucepan.
2. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat, then reduce to a steady simmer. Cook uncovered for 20–25 minutes until reduced by approximately half and the liquid coats the back of a spoon.
3. Remove thyme sprigs. Season with a small pinch of salt. Taste and adjust sweetness with extra honey if needed.
4. Use immediately as a glaze (brush over meat in the last 15–20 min of roasting) or cool and refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Aronia melanocarpa was used by several Indigenous North American peoples, notably the Potawatomi, who consumed the berries fresh and dried, and reportedly made tea from the bark to treat colds and as a general tonic.

Aronia Berry Kvass

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

A lightly fermented, low-alcohol berry drink rooted in Eastern European tradition — kvass is the probiotic ancestor of soft drinks, made simply from fruit, water, and a little sugar or honey to feed the wild yeasts. Aronia gives an extraordinarily deep ruby colour and a dry, wine-like character. Fermented for 2–3 days at room temperature, it develops gentle natural carbonation and a complex tart flavour. Excellent as a digestif, a kombucha alternative, or a base for mocktails.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Aronia berries (fresh or frozen) (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>)
800 g	Filtered water (room temperature)
60 g	Raw honey (or granulated sugar)
20 g	Lemon juice (fresh) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash berries thoroughly. Place in a clean 1.5 L glass jar and lightly crush with a wooden spoon to break the skins.
2. Add honey (or sugar) and lemon juice. Pour over room-temperature filtered water. Stir well until honey is dissolved.
3. Cover the jar with a breathable cloth secured with a rubber band, or use a loosely fitted lid. Leave at room temperature (18–22 °C) for 2–3 days, stirring once daily.
4. Taste on day 2. When pleasantly tart and gently effervescent, strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a jug, pressing the berries gently.
5. Pour into swing-top glass bottles. Seal and refrigerate immediately. Burp (open briefly to release gas) once daily for the first 2 days.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Holding a warm cup makes us judge others as warmer people; the body lends its heat to the heart.

Aronia Smoothie Bowl

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

A vibrant purple breakfast bowl that brings together aronia berries — packed with some of the highest anthocyanin levels of any edible berry — with banana, yoghurt, and whole grains. The banana and mango soften aronia’s astringency while the natural sugars provide morning energy. This is food-first nourishment: whole fruit, whole grains, real dairy — no supplements needed.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Aronia berries (frozen) (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>)
100 g	Frozen banana (ripe) (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>)
80 g	Plain whole-milk or coconut yoghurt
60 g	Plant milk or dairy milk
30 g	Granola or toasted oats (topping)
10 g	Mixed seeds (hemp, sunflower, pumpkin)

METHOD

1. Place frozen aronia berries, frozen banana, yoghurt, and plant milk in a high-speed blender.
2. Blend until completely smooth. The mixture should be thick (thicker than a drinking smoothie). Add 1 tbsp extra milk at a time only if needed.
3. Pour into a bowl and arrange toppings: granola or oats, fresh banana slices, dried berries, and seeds.
4. Drizzle with honey or aronia syrup if desired. Eat immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Poland adopted the crop in the late 1970s and became the world’s dominant producer by the 1990s; aronia berry wine and juice are traditional Polish cottage-industry products.

Nordic Aronia Muesli

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

A Scandinavian-inspired whole-grain muesli that makes dried aronia berries the star. Dried aronia has a chewy, slightly tart, cranberry-like character with less sugar than most commercial dried fruits, and an extraordinary polyphenol density preserved through the drying process. Mixed with rolled oats, rye flakes, seeds, and other Nordic berries, this is a genuinely powerful breakfast made entirely of whole food. Soak overnight in kefir or milk for a bircher-style muesli.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Dried aronia berries (<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>)
250 g	Rolled oats (old-fashioned) (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
80 g	Rye flakes (<i>Secale cereale</i>)
50 g	Pumpkin seeds (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>)
50 g	Sunflower seeds (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>)
50 g	Roughly chopped walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>)

METHOD

1. Weigh out all ingredients.
2. Mix well in a large bowl until evenly combined.
3. Transfer to an airtight jar or container. Label with the date.
4. To serve: scoop 70–80 g into a bowl with cold milk, kefir, or plant milk. Or soak overnight in kefir for bircher muesli.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Scandinavian foragers have historically used the berry alongside elderberry and rowan for syrups and aquavit infusions.

Fines herbes sauce verte — tarragon, parsley, chives & dill

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

A bright French herb sauce built on the classic fines herbes quartet, with tarragon leading. Blitzed with olive oil, lemon and a little Dijon into a vivid green sauce for fish, eggs, new potatoes, chicken or grilled vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Tarragon (<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>), leaf — Fresh tarragon leaves
25 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>), leaf — Flat-leaf parsley leaves
10 g	Chives (<i>Allium schoenoprasum</i>), leaf
8 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Dill fronds
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), bulb
5 g	White mustard (<i>Sinapis alba</i>) — Dijon mustard
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>), fruit juice — Lemon juice
90 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
3 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash and dry the tarragon, parsley, chives and dill; pick leaves from any tough stalks.
2. Put the herbs, garlic, mustard, lemon juice and a pinch of salt into a blender or small processor.
3. With the motor running, pour in the olive oil in a steady stream until you have a loose, spoonable green sauce, adding a splash of cold water if needed.
4. Taste and adjust salt, pepper and lemon.
5. Spoon over poached or grilled fish, soft-boiled eggs, new potatoes or chicken.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Tarragon’s common name comes, by way of Old French targon and Arabic/Greek roots, from the Latin *dracunculus*, “little dragon” — a name echoed in the species epithet and in old vernacular names like “dragon herb.”

Poulet à l'estragon — French tarragon roast chicken

Food / culinary • Makes 1 whole chicken

A French bistro classic: a whole chicken roasted with a generous bundle of tarragon and a knob of tarragon butter under the skin, then finished with a light cream-and-tarragon pan sauce. Tarragon and chicken are one of the great flavour marriages — warm, sweet and aniseed against rich roast meat.

INGREDIENTS

1500 g	Whole chicken
20 g	Tarragon (<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>), leaf — Fresh tarragon, divided (half chopped for the butter/sauce, half in sprigs)
50 g	Unsalted butter — Soft unsalted butter
100 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>), fruit
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil
80 g	Dry white wine — Dry white wine (for the sauce)
120 g	Double cream — Double/heavy cream (for the sauce)
5 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, freshly ground

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200°C. Mash half the chopped tarragon into the softened butter with a little salt.
2. Loosen the breast skin of the chicken and spread the tarragon butter underneath.
3. Season the bird inside and out; place tarragon sprigs and the lemon halves in the cavity, then rub the skin with olive oil.
4. Roast for about 1 hour 15 minutes (or 45 min/kg plus 20 min) until the thigh reaches 74°C and juices run clear; rest 15 minutes.
5. Spoon off excess fat from the tin, set over low heat, add the wine and scrape up the residues.
6. Stir in the cream and remaining tarragon, simmer 2–3 minutes, season and serve with the carved chicken.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Singing together slows many hearts into one shared rhythm, perhaps why we have always sung in choirs.

Sauce béarnaise — the classic French tarragon sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The definitive showcase for tarragon: a warm emulsified butter sauce built on a sharp reduction of white-wine vinegar, shallot and fresh tarragon, finished with more tarragon and chervil. Aniseed-sweet and buttery, it is the traditional partner to grilled steak, eggs and fish.

INGREDIENTS

12 g	Tarragon (<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>), leaf — Fresh tarragon, leaves and tender stalks, divided
45 g	White wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — White-wine vinegar (for the reduction)
30 g	Dry white wine
30 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>), bulb — Shallot, finely chopped
60 g	Egg yolks — Egg yolks (use pasteurised if serving vulnerable groups)
150 g	Unsalted butter — Unsalted butter, melted and warm
4 g	Chervil (<i>Anthriscus cerefolium</i>) — Fresh chervil, chopped (optional)
3 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Black pepper, freshly ground

METHOD

1. Simmer the vinegar, wine, chopped shallot and half the tarragon in a small pan until reduced to about 2 tablespoons; strain and cool slightly.
2. Set a heatproof bowl over (not touching) barely simmering water; whisk the egg yolks with the cooled reduction until pale, thick and doubled in volume.
3. Off a fierce heat, whisk in the warm melted butter a little at a time until thick and glossy; loosen with a few drops of warm water if too thick.
4. Stir in the remaining chopped tarragon and the chervil; season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve immediately, warm, with grilled steak, eggs or fish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Plant one row extra: for the birds, for the neighbour, for luck.

Tarragon vinegar — a kitchen staple

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

The classic way to capture tarragon’s fleeting anise flavour for the year ahead: fresh sprigs steeped in white-wine vinegar. Use it in vinaigrettes, béarnaise, mustards and marinades, or to deglaze a pan.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Tarragon (<i>Artemisia dracunculus</i>), leaf — Fresh tarragon sprigs, washed and dried
500 ml	White wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — White-wine vinegar

METHOD

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the fresh tarragon sprigs.
2. Lightly bruise the sprigs and pack into a clean, sterilised bottle or jar.
3. Gently warm the white-wine vinegar without boiling, then pour over the sprigs to cover completely.
4. Seal with a non-metallic, vinegar-proof lid and steep in a cool, dark place for 2–4 weeks, shaking occasionally.
5. Strain into a clean bottle, adding a fresh sprig for show if you like, and use as a flavouring vinegar.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Introduced to western Europe in the late Middle Ages, it became above all a treasured French culinary herb — one of the fines herbes and the defining flavour of sauce béarnaise — prized for its warm, aniseed fragrance.

Everyday spirulina green smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

A quick, bright green smoothie that folds a teaspoon of tested spirulina into fruit, taming its strong ‘ocean’ flavour with banana and pineapple while keeping its protein and pigment boost.

INGREDIENTS

2 g	spirulina (<i>Arthrospira platensis</i>) — Quality-tested <i>Arthrospira platensis</i> (spirulina) powder
1 whole	Ripe banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>) — Sweetness and body to balance the algae flavour
100 g	Frozen pineapple or mango chunks — Bright fruit to mask the strong taste
250 ml	Plant milk or water — Liquid vehicle

METHOD

1. Add the banana, frozen fruit and liquid to a blender.
2. Sprinkle in the spirulina powder.
3. Blend on high until smooth and vivid green, about 30–45 seconds.
4. Taste and add a little more fruit or liquid to balance; pour and drink fresh.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The oldest drawing of a human hand is a stencil on a cave wall: someone saying, across the ages, I was here.

Fresh Pawpaw Pulp and Smoothie

Food / culinary

The simplest and most traditional way to enjoy pawpaw: scooped fresh from a fully ripe fruit, or blended into a simple smoothie.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	ripe pawpaw fruit pulp (<i>Asimina triloba</i>) — skin and large seeds removed
0.5 cup	milk or plant milk — optional, for smoothie
4 piece	ice cubes — optional

METHOD

1. Choose a fully ripe pawpaw that yields to gentle pressure.
2. Cut in half lengthwise and scoop out the pulp with a spoon, discarding the skin and the large flat seeds.
3. Eat the pulp fresh as is, or blend with milk and ice for a smoothie.
4. Serve immediately, as the pulp oxidizes and browns quickly once exposed to air.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In autumn a tree does not so much lose its leaves as let them go, sealing each one off with great care first.



No-Bake Pawpaw Custard

Food / culinary

A traditional-style chilled custard made from pawpaw pulp, evoking historic American dessert uses of the fruit.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	ripe pawpaw fruit pulp (<i>Asimina triloba</i>) — skin and seeds removed
1 cup	heavy cream, whipped
2 tbsp	honey or sugar — to taste
1 tsp	lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — to slow browning

METHOD

1. Scoop pulp from fully ripe pawpaws, discarding skin and seeds.
2. Puree the pulp with lemon juice and sweetener until smooth.
3. Fold the pawpaw puree gently into whipped cream.
4. Chill at least 1 hour before serving in small dessert cups.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are both reported to have enjoyed the fruit.



Rooibos Cappuccino (Red Cappuccino)

Food / culinary

A beloved modern South African cafe classic — strongly brewed rooibos frothed with hot milk like a coffee cappuccino, for a caffeine-free treat.

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp	Dried fermented rooibos, strongly brewed (<i>Aspalathus linearis</i>)
0.25 cup	Water — for a concentrated brew
0.75 cup	Milk, steamed and frothed
1 pinch	Ground cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — optional garnish

METHOD

1. Brew rooibos leaves in the water for 7-10 minutes to make a strong concentrate.
2. Strain into a cup.
3. Steam and froth the milk until thick and foamy.
4. Pour the frothed milk over the rooibos concentrate.
5. Dust with cinnamon if desired and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cinnamon was once worth more than gold, and its traders guarded the secret of its far-off island with invented monsters.



Asparagus frittata with spring onion & parsley

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

Asparagus and eggs are a classic spring marriage. This open Italian-style frittata sets tender spears into softly cooked egg with spring onion and parsley — good hot, warm or packed cold for a picnic.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
300 g	Eggs — Eggs (about 6 medium), beaten
40 g	Welsh onion (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — Spring onions, sliced
8 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, chopped
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
4 g	Salt & pepper — Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oven grill (broiler). Snap the woody ends off the asparagus and cut spears into 3-4 cm lengths.
2. Warm the olive oil in an ovenproof non-stick frying pan and soften the asparagus and sliced spring onion for 4-5 minutes.
3. Beat the eggs with the chopped parsley, salt and pepper; pour into the pan and stir gently once, then leave to set over low heat 5-7 minutes until the base is set and the top still slightly loose.
4. Finish under the grill for 1-2 minutes until just set and golden. Slide out, cut into wedges and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Snow is not white but clear; it looks white only because it hands back every ray of light it is given.

Roasted asparagus with olive oil, garlic & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 350 g

High-heat roasting concentrates asparagus’s sweetness and gives lightly charred, nutty tips. Tossed with olive oil and garlic and brightened with lemon, it is a fast, savoury side that needs nothing else.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, thinly sliced (about 3 cloves)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
3 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste
0.5 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 220 C (200 C fan). Snap the woody bases off the spears.
2. Spread the spears on a baking tray, drizzle with the olive oil, scatter over the sliced garlic and a little salt, and toss to coat.
3. Roast 10-15 minutes (depending on thickness) until tender and lightly browned at the tips, shaking the tray once.
4. Squeeze over the lemon juice, grind on black pepper and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The species epithet *officinalis* marks its long inclusion in the apothecary’s list of useful plants, traditionally as a diuretic and “cooling,” cleansing spring food.

Steamed asparagus with butter & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

The simplest and best way to enjoy spring asparagus: spears steamed just until tender-crisp and bright green, then finished with a little butter, lemon and salt. A near-pure showcase of the vegetable, keeping its folate, fibre and vitamin C largely intact.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
20 g	Unsalted butter
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice (about half a lemon)
3 g	Sea salt — Flaky sea salt, to taste
0.5 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Snap the woody base off each spear (it breaks naturally where it turns tender) or peel the lower third of thick spears.
2. Bring 2-3 cm of water to the boil in a wide pan with a steamer basket, or use a tall asparagus pan. Add the spears.
3. Steam 3-6 minutes (thin spears 3-4, thick 5-6) until just tender and still bright green — a knife tip should meet slight resistance.
4. Lift out and drain. Toss gently with the butter, a good squeeze of lemon, salt and a grind of pepper. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

All good bread begins the night before.

Stir-fried asparagus with ginger, garlic & sesame

Food / culinary • Makes 320 g

A quick, high-heat stir-fry that keeps asparagus crunchy and green, with ginger, garlic and toasted sesame for an East-Asian-leaning side. Ready in minutes.

INGREDIENTS

320 g	Asparagus (<i>Asparagus officinalis</i>) — Fresh asparagus spears, woody ends removed
8 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, finely grated
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely chopped (about 2 cloves)
8 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — Toasted sesame oil
5 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — Toasted sesame seeds
15 g	Soy sauce

METHOD

1. Snap the woody ends off the asparagus and cut into 4 cm lengths on the diagonal.
2. Heat a wok or large frying pan until very hot, add the sesame oil, then the ginger and garlic for 20-30 seconds until fragrant.
3. Add the asparagus and stir-fry over high heat 3-4 minutes until tender-crisp and bright green; add a splash of water if it catches.
4. Add the soy sauce, toss, and finish with the toasted sesame seeds. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The rings of a tree keep a diary of all its years, the kind ones wide, the hard ones thin.



Shatavari & Cardamom Nourishing Energy Balls

Food / culinary • Makes 12 balls

A tasty way to take shatavari as food — date-and-nut energy balls spiced with cardamom, a homely take on the Ayurvedic tonic laddoo.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Shatavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>), root
2 g	Cardamom (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>), seed
200 g	Pitted soft dates, ~200 g (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>)
150 g	Mixed nuts (almonds/cashews), ~150 g

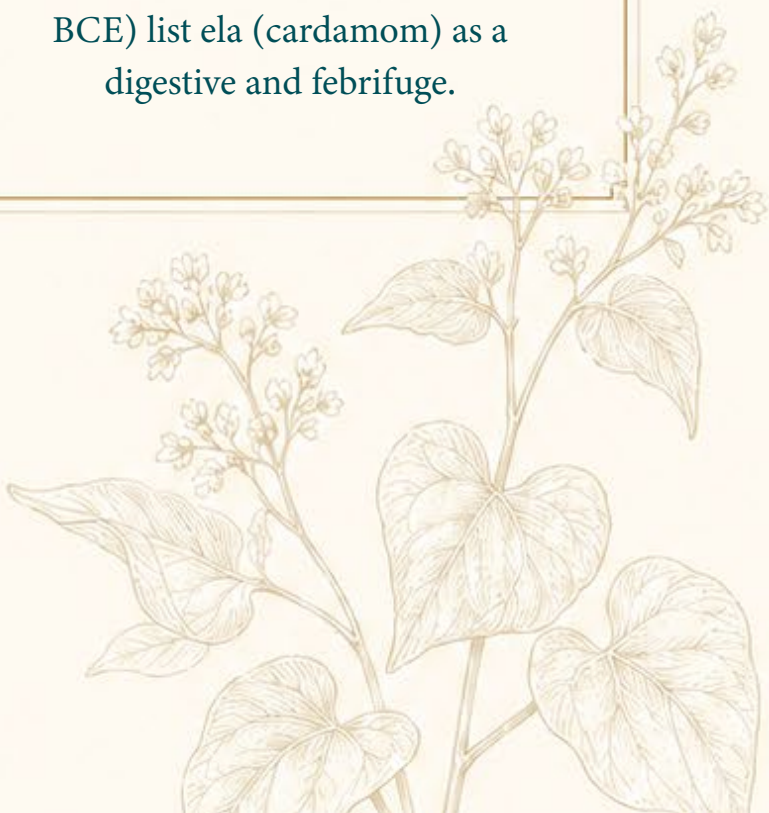
METHOD

1. Pit the dates if needed.
2. Combine the dates, mixed nuts, shatavari powder and ground cardamom in a food processor.
3. Blend until the mixture comes together into a sticky, coarse paste.
4. Roll into about 12 balls.
5. Chill in the refrigerator until firm.
6. Store refrigerated; eat 1-2 balls a day as a nourishing snack.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cardamom has been used medicinally for at least three millennia. The Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita of Ayurvedic medicine (compiled c. 700–300 BCE) list ela (cardamom) as a digestive and febrifuge.



Blanched Astilbe Young Shoots

Food / culinary

Before it becomes the feathery garden plume, Chinese astilbe sends up tender young shoots that are edible when cooked. Blanched and dressed in the Korean namul style, they make a mild, green mountain-vegetable side.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups	Chinese astilbe (<i>Astilbe chinensis</i>) — Tender young astilbe shoots, tough ends trimmed
1 tbsp	Soy sauce
1 tsp	Toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Finely minced
1 tsp	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil and blanch the young shoots for 2 to 3 minutes until just tender.
2. Drain and plunge into cold water to keep the colour, then squeeze out the excess water.
3. Cut into bite-length pieces and place in a bowl.
4. Toss with soy sauce, sesame oil, minced garlic and sesame seeds, and serve at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A seed can wait a hundred years in the dark and still remember, at the first warm rain, exactly how to grow.



Tucumã Amazon Breakfast Sandwich (X-Caboquinho Style)

Food / culinary

Tucumã is a fiery-orange Amazonian palm fruit whose firm, oily pulp tastes rich and faintly cheesy. In the markets of Manaus it stars in the beloved x-caboquinho: a crusty roll layered with tucumã, fried plantain and regional cheese.

INGREDIENTS

6 slices	Tucuma (<i>Astrocaryum vulgare</i>) — Ripe tucumã pulp, peeled off the seed and sliced
1 roll	Crusty bread roll — Split
0.5 fruit	Ripe plantain (<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>) — Sliced and pan-fried
2 slices	Coalho or firm melting cheese
1 tsp	Butter — For toasting the roll

METHOD

1. Fry the plantain slices in a little butter until golden and caramelised on both sides.
2. Lightly toast the split roll, buttered side down, until crisp.
3. Layer the tucumã slices along the base of the roll.
4. Add the cheese and the warm fried plantain, close the sandwich, and press gently so the flavours meld before eating warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Tucuma is woven into the daily life and material culture of Amazonian and Guianan peoples.

Bai Zhu and Jujube Spleen Congee

Food / culinary • Makes ~10 g

Bai zhu, the sweet-earthy rhizome of *Atractylodes macrocephala*, is a cornerstone spleen-strengthening herb in Chinese medicine. Simmered into a soft rice congee with red dates it becomes a warming, easy-to-digest breakfast for a tired appetite.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Largehead atractylodes (<i>Atractylodes macrocephala</i>) — Dried bai zhu (<i>Atractylodes macrocephala</i>) slices
0.5 cup	Short-grain rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Rinsed
4 whole	Dried red jujube dates (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>) — Pitted
1.5 litres	Water
2 slices	Fresh ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Optional

METHOD

1. Rinse the bai zhu slices and simmer them with the jujubes and ginger in the water for 20 minutes to make a fragrant base.
2. Add the rinsed rice and bring back to a gentle boil.
3. Lower the heat and simmer, stirring now and then, for 40 to 50 minutes until the rice breaks down into a soft, creamy congee.
4. Lift out the woody bai zhu slices, then serve the congee warm with the softened dates.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bai Zhu is one of the foremost Qi-tonifying herbs of Chinese medicine, recorded in the earliest materia medica and a component of countless classical formulae.

Toasted Neem Flowers (Veppampoo) for Rasam & Pachadi

Food / culinary • Makes 20 g

In Tamil and other South Indian kitchens the dried neem flower (veppampoo) is dry-roasted in a little ghee and used as a bitter seasoning in rasam, pachadi and the Tamil New-Year (Puthandu) dish — a culinary, food-as-medicine bitter.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|------|---|
| 15 g | Neem (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>), flower — dried neem flowers (veppampoo) |
| 5 g | Ghee — ghee for roasting |

METHOD

1. Warm the ghee in a small pan over low heat.
2. Add the dried neem flowers and dry-roast, stirring, until crisp and fragrant, taking care not to scorch.
3. Cool slightly, then crumble.
4. Sprinkle a small pinch over rasam, pachadi or hot rice as a bitter seasoning.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In the far north the summer sun does not set for weeks, and the flowers there bloom around the clock.



Land cress pesto with pine nuts & Parmesan

Food / culinary • Makes 1 jar (approx 200 g)

A vivid, peppery pesto made with land cress instead of basil — a brilliant way to use a large harvest, especially when leaves are older and more pungent. The cress provides an extraordinary hit of vitamins K and A, plus the characteristic glucosinolate-derived mustard flavour. Use as pasta sauce, spread on bruschetta, dollop on soup, or serve alongside grilled fish or chicken.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Land cress (<i>Barbarea verna</i>) — Leaves and tender stems; remove any thick stalks
40 g	Pine nuts (pignoli) (<i>Pinus pinea</i>) — Lightly toasted in a dry pan; or substitute walnuts or blanched almonds
50 g	Parmesan or Pecorino, finely grated — Use a strong aged cheese for best flavour
5 g	Garlic clove, peeled (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Start with less if you prefer a milder flavour
90 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Density ~0.91 g/ml; add more to adjust consistency
10 g	Lemon juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Brightens the flavour and helps preserve colour

METHOD

1. Toast the pine nuts in a dry frying pan over medium heat for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly, until lightly golden. Remove from heat and cool.
2. Wash the land cress well and remove any thick stalks. Spin or pat dry.
3. Place the land cress, cooled pine nuts, garlic, and Parmesan in a food processor. Pulse several times until roughly chopped.
4. With the processor running, drizzle in the olive oil gradually until you reach your desired consistency — rough and rustic or smoother, as preferred.
5. Add the lemon juice and a good pinch of salt. Pulse once more to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning. Transfer to a jar, smooth the surface, and cover with a thin layer of olive oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Almonds are the seed of a blossom kin to the rose, and the tree dares to flower before it will risk a leaf.

Beetroot hummus

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

A hot-pink twist on hummus: roasted or cooked beetroot blended with chickpeas, tahini, garlic, lemon and cumin into a smooth, earthy-sweet dip. A delicious way to fold more beetroot into everyday eating, rich in fibre and folate.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>)
60 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
2 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
240 g	Cooked chickpeas (drained) (<i>Cicer arietinum</i>)
4 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Cook or roast the beetroot until tender (boil, steam, or wrap and roast until a knife slides in easily), then peel and roughly chop.
2. Put the beetroot, drained chickpeas, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, cumin, olive oil and salt into a food processor.
3. Blend until smooth, adding a little water as needed to reach the texture you like.
4. Taste and adjust lemon and salt.
5. Transfer to a bowl, drizzle with olive oil, and serve as a dip with flatbread and crudité's.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The garden keeps no secrets from the one who kneels in it.

Sauteed beet greens & chard with garlic and lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The leafy half of the beet plant, too often discarded — beet greens and chard wilted with garlic in olive oil and brightened with lemon. A quick, frugal side that turns the whole crop into food and delivers the leaves’ generous vitamin K, vitamin A and potassium.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Beet greens and/or chard leaves with stalks (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)
2 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Wash the greens well; separate the stalks from the leaves. Slice the stalks small and roughly chop the leaves.
2. Warm the olive oil over medium heat; soften the sliced stalks 3-4 minutes.
3. Add the garlic and chilli and cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. Add the chopped leaves with the water still clinging; toss until just wilted and tender, 3-4 minutes.
5. Off the heat, squeeze over the lemon and season with salt.
6. Serve warm as a side, on toast, or folded through pasta or grains.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

“Carried to Europe, Africa and Asia after Columbus’s voyages, capsicum spread astonishingly fast and was absorbed into the cuisines and folk traditions of the Old World within a century or two.

Fresh Birch Sap Spring Tonic (Birch Water)

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

In early spring, before the leaves open, silver birch can be tapped for its clear, faintly sweet, mineral-rich sap — a traditional Nordic and Baltic spring tonic drunk fresh.

INGREDIENTS

- 250 ml Fresh silver birch sap (*Betula pendula*) — tapped in early spring before leaf-out
- 1 slice Lemon (*Citrus limon*) — optional, to taste

METHOD

1. In early spring before the buds open, drill a small hole in a healthy mature birch and lead the dripping sap into a clean covered container.
2. Take only a modest amount from any single tree, then plug the hole with a wooden dowel so it heals.
3. Strain the sap through a clean cloth and chill immediately.
4. Drink cold and fresh within a couple of days, with a slice of lemon if you like.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A meadow left alone for a single year will fill with more kinds of life than any garden a person could plant.

Fresh Birch Sap Spring Tonic

Food / culinary • Makes 1 litre

One of the north’s great food-first spring rituals: the clear, faintly sweet sap that rises in the birch for a few weeks before the leaves open. Drunk fresh it is a light, mineral-bearing “spring water” traditionally taken to greet the season and gently support the kidneys — real food and drink from the living tree, not a medicine.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 litre Fresh birch sap (*Betula pubescens*) — Tapped from a clean tree in early spring
- 1 wedge Lemon (*Citrus limon*) — Optional

METHOD

1. Tap the fresh birch sap from a clean, healthy tree in early spring while the sap is running.
2. Chill the sap.
3. Pour a glass and add a squeeze of lemon if desired.
4. Drink fresh, a glass or two a day while the sap is running.
5. Any extra sap can be lightly fermented into water kefir, boiled down to syrup, or frozen for later.
6. Refrigerate and drink within 2-3 days, or freeze/ferment to keep.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Nordic and Baltic culture birch is the tree of spring, renewal and purification — its leafy twigs (the sauna vihta/vasta) are used to switch the skin in the sauna, and birch-sap gathering marks the turning of the year.

Sauteed Spanish Needle Greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 g

A simple, kale-like saute of young Spanish needle tips, a nutritious wild green enjoyed across the tropics and subtropics.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Spanish needles (<i>Bidens alba</i>) — Young Spanish needle (<i>Bidens alba</i>) leaves and tender shoots, washed
15 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — For sauteing
1 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Finely sliced
1 pinch	Salt — To taste
5 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — A squeeze to finish

METHOD

1. Wash the young leaves and shoots well and drain; discard any tough older leaves.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
3. Add the greens and a pinch of salt, and saute for 3-5 minutes until wilted and tender.
4. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Across the Americas, the Caribbean, and Africa the *Bidens* complex is a widely used household remedy: teas for colds, coughs, and stomach upsets, and poultices for wounds.



Sautéed Blackjack Greens

Food / culinary

The young shoots and leaves of *Bidens pilosa* (blackjack) are a widely eaten wild vegetable in Africa and Asia, mild and spinach-like once cooked.

INGREDIENTS

4 cups	Hairy beggarticks (<i>Bidens pilosa</i>) — young blackjack leaves and shoots, loosely packed
1 small, sliced	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 chopped	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
2 tbsp	Cooking oil
1 to taste	Salt

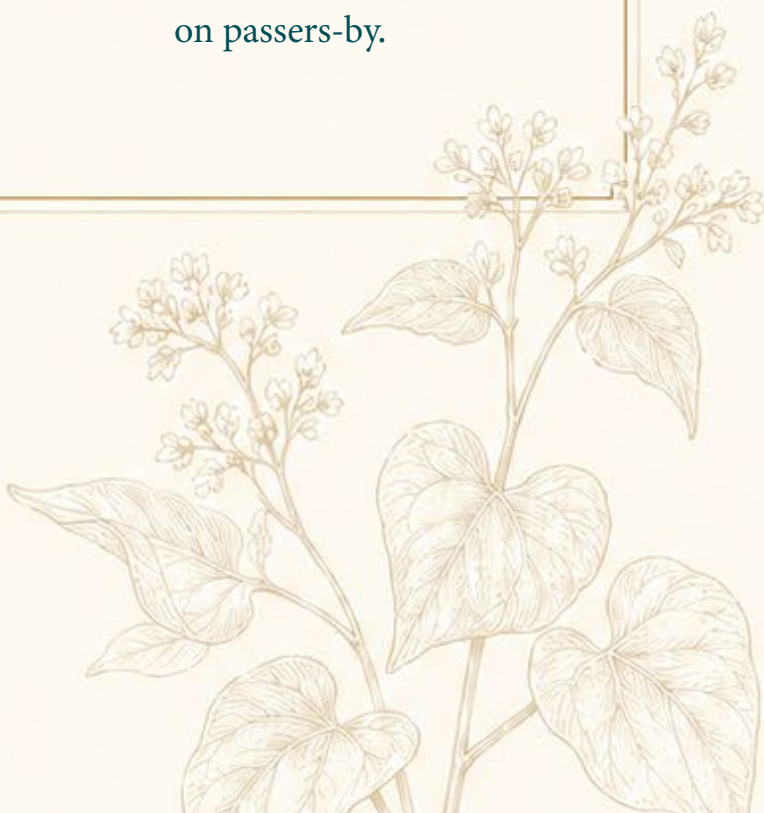
METHOD

1. Wash the young greens well and blanch in boiling water for 2 to 3 minutes, then drain.
2. Heat the oil in a pan and soften the onion until translucent.
3. Add the tomato and cook until it breaks down into a light sauce.
4. Stir in the blanched greens, season with salt, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes until tender.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known across the tropics by names such as “blackjack,” “beggar-ticks,” “Spanish needles,” “cobbler’s pegs” and “devil’s needles” — all referring to the barbed seeds that hitch rides on passers-by.



Good King Henry Spring Greens (Sautéed Leaves)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A traditional spring vegetable dish using the young leaves of Good King Henry as a spinach substitute. One of Europe’s oldest cultivated pot-herbs, eaten since at least the Iron Age, this quick sauté showcases the pleasantly earthy flavour of the blanched greens.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Good King Henry young leaves (<i>Blitum bonus-henricus</i>) — Fresh, young leaves under 8 cm; discard any tough or yellowing leaves
15 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Or use butter for a richer flavour
5 g	Garlic clove, finely sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 1 medium clove
	Sea salt and black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young Good King Henry leaves thoroughly in cold water. Shake dry.
2. Bring a pan of lightly salted water to the boil. Blanch the leaves for 2 minutes, then drain. Discard the blanching water — this removes a significant portion of the oxalate content.
3. Heat the olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook gently for 30 seconds until fragrant but not coloured.
4. Add the blanched leaves and sauté for 2–3 minutes, tossing to coat in the oil. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve warm as a side vegetable. A squeeze of lemon juice or a little grated cheese makes a good finishing touch.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The name derives from the German “Guter Heinrich” (Good Henry), contrasted with “Böser Heinrich” (Bad Henry) — an old name for the poisonous Dog’s Mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*).

Dried Porcini Culinary Infusion (Rehydration Liquid)

Food / culinary • Makes 400 ml

Rehydrating dried porcini yields both the reconstituted mushroom pieces and a deeply flavourful, nutritive soaking liquid rich in water-soluble β -glucan polysaccharides, trehalose, and umami compounds. This is the foundational culinary preparation used in Italian risotto, sauces, soups, and stews. The soaking liquid should always be used — it holds the majority of the soluble nutritive compounds.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 20 g | Porcini (<i>Boletus edulis</i>), fruit — Good quality dried porcini slices from a reputable supplier. Commercial dried porcini must comply with EU regulations on cadmium content in dried wild mushrooms. |
| 400 ml | Filtered water — Hot (not boiling) filtered water, approximately 80–90 °C |

METHOD

- Place 20 g of dried porcini slices in a heatproof bowl or measuring jug. Pour 400 ml of hot (80–90 °C) water over the mushrooms.
- Cover and allow to soak for 20–30 minutes, until the mushroom pieces are fully rehydrated and softened. The soaking liquid will turn a deep amber-brown colour and will smell richly of porcini.
- Carefully lift out the rehydrated mushroom pieces. Check for any grit or debris and rinse lightly if needed; squeeze gently to remove excess liquid back into the bowl. Slice or chop as needed for your recipe.
- Pour the soaking liquid slowly through a fine-mesh sieve or muslin cloth, leaving any grit at the bottom of the bowl behind. This flavourful, β -glucan-rich liquid is an essential ingredient — add it to your risotto stock, pasta sauce, soup or stew. Heat to a full simmer before use.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Boletus edulis has been gathered and prized as a wild food across Europe and Asia since antiquity. Roman authors — including Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia*, 77 AD) — noted large boletes among esteemed edible fungi.

Candied Borage Flowers

Food / culinary • Makes 1 batch (~30–40 flowers)

Candied borage flowers are a classic confection with a history stretching back at least to Tudor times, when herbalists like Culpeper recorded that women would candy borage flowers as a preserve for the heart and spirits. Today they are prized as a strikingly beautiful, edible decoration for cakes, chocolate, panna cotta, tarts, and dessert plates. The process is simple: a thin coat of beaten egg white followed by a dusting of fine sugar, then a slow dry. The result is a crystalline, gem-like blue flower that holds its shape and colour for weeks.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Borage flowers (fresh, fully open, perfect blooms) (<i>Borago officinalis</i>)
30 g	Egg white (1 medium) — Or use pasteurised liquid egg white for those avoiding raw egg
60 g	Caster sugar (very fine / superfine)

METHOD

1. Harvest perfect, fully open borage flowers on a dry morning. Gently remove any insects using a dry brush. Do not wash.
2. Lightly beat the egg white in a small bowl until just barely foamy — not stiff.
3. Hold a flower by the calyx. Using a fine pastry brush, paint both sides of the petals with a thin, even layer of egg white.
4. Hold the painted flower over a bowl of caster sugar and gently spoon sugar over both sides, turning to coat completely. Shake off excess gently.
5. Place the flower on a baking-parchment-lined rack. Open out the petals to their natural shape using a cocktail stick.
6. Repeat with remaining flowers. Leave to dry at room temperature in a warm, dry, well-ventilated place for 12–24 hours, or in a very low oven (40–50 °C) for 1–2 hours until completely dry and crisp.
7. Once fully dry, transfer carefully to an airtight tin lined with parchment. Store away from moisture.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Steam rising from a pot is the house breathing.

Ligurian Pansoti with Borage & Ricotta

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Pansoti (or pansotti) are the pride of Ligurian pasta-making — triangular or semicircular parcels filled with the wild greens called prebuggiun, in which borage has been the star ingredient for centuries. Borage leaves, blanched briefly, lose their bristles and take on a silky texture and mild, almost spinach-like flavour with a subtle mineral quality. Mixed with fresh ricotta and a little Parmigiano, the filling is simple, delicate, and deeply satisfying. Serve with the classic Ligurian walnut sauce (*salsa di noci*) or simply in browned butter.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Young borage leaves (fresh, pre-blanching weight) (<i>Borago officinalis</i>) — Young tender leaves; blanch before use to remove bristles and soften
250 g	Fresh ricotta (well-drained)
60 g	Parmigiano Reggiano, finely grated
50 g	Egg (medium)
1 g	Freshly grated nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>)
300 g	Plain ‘00’ flour (pasta flour) (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — For the pasta dough
150 g	Eggs (medium, for pasta dough) — 3 medium eggs for the pasta dough
80 g	Unsalted butter — For browned butter sauce
10 g	Fresh sage leaves (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>)

METHOD

1. FILLING — Wash the borage leaves. Blanch in boiling salted water for 2 minutes until tender and wilted. Drain, refresh under cold water, squeeze firmly to remove water, then chop finely.
2. Combine chopped borage, ricotta, Parmigiano, beaten egg, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Mix well. Adjust seasoning. Filling should be firm — drain ricotta through muslin if too wet.
3. PASTA — Mound flour on a work surface, make a well, add eggs. Gradually incorporate flour into eggs until a rough dough forms. Knead 8–10 minutes until smooth and elastic. Wrap in cling film; rest 30 minutes.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ancient Greek and Roman writers described it as euphrosinum — the plant that cheers. Pliny the Elder associated it with Homer’s nepenthes, the legendary potion offered to Helen of Troy to banish grief.

4. Roll pasta very thin (1–2 mm). Cut into 8 cm squares. Place a heaped teaspoon of filling in the centre of each square.
5. Fold each square diagonally to form a triangle, pressing the edges firmly to seal, pushing out any air pockets. Set aside on a floured tray.
6. SAUCE — Melt butter in a wide pan over medium heat until it turns golden and smells nutty. Add sage leaves. Remove from heat.
7. Cook pansoti in abundant boiling salted water for 3–4 minutes until they float and pasta is cooked through. Drain carefully.
8. Toss gently with the browned sage butter and serve immediately with extra Parmigiano.

Sarson ka Saag (Punjabi-style slow-cooked mustard greens)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The classic winter dish of the Punjab — a slow-cooked, deeply nourishing green made from mustard leaves (sarson) with spinach and fenugreek leaves, finished with a generous knob of ghee or butter and served with maize flatbreads (makki di roti). Rich in vitamins K, C, and A, and in calcium, iron, and potassium. The slow cooking softens the pungent bite of the raw mustard greens into something earthy, warming, and deeply satisfying.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Mustard greens (sarson), fresh (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)
200 g	Spinach leaves, fresh (<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>)
80 g	Fenugreek leaves (methi), fresh or 1 tbsp dried (<i>Trigonella foenumgraecum</i>)
30 g	Maize flour (makki ka atta) — traditional thickener (<i>Zea mays</i>)
15 g	Garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
15 g	Fresh ginger, grated (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
30 g	Ghee or butter (for tadka and serving)
5 g	Green chilli, slit (optional) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)
5 g	Salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Wash mustard greens, spinach, and fenugreek leaves thoroughly. Roughly chop. Place in a large heavy pot with 250 ml water.
2. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 45–60 minutes until the greens are very soft and dark. Stir occasionally.
3. Use a hand blender or traditional wooden masher (mathani) to blend the greens to a coarse-smooth texture — not perfectly smooth; some texture is desirable. Return to heat.
4. Stir in the maize flour (makki ka atta). This acts as a thickener and gives the traditional body. Simmer on low heat, stirring, for 10 minutes. Season with salt.
5. In a separate small pan (tadka pan), heat the ghee or oil over medium-high heat. Add ginger and garlic; fry until fragrant and beginning to colour, 2 minutes. Add the green chilli (if using). Pour the tadka immediately over the saag, scraping in all the flavoured fat.
6. Stir and serve immediately, topped with an extra knob of ghee or white butter.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Brassica juncea has been cultivated for at least 4,000–5,000 years. Genomic evidence (Kang et al., 2021) places its probable origin in West Asia around 8,000–14,000 years ago through natural hybridisation.

Stir-fried mustard greens with garlic (gai choy chao suan)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A fast, vibrant side dish from Chinese and Southeast Asian home cooking: tender young mustard greens (gai choy) briefly stir-fried in a very hot wok or large pan with garlic, a splash of soy sauce, and a drizzle of sesame oil. Cooking over high heat for just 2–3 minutes keeps the leaves bright green, slightly tender-crisp, and nutritious — the brief heat reduces raw pungency while preserving vitamins. Rich in vitamin K, vitamin C, iron, calcium, and potassium, and ready in 10 minutes from start to finish.

INGREDIENTS

350 g	Mustard greens (gai choy), fresh (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)
15 g	Garlic, thinly sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
15 g	Neutral oil (rapeseed/canola or sunflower)
15 g	Light soy sauce
5 g	Sesame oil, toasted (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash mustard greens and tear or cut into bite-sized pieces. Spin or pat dry — excess water on the leaves will make the wok steam rather than stir-fry.
2. Heat a wok or large frying pan over the highest heat your stove allows until smoking hot. Add the neutral oil.
3. Add the garlic immediately and toss for 30 seconds until fragrant and just turning golden — do not burn.
4. Add all the mustard greens at once. Toss continuously with tongs or a wok spatula for 2–3 minutes until wilted and bright green with some tender-crisp stems.
5. Add soy sauce and toss for 30 seconds more. Remove from heat, drizzle with sesame oil, and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Mustard appears in Indian Ayurvedic texts and in ancient Chinese herbals as a warming, stimulating food and medicine.

Whole-grain brown mustard (maison-style condiment)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 x 200 ml jar

A simple, deeply flavourful whole-grain mustard made from brown mustard seeds (*Brassica juncea*), soaked overnight in apple cider vinegar and a little white wine, then coarsely ground into a thick, textured condiment. Brown mustard (from *B. juncea*) is spicier and more complex than yellow mustard (*S. alba*), with a warm heat from allyl isothiocyanate (AITC) that develops only when the soaked seed cells are broken. The vinegar soaking tempers the raw sharpness and acts as a preservative. Use as a table condiment, in salad dressings, with grilled meats and fish, or spread on sandwiches and cheese boards.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Brown mustard seeds (whole) (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)
80 g	Apple cider vinegar (<i>Malus domestica</i>)
40 g	Dry white wine or water
5 g	Fine sea salt
10 g	Honey or sugar (optional, balances heat)

METHOD

1. Combine mustard seeds, apple cider vinegar, white wine, salt, and honey (if using) in a bowl. Stir well, cover, and leave at room temperature for 12–24 hours to soak. The seeds will absorb most of the liquid and swell considerably.
2. Transfer the soaked seeds and all remaining liquid into a blender or food processor. Pulse 8–12 times to a coarse, textured consistency — about half the seeds should remain whole for a traditional whole-grain texture.
3. Taste and adjust: add more vinegar for sharpness, salt to season, or a little cold water if the mustard is too thick. The heat will increase over the first hour as myrosinase enzyme generates more AITC; it mellows again after a day in the fridge.
4. Pack into a sterilised glass jar. Seal and refrigerate immediately. Leave for 24 hours before using — the flavour settles and deepens.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Most of the air you breathe comes not from the forests but from the tiny drifting plants of the sea.

Buttered neeps with nutmeg & black pepper

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Plain mashed swede - “bashed neeps” - enriched with butter and lifted with a little nutmeg and plenty of black pepper. The traditional Burns Night accompaniment to haggis, and a comforting everyday winter side that lets the swede’s sweet, earthy flavour shine.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Swede (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Swede / rutabaga root
40 g	Butter — Dairy butter
0.3 g	Nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) — Nutmeg - a small pinch
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)
4 g	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Peel the swede and cut into even chunks.
2. Boil in salted water 20-25 minutes until very tender; drain well and let steam dry a minute.
3. Mash until smooth (a food processor gives extra silkiness).
4. Beat in the butter, nutmeg and black pepper; season with salt to taste.
5. Serve hot, classically alongside haggis.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Brassica napus emerged in cultivation in the late Middle Ages / early modern period as a natural hybrid of cabbage and turnip-rape, and has no ancient wild lineage.



Clapshot (swede & potato mash)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A traditional Orcadian and Scottish winter dish of swede and potato mashed together with butter and chives or onion - the classic, warming partner to haggis, sausages or a roast. Food-first comfort cooking that makes a humble winter root the star.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Swede (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Swede / rutabaga root
500 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>)
40 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion or chives
50 g	Butter — Dairy butter
4 g	Sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Peel and chop the swede and potatoes into even chunks.
2. Boil separately (the swede takes longer) in salted water until both are tender, about 20-25 minutes.
3. Drain well and mash together while hot.
4. Beat in the butter and the finely chopped onion or chives.
5. Season with salt and black pepper. Serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Lightning is hotter than the surface of the sun, and it strikes the Earth some fifty times a second.

Rapeseed-roasted swede with thyme

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Swede cut into chunks, tossed in cold-pressed rapeseed (canola) oil with thyme and garlic, and roasted until golden and caramelised at the edges - a simple way to turn a winter root into a sweet, nutty side. Uses *Brassica napus* twice over: the root as vegetable and its own seed oil as the roasting fat.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Swede (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Swede / rutabaga root
28 g	Cold-pressed rapeseed (canola) oil (<i>Brassica napus</i>) — Rapeseed/canola seed oil - same species
3 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
4 g	Sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200°C. Peel the swede and cut into even chunks.
2. Toss the chunks with the rapeseed oil, thyme, crushed garlic, salt and pepper.
3. Spread in a single layer on a baking tray.
4. Roast for 35–45 minutes, turning halfway, until golden and caramelised at the edges.
5. Serve hot as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Roman soldiers bathed in thyme water to gain vigour, and Pliny recommended burning it to drive away venomous creatures.



Black Mustard Seed Tarka (South Indian tempering base)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Tarka (also tadka, vagharni, chhonk) is the foundational South Indian and South Asian technique of blooming whole spices in hot oil or ghee until they pop and release their volatile flavour compounds. Black mustard seeds are the centrepiece — they start with a sharp, grassy character but transform in hot oil into something nutty, warm, and subtly smoky, with the raw pungency almost entirely neutralised by heat. Pour this aromatic oil over lentil dal, rice dishes, steamed vegetables, or yoghurt raita to finish them with fragrance and warmth. The technique takes less than two minutes and elevates any simple dish instantly.

INGREDIENTS

5 g	Black mustard seeds (<i>Brassica nigra</i>)
2 g	Fenugreek seeds (methi) (<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>)
5 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
25 g	Coconut oil or ghee
2 g	Dried red chilli (optional) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)

METHOD

1. Measure all spices and have them ready beside the stove before heating the oil — tempering moves fast.
2. Heat the oil or ghee in a small heavy pan (tarka pan or small saucepan) over medium-high heat until it shimmers but does not smoke.
3. Add the black mustard seeds. They will begin to pop within 15–30 seconds — cover loosely with a lid or splash guard to contain them. Listen for the popping to slow.
4. Once most seeds have popped and turned a shade lighter grey-brown (not black-burnt), add the fenugreek seeds and dried chilli (if using). Fry 10–15 seconds until fenugreek is golden.
5. Add the garlic slices and fry until they just begin to turn pale gold, about 30 seconds. Remove from heat immediately.
6. Pour the entire contents of the pan immediately over the prepared dal, vegetables, or rice. Stir in gently and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

What you stir with love needs less salt.

Whole-grain black mustard condiment (moutarde à l'ancienne style)

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

A traditional-style whole-grain prepared mustard made with black mustard seeds as the base — bolder and more pungent than the typical yellow-seed version sold commercially. The vinegar stabilises the preparation and stops AITC development after a few days, leaving a pleasantly sharp, complex condiment. Whole black mustard seeds provide texture and visual appeal (tiny dark pearls), while part-grinding half the seeds gives body and heat. Use as a condiment for cold meats, cheese boards, sandwiches, vinaigrettes, and in cooking (mustard-crusted roast chicken, dressings, sauces). The preparation is naturally preservative — vinegar and salt.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Black mustard seeds (whole) (<i>Brassica nigra</i>)
80 g	White wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar (5% acidity)
40 g	Water, cold
6 g	Fine sea salt
10 g	Honey or light brown sugar

METHOD

1. Place the whole black mustard seeds in a clean bowl. Pour over the vinegar and cold water. Cover and leave to soak at room temperature for 12–24 hours — the seeds will absorb liquid and swell.
2. Transfer half the soaked seeds and all the soaking liquid to a blender or mortar. Add the salt and honey. Blend or pound to a rough paste — not smooth; keep texture. The mixture will thicken as the natural mucilage from the seeds develops.
3. Stir in the remaining whole (unblended) seeds. Taste and adjust seasoning: more honey for a mellower finish, more vinegar for sharpness, more salt to amplify flavour.
4. Transfer to a sterilised glass jar. Seal and refrigerate for at least 24 hours before using — the mustard will mellow, thicken further, and the flavours will meld. The initial sharp heat reduces as AITC slowly disperses.
5. Use as a condiment. Keeps 3–4 months refrigerated, sealed. The texture firms more over time.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fog is only a cloud that has come down to visit the ground for a little while.

Simple Buttered Braised Cabbage with Caraway

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A homely, gut-friendly way to cook cabbage: shredded and gently braised with a little butter and caraway until sweet and tender. Cooking softens the sulphur compounds for an easy-to-digest dish.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i>), leaf — cabbage, finely shredded
30 g	Butter — a knob, for braising
2 g	Caraway seeds (<i>Carum carvi</i>) — about 1 tsp
2 g	Salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Finely shred the cabbage.
2. Melt the butter in a wide pan over medium heat.
3. Add the cabbage with a splash of water and the caraway seeds; season lightly with salt.
4. Cover and braise gently for 10-15 minutes, stirring once or twice, until tender and sweet.
5. Serve warm as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and kale are all one wild plant, coaxed by patient hands down many different roads.

Cauliflower gratin — chou-fleur au gratin

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic French baked dish — blanched cauliflower florets baked in a simple béchamel (white sauce) enriched with mature cheese and gratinéed until bubbling and golden. Substantial, comforting, and a time-honoured way to eat a whole head. Chou-fleur au gratin appears in 18th-century French cookery; the name recalls the popularity of cauliflower in French aristocratic cuisine.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Cauliflower (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>) — Cauliflower, cut into florets (keep some stalk pieces too)
40 g	Unsalted butter — For the béchamel
40 g	Plain flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — For the béchamel
600 ml	Whole milk — Warm milk for a smooth béchamel
80 g	Mature cheddar or gruyère — Coarsely grated; use half in the sauce and half on top
5 g	Sea salt, white pepper, nutmeg — Season the béchamel to taste; a grating of fresh nutmeg is traditional

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200 °C. Cook the cauliflower florets in well-salted boiling water for 4–5 minutes until just tender (not soft). Drain thoroughly and spread in a buttered oven-proof dish.
2. Make the béchamel: melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the warm milk, bringing to a simmer while stirring constantly, until thickened and smooth — about 5 minutes. Season with salt, white pepper and a generous grating of nutmeg. Stir in half the cheese.
3. Pour the sauce over the cauliflower, making sure all florets are covered. Scatter the remaining cheese over the top.
4. Bake 20–25 minutes until bubbling and deeply golden on top. Rest for 5 minutes before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Your sense of smell runs straight to memory, which is why a single scent can return a whole lost year.

Cauliflower steaks with tahini, lemon & parsley

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Thick slabs cut through the whole cauliflower head, seared in a hot pan then finished in the oven, served with a classic Levantine tahini sauce and fresh parsley. A simple technique that showcases cauliflower’s ability to brown and develop complex flavour — widely enjoyed across the Middle East where fried or roasted cauliflower with tahini is a street-food and mezze staple.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Cauliflower (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>botrytis</i>) — Cauliflower, 1 large head — cut from top to bottom into 2–3 thick steaks (2–3 cm); keep florets that fall off for another use
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil (3 tbsp), divided
60 g	Tahini (sesame paste) (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — Good quality runny tahini
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice (~1 lemon)
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed (1 small clove)
15 g	Flat-leaf parsley, fresh (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Roughly chopped
5 g	Sea salt and black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200 °C. Cut the cauliflower from top to bottom into 2–3 thick steaks through the core. Season both sides generously with salt and black pepper.
2. Heat a large oven-safe frying pan over high heat. Add 2 tbsp olive oil. When shimmering, lay the cauliflower steaks in the pan. Sear 3–4 minutes until deep golden brown, then flip carefully and sear the other side 2–3 minutes.
3. Transfer the pan to the oven and roast 10–15 minutes until the steak is tender through when pierced.
4. While roasting, make the tahini sauce: whisk together the tahini, lemon juice, crushed garlic and a pinch of salt. Add water a tablespoon at a time, whisking, until you reach a smooth, pourable consistency.
5. Serve the steaks on the sauce, drizzled with the remaining olive oil and scattered with chopped parsley. Serve with warm flatbread or pitta.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

There is a jellyfish that can grow young again, quietly unwinding its life to begin a second time.

Stuffed cabbage rolls (gołąbki) in tomato sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

Whole cabbage leaves blanched until pliable, wrapped around a savoury rice-and-meat (or lentil) filling and braised in tomato sauce — the central-European gołąbki / sarma / holishkes tradition. A food-first way to make a whole cabbage into a hearty, complete meal.

INGREDIENTS

1 whole	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>), leaf — 1 large head of green cabbage, core removed (about 12 large leaves)
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped (for the filling)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, minced (about 3 cloves)
500 g	Minced beef/pork or cooked brown lentils — Protein filling (choose meat or lentils)
150 g	Cooked rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Binds and lightens the filling
700 g	Passata or chopped tomatoes (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — For the braising sauce

METHOD

1. Core the cabbage and simmer the whole head in boiling water a few minutes, peeling off leaves as they soften and become pliable; trim the thick central rib of each leaf flat.
2. Soften the onion and garlic, then mix with the meat or lentils, cooked rice, salt and pepper to make the filling.
3. Place a spoon of filling on each leaf, fold in the sides and roll up into neat parcels.
4. Lay the rolls seam-down in a pot, pour over the passata with a little water, cover, and braise gently (hob or oven) for about 1 hour until tender and the filling is cooked through.
5. Rest a few minutes, then serve with the sauce.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It became a staple of cool-climate Europe, central to peasant diets and to preservation by fermentation (sauerkraut, and in Korea the kimchi tradition), valued because a dense head stores through winter when little else is fresh.

Blanch & Freeze Brussels Sprouts (Garden Harvest Preservation)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 grams

When the garden or market delivers a glut of Brussels sprouts in autumn, this simple blanch-and-freeze method preserves their colour, texture and nutritional value for up to twelve months. Blanching briefly in boiling water inactivates the enzymes that would otherwise degrade quality during freezing, then rapid chilling in ice water stops further cooking. Frozen sprouts go straight from freezer to boiling water, roasting pan or stir-fry with no thawing needed.

INGREDIENTS

- 1000 grams Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea* var. *gemmifera*)
- 4000 grams Water (for blanching pot)
- 500 grams Ice (for ice bath)
- 2000 grams Cold water (for ice bath)

METHOD

- Sort sprouts by size into small (under 2.5 cm), medium (2.5–4 cm) and large (over 4 cm) groups — they need different blanching times.
- Trim the base of each sprout and remove any yellowed or damaged outer leaves. Do not cut in half for freezing — leave whole.
- Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Prepare a large bowl of ice water alongside.
- Blanch in batches: small sprouts 3 minutes; medium 4 minutes; large 5 minutes. Do not overcrowd the pot.
- Immediately transfer blanched sprouts to the ice water with a slotted spoon. Leave for the same time as blanching (3–5 minutes) to cool completely.
- Drain thoroughly and spread on clean tea towels or trays to surface-dry for 30 minutes.
- Spread in a single layer on baking trays and open-freeze for 1–2 hours until solid. Transfer to labelled freezer bags, squeeze out air, and seal. Store at –18 °C.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

References to a cabbage-like vegetable producing small heads along the stem appear in Belgian and Flemish horticultural literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, and the crop had spread to France and England by the 18th century.

High-Heat Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Lemon & Parmesan

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Roasting at high heat is the technique that turned Brussels sprouts from the most hated vegetable on the Christmas plate to a year-round favourite. The cut faces caramelize, the outer leaves crisp, and the sulphurous bitterness mellows into a savoury-sweet nuttiness. A squeeze of lemon and some grated Parmesan at the end is all it needs.

INGREDIENTS

- 500 grams Brussels sprouts (*Brassica oleracea* var. *gemmifera*)
- 30 grams Extra-virgin olive oil (*Olea europaea*)
- 4 grams Flaky sea salt
- 1 grams Black pepper, freshly ground (*Piper nigrum*)
- 30 grams Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 15 grams Lemon juice, freshly squeezed (*Citrus limon*)

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220 °C / 200 °C fan / gas 7. Place a large heavy baking tray in the oven to heat.
2. Trim the base of each Brussels sprout and remove any tatty outer leaves. Halve through the root.
3. Toss the halved sprouts with the olive oil, salt and pepper until evenly coated.
4. Carefully remove the hot tray from the oven. Tip the sprouts onto it and spread in a single layer, cut-side down.
5. Roast for 20–25 minutes, turning once halfway, until the cut faces are dark golden-brown and the outer leaves are lightly crisped.
6. Transfer to a warm serving dish. Squeeze over the lemon juice and scatter with Parmesan. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

They became a fixture of British and Northern European winter cookery, particularly associated with the Christmas dinner in the United Kingdom, where their bitter-sweet flavour and frost-sweetened quality made them a seasonal tradition.

Dehydrated kohlrabi chips (oven or dehydrator)

Food / culinary • Makes 50 g (approx)

A brilliant, long-shelf-life preserve for a glut of kohlrabi. Thin-sliced and seasoned, these crunchy vegetable chips make a satisfying snack rich in fibre and vitamin C (though vitamin C is partially reduced by drying). Ready in 6–8 hours in a dehydrator or 2–3 hours in a low oven. The kohlrabi shrinks dramatically — 500 g fresh yields roughly 50–60 g chips.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Kohlrabi (swollen stem) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — About 2–3 medium kohlrabi; yields ~50–60 g dried chips
15 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — ~1 tablespoon; density_g_per_ml 0.91
	Seasoning of choice — Options: smoked paprika + salt; nutritional yeast + garlic powder; sea salt only; za’atar + lemon zest

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 60–70°C (fan) and line baking trays with baking paper.
2. Peel the kohlrabi and slice 2–3 mm thin, ideally on a mandoline.
3. Toss the slices with the olive oil and chosen seasoning.
4. Spread in a single, non-overlapping layer on the trays.
5. Dry in the oven 2–3 hours, flipping once, until completely dry, crisp and curling at the edges.
6. Cool completely before storing airtight.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The first taste belongs to the cook;
the best taste belongs to the tired.

Kohlrabi kimchi

Food / culinary • Makes 1 litre jar

A simple, vibrant kimchi using kohlrabi as the main vegetable — crisp, peppery, tangy and probiotic-rich. Kohlrabi’s firm texture holds up beautifully through fermentation, making it one of the best brassicas for kimchi beyond the traditional napa cabbage. Serve as a side with rice, noodles, eggs, or grilled meat.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Kohlrabi (swollen stem) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — About 3 medium kohlrabi
14 g	Non-iodised salt — 2% of kohlrabi weight; use sea salt or kosher salt — not iodised
5 g	Sugar — ~1 tsp; aids initial fermentation
20 g	Gochugaru (Korean chilli flakes) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — ~2–4 tablespoons — adjust for heat preference
15 g	Fish sauce (or soy sauce for vegan) — ~1 tablespoon; density_g_per_ml ~1.1
15 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 3–4 cloves
10 g	Fresh ginger root (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — ~2 cm piece
50 g	Spring onions (scallions) (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — 4–5 spring onions

METHOD

1. Peel and cut the kohlrabi into 1.5-2 cm cubes or match-sticks; toss with the salt and sugar and leave 30-60 minutes to draw out moisture, tossing once or twice.
2. Rinse the kohlrabi in cold water, drain and pat dry.
3. Mix the gochugaru, fish sauce, garlic, ginger and spring onions into a paste.
4. Wearing gloves, toss the kohlrabi thoroughly through the paste until evenly coated.
5. Pack tightly into a sterilised jar, pressing down so any liquid rises to cover, leaving 2-3 cm headspace.
6. Ferment at room temperature (18-22°C) for 1-3 days, pressing down daily to keep the vegetables submerged.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

We yawn when others yawn because we are made to feel with one another, right down to the breath.

7. Once pleasantly tangy, seal and refrigerate; best after 5-7 days, continuing to deepen in flavour.

Roasted kohlrabi with garlic, thyme & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Roasting transforms kohlrabi — the mild flesh caramelises and the edges go golden and slightly nutty. This is the simplest and most rewarding way to cook kohlrabi as a vegetable side dish. Ready in 30 minutes; pairs with everything from roast chicken to lentils.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Kohlrabi (swollen stem) (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>gongylodes</i>) — About 3–4 medium kohlrabi
40 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — ~3 tablespoons; density_g_per_ml 0.91
5 g	Fresh thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Or ½ tsp dried thyme
15 g	Garlic cloves (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 3–4 cloves; added in last 5–8 minutes
20 g	Lemon (juice and zest) (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — ½ lemon
	Salt and black pepper — Season generously before roasting

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Peel the kohlrabi and cut into 2-3 cm cubes or wedges.
3. Toss with olive oil, thyme leaves, salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice; spread in a single layer on a roasting tray.
4. Roast 25-30 minutes, turning once halfway, until golden-edged and tender.
5. Scatter the garlic over the tray for the final 5-8 minutes of roasting so it doesn't burn.
6. Finish with lemon zest and a drizzle of fresh olive oil; serve hot or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The vegetable was introduced to the Americas in the early 19th century. It has never achieved the commercial ubiquity of cabbage or broccoli in the Anglophone world but remains popular in Germany, Eastern Europe, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Orecchiette with broccoli, garlic, chilli & anchovy

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic southern-Italian pasta that turns broccoli into a silky, savoury sauce. The florets are simmered until soft and broken down, then tossed with garlic, chilli and anchovy melted in olive oil — a food-first way to eat a whole head of broccoli with deep flavour.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), flower — Broccoli, cut into small florets (peel and slice the stalk too)
400 g	Orecchiette pasta (<i>Triticum durum</i>) — Orecchiette (or other short pasta)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, thinly sliced (~4 cloves)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~3 tbsp)
1 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Dried chilli flakes, to taste (~1/2 tsp)
25 g	Anchovy fillets — Anchovy fillets in oil (~4), chopped
4 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, for the pasta water and to taste

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to the boil. Add the broccoli florets and sliced stalk and cook 4–5 minutes until very tender, then lift out with a slotted spoon (keep the water boiling).
2. Cook the orecchiette in the same water according to packet timing.
3. Meanwhile, warm the olive oil in a wide pan over medium-low heat. Add the garlic, chilli flakes and anchovies and cook gently, stirring, until the anchovies melt and the garlic is soft and fragrant (do not brown).
4. Add the cooked broccoli to the pan and crush it lightly with a wooden spoon so it breaks down into a rough sauce; loosen with a ladle of pasta water.
5. Drain the pasta and toss it through the broccoli, adding a little more pasta water and olive oil to coat. Taste, adjust salt, and serve hot with optional grated pecorino.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Grown around the Mediterranean since Roman times in its earlier forms, it was prized in Italy for centuries before spreading.

Roasted broccoli with garlic, chilli & sesame

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

High-heat roasting caramelises broccoli into crisp, nutty, slightly charred florets — a favourite way to get children and sceptics to love it. Tossed with garlic and chilli, finished with toasted sesame.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), flower — Broccoli, cut into florets with some stalk attached
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
1 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Dried chilli flakes, to taste
8 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — Sesame seeds, toasted
3 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 220 °C (200 °C fan). Toss the broccoli with the olive oil, sliced garlic, chilli flakes and salt, and spread in a single layer on a large baking tray.
2. Roast 18–22 minutes, turning once, until the edges are crisp and browned and the stalks are tender.
3. Scatter with toasted sesame seeds and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The colour blue is rare in nature, so most blue flowers make it by bending the light, not by holding a dye.

Steamed broccoli with lemon, garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The simplest, most nutrient-respecting way to eat broccoli: steamed just until crisp-tender and bright green, then dressed with good olive oil, lemon and a whisper of raw garlic. Light steaming keeps vitamin C and the myrosinase that forms sulforaphane.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Broccoli (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>italica</i>), flower — Broccoli, cut into florets; stalk peeled and sliced
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1/2 lemon)
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely grated (~1 small clove)
3 g	Flaky sea salt — Flaky sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Set up a steamer over boiling water. Add the broccoli florets and sliced stalk, cover, and steam 4–5 minutes until just crisp-tender and vivid green — do not overcook.
2. Meanwhile whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, grated garlic and a little salt.
3. Tip the hot broccoli into a bowl, pour over the dressing and toss gently. Serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It reached England in the 18th century (recorded as “Italian asparagus”) and was popularised in the United States by Italian immigrant growers in the early 20th century, especially in California, after which it became a worldwide everyday vegetable.

Stir-fried turnip greens with garlic and ginger

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A fast, vivid green side that makes the most of turnip tops or the leafy forms of *Brassica rapa* — pak choi, choy sum, komatsuna. The leaves wilt in minutes in a hot pan with garlic, ginger and a splash of soy and sesame. Turnip greens are exceptionally rich in vitamin K, vitamin C and folate, so this is a genuinely nourishing way to eat them.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Turnip greens / tops or pak choi (<i>Brassica rapa</i>) — Use turnip tops, pak choi, choy sum or komatsuna — all leafy <i>Brassica rapa</i> .
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
10 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger.
15 g	Neutral oil (groundnut or sunflower)
15 g	Light soy sauce — Use tamari for gluten-free.
5 g	Toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — To finish.
5 g	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash the greens well and shake dry; separate thick stems from leaves and cut both into wide pieces.
2. Heat the oil in a wok or wide pan over high heat and stir-fry the garlic and ginger 20–30 seconds until fragrant.
3. Add the stems first and stir-fry 1 minute, then add the leaves and toss until just wilted, 1–2 minutes.
4. Add the soy sauce and a splash of water, tossing to coat.
5. Off the heat, drizzle with sesame oil and scatter with sesame seeds.
6. Serve at once with rice or noodles.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Brassica rapa is one of humanity's oldest cultivated plants, grown around the Mediterranean and across Europe and Asia since antiquity.



Toor Dal (Split Pigeon Pea Dal)

Food / culinary

A staple South Asian dish made from split, dried pigeon peas simmered until soft and tempered with spices.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	<i>Cajanus cajan</i> (dried split pigeon peas / toor dal)
3 cup	water
0.5 tsp	turmeric powder (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
1 tsp	cumin seeds (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — for tempering
1 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Rinse split pigeon peas until the water runs clear.
2. Simmer with water and turmeric 30-40 minutes until soft and mushy, skimming foam.
3. In a separate small pan, heat oil and sizzle cumin seeds until fragrant.
4. Pour the tempering over the dal, stir in salt, and simmer 2-3 more minutes.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In parts of Africa and Asia, leaf and root decoctions have been used in traditional folk medicine for wound care, jaundice, and as a general tonic, though these are traditional, not clinically validated, uses.

Classic Green Tea Infusion

Tea / infusion • Makes 1 cup

The everyday cup — and the traditional herbal preparation registered by the EMA for relief of fatigue and a sensation of weakness. Brewed cooler and shorter than black tea to keep it fresh and not bitter.

INGREDIENTS

2 g Tea Plant (*Camellia sinensis*), leaf — green tea leaf
 (≈1.8-2.2 g per EMA)

METHOD

1. Heat fresh water and let it cool slightly off the boil (about 70-80 °C) — boiling water scorches green tea and makes it bitter.
2. Place about 2 g of green tea leaf in a cup or pot and pour over 100-150 ml of the hot water.
3. Steep 1-3 minutes (shorter for a milder, sweeter cup), then strain.
4. Drink warm; the same leaf can be re-steeped once or twice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A seed is a promise the soil intends
to keep.



Matcha Latte

Food / culinary • Makes 1 cup

A creamy whisked-matcha latte — finely stone-ground shade-grown green tea suspended in warm milk. Because you drink the whole powdered leaf, matcha gives a smooth, sustained lift with green-tea catechins and L-theanine.

INGREDIENTS

2 g	Tea Plant (<i>Camellia sinensis</i>), leaf — matcha (ceremonial-grade green tea powder), ~1 tsp
30 g	Water (~80 °C) — hot (not boiling) water, ~80 °C, to whisk the paste
200 g	Milk (dairy or plant) — warm milk (dairy or plant)
1 tsp	Honey/sweetener (optional) — honey or sweetener, to taste (optional)

METHOD

1. Sift 1 tsp matcha into a bowl or cup to remove lumps.
2. Add a little hot (not boiling, ~80 °C) water and whisk briskly in a zig-zag until smooth and frothy.
3. Warm and froth the milk, then pour it over the matcha paste; sweeten to taste.
4. Stir and drink straight away; best earlier in the day.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Tea has been drunk in China for well over two thousand years, first as a restorative and “medicine” and later as the everyday beverage.



Harebell Blue Flower Garnish Plate

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

The nodding sky-blue bells of harebell are delicate and mild, best used whole as a beautiful edible garnish that turns a simple plate or soft cheese into something quietly magical.

INGREDIENTS

12 flowers	Harebell (<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>) — fresh harebell flowers
100 g	Soft fresh cheese (chèvre or ricotta) — spread on toast or a plate
1 tsp	Honey — optional drizzle

METHOD

1. Gently pick over the harebell flowers and give them the lightest rinse, then let them dry on a cloth.
2. Spread the soft fresh cheese onto a plate or toast.
3. Drizzle very lightly with honey if you like a touch of sweetness.
4. Arrange the whole blue harebell flowers over the top and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A person walking has, for an instant of every step, both feet in the air; to walk is to catch a falling.



Salt-Brined Caper Buds

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Capers are the unopened flower buds of *Capparis spinosa*. Raw buds are unpalatably bitter, so they are cured to develop their bright, briny tang.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Caper bush (<i>Capparis spinosa</i>) — fresh unopened caper buds
100 g	coarse sea salt — for dry-curing
250 ml	white wine vinegar (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — for optional brine finish

METHOD

1. Spread the caper buds on a tray and leave to wilt for a day to firm them.
2. Layer the buds with sea salt in a clean jar, shaking daily; drain the drawn-out liquid each day for 7-10 days.
3. Taste for bitterness; continue salting until mellow and briny.
4. For a milder finish, rinse the salted capers and cover with white wine vinegar; store sealed.
5. Rinse before serving to remove excess salt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The caper has been valued around the Mediterranean and Near East since antiquity as both food and folk medicine.



Shepherd's Purse Wild Greens (sauté)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Long eaten as a free, nutritious wild pot-herb, the young leaf rosettes of shepherd's purse have a mild, peppery, cabbage-cress flavour. A simple sauté makes the most of spring rosettes gathered before the plant flowers.

INGREDIENTS

150 g Shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*), leaf

METHOD

1. Gather and wash young pre-flowering rosette leaves.
2. Wilt in olive oil/butter with garlic over medium heat 3–5 minutes.
3. Season with salt, pepper and lemon; serve like spinach.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Shepherd's purse takes its name across many languages from the flat, purse-like seed pods (German Hirtentäschelkraut, French bourse-à-pasteur, “shepherd's purse”).



Traditional Hot Pepper Sauce (Cayenne, Garlic & Vinegar)

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

A classic homemade hot sauce of red cayenne-type chillies, garlic and vinegar — the everyday culinary face of Capsicum annuum. The acid both extracts the bright colour and pungency and preserves the sauce. A condiment, used to add heat and flavour to food.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>), fruit
20 g	Garlic cloves, peeled (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
250 g	White wine or cider vinegar
8 g	Salt

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, stem and roughly chop about 200 g of ripe red cayenne-type chillies (remove seeds for a milder sauce).
2. Add the chillies, peeled garlic and salt to a blender with the vinegar and blend until smooth. Ventilate the room.
3. Simmer gently in a non-reactive pan for 5–10 minutes to soften and meld the flavours (optional, for a cooked-style sauce).
4. Blend again if needed, then pour through a funnel into clean, sterilised bottles.
5. Cool, seal, label and date. Refrigerate after opening; use within about 6–12 months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Strings of drying red chillies (ristras) are a familiar folk emblem of warmth and protection in the American Southwest.



Ají Amarillo Fresh Chilli Sauce

Food / culinary

Capsicum baccatum peppers (the South American ají family) have a fruity heat. Blended into a smooth sauce they lift grilled foods, potatoes and rice.

INGREDIENTS

4 whole	Ají (<i>Capsicum baccatum</i>) — fresh ají amarillo (C. baccatum) peppers, deseeded
2 clove	garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
3 tbsp	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tbsp	lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
0.5 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, halve the peppers and remove seeds and membranes.
2. Blanch the pepper flesh in boiling water for 2 minutes, then drain.
3. Blend the peppers with garlic, olive oil, lime juice and salt until smooth.
4. Taste and adjust salt and lime; loosen with a splash of water if needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The word companion means, quite simply, the one with whom you share your bread.



Habanero & mango salsa

Food / culinary • Makes 350 g

A bright Caribbean-style fresh salsa where the sweet, perfumed mango meets the fruity fire of the habanero (*Capsicum chinense*). Sweet-hot and fragrant, it lifts fish, tacos and grilled food.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Habanero pepper (<i>Capsicum chinense</i>) — Habanero (about 1 pod), deseeded and very finely chopped; wear gloves
200 g	Mango (<i>Mangifera indica</i>) — Ripe mango, peeled and diced
40 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Red onion, finely diced
25 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lime juice
8 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander, chopped
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, deseed and very finely chop the habanero.
2. Dice the mango and red onion; chop the coriander.
3. Toss everything with the lime juice and salt.
4. Rest 10 minutes, taste (cautiously) and adjust lime, salt and chilli. Serve fresh.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried out of the Amazon
by Indigenous peoples in pre-
Columbian times, C.

Salsa habanera - Yucatecan habanero, tomato & lime salsa

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The fiery, fruity table salsa of the Yucatan, built on the apricot-scented heat of the habanero (*Capsicum chinense*). Used by the spoonful as a condiment, not a dish - the heat self-limits how much you eat.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Habanero pepper (<i>Capsicum chinense</i>) — Fresh habanero (about 2-3 pods), seeds and ribs removed for a touch less heat; wear gloves
150 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomato, finely diced (or roasted for depth)
40 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — White or red onion, finely diced
25 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lime juice (about 1 lime)
8 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander, chopped
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, halve the habaneros, scrape out the seeds and white ribs (this tempers the heat), and chop very finely.
2. Finely dice the tomato and onion and chop the coriander.
3. Combine everything in a bowl with the lime juice and salt. For a smoother salsa, pulse briefly in a blender instead.
4. Rest 15-20 minutes for the flavours to marry. Taste with a tiny spoon - it is fierce - and adjust salt and lime.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Feed the soil and the soil feeds everyone at the table.

Andean rocoto table sauce (aji de rocoto)

Food / culinary

A bright, fiery Andean table sauce that shows off the rocoto’s clean, fruity heat. Spooned sparingly over potatoes, grilled meats or eggs, it is the everyday face of this pepper across Peru and Bolivia.

INGREDIENTS

2 whole	Rocoto pepper (<i>Capsicum pubescens</i>) — Ripe rocoto peppers, seeded and deveined to temper the heat
0.5 whole	Red onion, roughly chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
2 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, halve the rocotos, remove the seeds and white ribs, and chop the flesh.
2. For a milder sauce, blanch the pepper flesh in boiling water for a minute and drain.
3. Put the pepper, onion, garlic, lime juice and olive oil in a blender.
4. Blend to a smooth, pourable sauce, adding a splash of water if needed.
5. Season with salt to taste, then chill before serving in small amounts.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known in the Andes as rocoto or locoto, it is among the most ancient cultivated peppers, deeply woven into Andean cuisine and folk custom; its black seeds and purple flowers set it apart from all other domesticated peppers.

Hairy Bittercress Wild Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes ~120 g

A free, peppery green pesto made from a common garden weed. Bittercress has a bright cress-like bite that stands in beautifully for rocket or basil.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Hairy bittercress (<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>) — Young hairy bittercress leaves and tender stems, washed
30 g	Toasted pine nuts or walnuts — For body and richness
30 g	Hard cheese (Parmesan-style) — Finely grated
1 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Small
80 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Good quality
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To brighten
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the bittercress well and shake or spin dry.
2. Put the leaves, nuts, cheese and garlic in a food processor (or use a mortar and pestle).
3. Pulse to a coarse paste, then drizzle in the olive oil with the motor running until you have a loose green sauce.
4. Stir in the lemon juice and season with salt to taste.
5. Loosen with a little more oil if needed and use straight away or store under a film of oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Better known to gardeners as an exasperating weed that seeds itself everywhere via its catapulting pods, hairy bittercress has quietly been gathered as a free peppery salad green for generations.

Caraway-Roasted Root Vegetables (German-Scandinavian style)

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g (serves 4)

Roasted root vegetables with caraway seeds are a staple of German, Scandinavian and central European autumn cooking. The warm spice of caraway perfectly complements the natural sweetness of carrots, parsnips and celeriac — elevating a simple side dish into something deeply satisfying. This is whole-food eating at its best: vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates and dietary fibre, with caraway adding both flavour and digestive benefit.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Caraway seeds (whole) (<i>Carum carvi</i>) — Approximately 1 tablespoon; toast lightly before roasting to intensify flavour
300 g	Carrots (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
250 g	Parsnips (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>)
250 g	Celeriac (<i>Apium graveolens</i>) — Or substitute turnip or swede
30 ml	Rapeseed or olive oil
6 g	Sea salt and black pepper — Season generously

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220 °C (200 °C fan). Line a large roasting tin with baking parchment.
2. Toast caraway seeds in a dry pan over medium heat for 1–2 minutes until fragrant (they will just begin to jump in the pan). Watch carefully — they burn quickly. Remove from heat.
3. Toss all prepared vegetables with the oil, toasted caraway seeds, salt and pepper in the roasting tin. Spread in a single layer — do not crowd the tin, or they will steam rather than roast.
4. Roast for 30–40 minutes, turning once halfway through, until golden-brown and tender. The edges should be slightly caramelised.
5. Serve hot, scattered with fresh flat-leaf parsley if available.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Caraway is one of the oldest cultivated plants in Europe; seeds have been found in Mesolithic food remains (Maglemosian culture) and in Bronze Age lake-dwelling sites in Switzerland, indicating at least 5,000 years of human use.

Homemade Pecan Milk

Food / culinary • Makes ~750 ml

A dairy-free milk alternative made by soaking and blending raw pecans.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Raw pecans (<i>Carya illinoensis</i>) — soaked 4-8 hours
750 ml	Fresh water (for blending)
2 piece	Pitted dates (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>) — optional, for sweetness

METHOD

1. Soak pecans in water for 4-8 hours; drain and rinse.
2. Blend soaked pecans with 750 ml fresh water (and dates, if using) until smooth.
3. Strain through a nut-milk bag or fine cloth into a jug.
4. Refrigerate and use within a few days.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

To break bread with someone was, in almost every old culture, a promise to do them no harm.

Lagos Spinach Sauté (Celosia leaves)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

In West Africa — particularly in Nigeria, Benin and Ghana — the young leaves and shoot tips of Celosia argentea (known as soko yokoto in Yoruba) are a well-established leafy vegetable, used in soups and stews much as spinach is used elsewhere. This simple sauté reflects how the leaves are typically prepared: quickly cooked to retain their vivid green colour and mild, slightly spinach-like flavour. Leaves should be harvested before the plant flowers, when young and tender. This is a genuine, documented, culturally significant food tradition — not a medicinal recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 200 grams Celosia argentea young leaves and shoot tips — Harvested before flowering; washed and roughly chopped
- 80 grams Onion (Allium cepa) — Finely sliced
- 20 grams Palm oil or neutral oil — About 1.5 tablespoons
- 3 grams Salt and pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young celosia leaves and shoot tips well. Shake off excess water and chop roughly.
2. Heat the oil in a wide pan over medium-high heat. Add the sliced onion and cook, stirring, for 3–4 minutes until softened and lightly golden.
3. Add the celosia leaves and stir to combine. Cook for 2–3 minutes, tossing frequently. The leaves will wilt quickly and turn vivid green — do not overcook or they will lose colour and texture.
4. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately as a side dish, or stir into a soup or stew in the final minutes of cooking.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A grandmother’s recipe is a message sent forward through time, hands teaching hands they will never meet.

Cornflower Petal Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes 1 portion

Cornflower ray petals (the blue outer florets) are edible with a mild, slightly spicy, clove-like flavour and a subtle bitterness. They have been used as a culinary garnish and natural blue food colouring across Europe for centuries and appear in many commercial herbal tea blends as a colourful botanical ingredient. They are widely used fresh or dried to add vivid colour to salads, desserts, cocktails, cheese plates and baked goods. Blue cornflower petals also yield a natural food-safe blue dye when mixed with water — historically used to colour sugar and confectionery.

INGREDIENTS

2 g Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) — fresh or dried blue cornflower ray petals (approximately 1–2 tablespoons fresh, or 1 teaspoon dried)

METHOD

1. Pick fully open cornflower heads from pesticide-free plants in the morning once dew has dried.
2. Gently pull the blue ray florets (outer petals) away from the receptacle and discard the green base and inner disc florets.
3. Use fresh petals immediately as a garnish, or spread on a rack and dry at room temperature for 2–4 days for pantry storage.
4. Scatter over salads, desserts, cocktails, or baked goods just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The cornflower carries one of the richest cultural and symbolic histories of any European wildflower.



Cornflower Petal Tea

Tea / infusion • Makes 250 g

A light, visually striking infusion of dried cornflower petals with a mild, subtly spicy-floral flavour and an attractive blue-purple hue. Cornflower petals have been added to European herbal tea blends and black tea for generations — they are a widely sold culinary-grade dried flower and appear in numerous commercial tea blends. Enjoyed primarily for colour and gentle flavour, and as an edible-flower celebration of the cornflower’s long association with grain harvest culture.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Cornflower (<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>) — dried cornflower ray petals (approximately 1 heaped teaspoon)
250 g	Just-boiled water — approximately 250 ml

METHOD

1. Place dried cornflower petals in a teapot or infuser.
2. Pour over just-boiled water, cover and steep 5–8 minutes.
3. Strain and sip warm. Add honey or a squeeze of lemon if desired — note that lemon juice will shift the blue-violet colour to pink due to pH change.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

As an archaeophyte it arrived in northern and western Europe with Neolithic grain agriculture, making it a companion of human cultivation for millennia — its intense blue flowers a defining contrast to fields of gold grain.

Simple mouse-ear pot-greens

Food / culinary

A humble way to use a common lawn weed: the young downy shoots of mouse-ear, gently wilted like spinach, become a mild, pleasant green for spring foraging plates.

INGREDIENTS

2 handful	Common mouse-ear (<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>) — Young mouse-ear shoots and leaves, washed
1 tbsp	Butter or olive oil
1 clove	Garlic clove, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young mouse-ear shoots well and pick over, discarding tough or flowering stems.
2. Warm the butter or oil in a pan and soften the garlic for a moment.
3. Add the greens and toss over medium heat until just wilted, one to two minutes.
4. Season with a pinch of salt and serve straight away.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Old pots make honest food.



Fireweed Flower Lemonade

Food / culinary • Makes 1 litre

A jewel-pink summer drink, all the more magical because the colour comes from the flowers alone. Fireweed syrup let down with cold water and fresh lemon makes a gorgeous, gently floral lemonade to serve while the plant is in bloom.

INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp	Fireweed flower syrup (see recipe) — plus a few fresh blossoms (<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>) — From the fireweed flower syrup
1 litre	Cold water
1.5 units	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice, to taste

METHOD

1. Stir the fireweed flower syrup into the cold water.
2. Add lemon juice to taste.
3. Pour over ice to serve, floating a few fresh fireweed blossoms on top.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fireweed holds a prominent place in the folklore and culture of boreal peoples across the Northern Hemisphere.



Fireweed Stem Pith — a Traditional Alaska Native Food

Food / culinary • Makes 1 servings

A simple wild nibble with deep roots in the north. Alaska Native peoples — including the Dena’ina — and Siberian peoples traditionally ate the sweet, tender inner pith (the “marrow”) of the fireweed stem. It is shared here with respect for that food heritage, as a living-library note rather than a reinvention.

INGREDIENTS

4 stems Fresh fireweed stems (young, not woody) (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), aerial parts — For the sweet inner pith

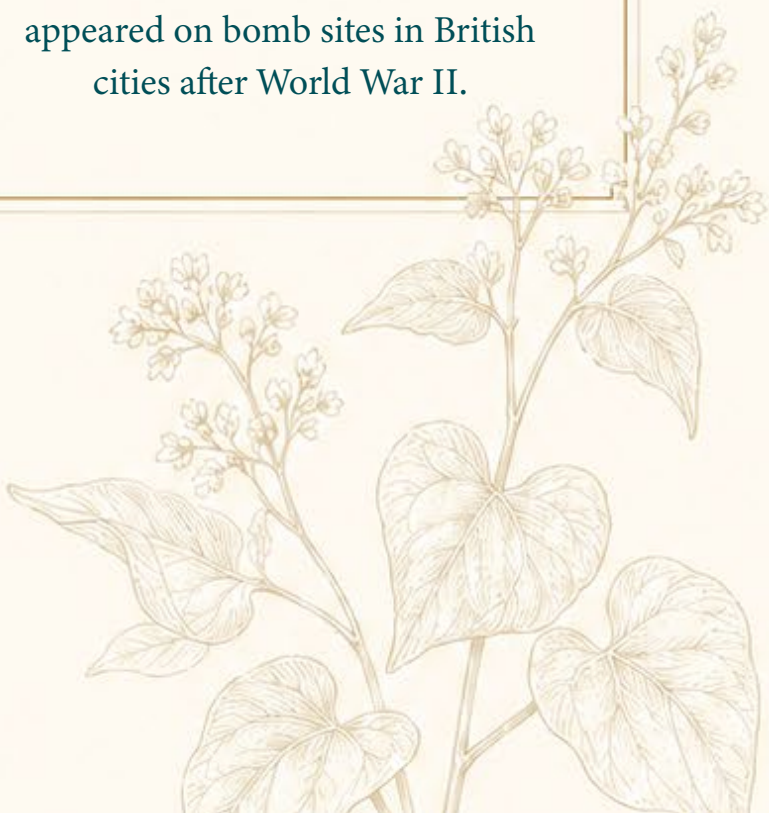
METHOD

1. Choose a fresh, not-too-woody fireweed stem.
2. Split it lengthwise with a thumbnail or knife.
3. Scrape out the soft inner pith with the bottom teeth or a knife.
4. Eat the pith raw as a trail nibble.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its explosive post-fire colonisation made it a symbol of regeneration and resilience — after the Great Fire of London (1666) it reportedly flowered on the ruins, and similarly appeared on bomb sites in British cities after World War II.



Sautéed Young Fireweed Shoots

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

In spring, before it flowers, fireweed sends up tender young shoots that are cooked and eaten much like asparagus — a wild spring vegetable rich in vitamins A and C. Traditionally the young shoots were gathered and eaten by Native American and Siberian peoples, and they remain a favourite of northern foragers today.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Young fireweed shoots (under ~20 cm) (<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>), aerial parts — Tender spring shoots and young leaves
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 clove	Garlic, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

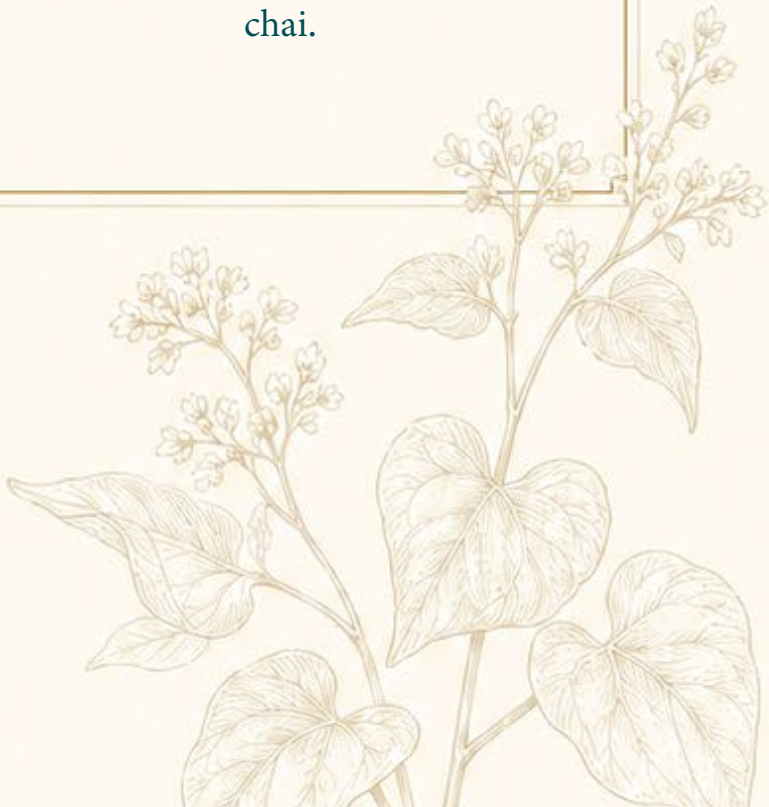
METHOD

1. Pick young fireweed shoots under about 20 cm; trim.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan with the sliced garlic.
3. Add the shoots and young leaves; sauté or steam briefly, 3-5 minutes, until just tender, as you would asparagus.
4. Season with salt.
5. Serve warm as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Russia, Ivan chai (fireweed tea) was for centuries a major everyday beverage and an important export; the town of Koporye near St. Petersburg gave its name to Koporye chai.



Sautéed Lamb's Quarters Greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Lamb's quarters (fat hen) is a common wild edible green with a mild, spinach-like flavour. The young leaves and tender tips are cooked much like spinach.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Fat hen (<i>Chenopodium album</i>) — young lamb's quarters leaves and tips, washed
2 clove	garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — sliced
2 tbsp	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
0.5 tsp	salt — to taste
1 wedge	lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — to finish

METHOD

1. Wash the leaves well and discard any tough stems.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan and soften the garlic for a minute without browning.
3. Add the leaves and a pinch of salt; sauté, tossing, until wilted and tender, about 4-5 minutes.
4. Finish with a squeeze of lemon and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In the old kitchens the fire was never quite let out, and to keep the household flame alive all winter was a quiet pride.

Scarola alla napoletana — Neapolitan braised escarole with raisins, pine nuts & olives

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A Neapolitan side dish of great character: escarole braised until silky-soft in fragrant olive oil and garlic, enriched with sweet raisins, toasted pine nuts and salty black olives. The interplay of bitter, sweet, salty and rich makes it far more than a simple vegetable side — serve alongside grilled white fish, roast pork or as part of an antipasto spread.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Endive (<i>Cichorium endivia</i>), leaf — whole head, roughly chopped
50 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra-virgin olive oil
10 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 3 cloves, sliced
40 g	Raisins / sultanas (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — plump sultanas or dark raisins, soaked 10 min in warm water then drained
30 g	Pine nuts (<i>Pinus pinea</i>) — lightly toasted in a dry pan
50 g	Black olives (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — pitted black Gaeta or Kalamata olives, roughly halved
20 g	Anchovy fillets (optional) — optional: 4–5 anchovy fillets in oil, for a more savoury version (omit for vegetarian)

METHOD

1. Wash the escarole in several changes of cold water. Roughly chop the whole head including outer leaves — these are more bitter but become tender and rich when braised.
2. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the escarole and blanch for 3 minutes. Drain thoroughly and squeeze gently to remove excess water.
3. Warm the olive oil in a wide heavy pan over medium heat. Add the garlic (and anchovies if using) and cook gently until fragrant and the anchovies have melted, about 2 minutes.
4. Add the blanched escarole, olives, drained raisins and toasted pine nuts. Stir well to combine. Cover and braise over low heat for 10–12 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the escarole is completely soft and the flavours have melded. Uncover for the final 2 minutes to evaporate any excess liquid.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning (anchovies and olives are salty — you may need very little or no added salt). Serve warm or at room temperature with good bread, alongside grilled fish, roast pork or as part of an antipasto.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

During the medieval period it was a kitchen garden staple across southern Europe, used in salads and brothy soups and as a bitter digestive green.

Braised Belgian endive (witloof) with orange & thyme

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

Whole chicons (Belgian endive / witloof) braised gently until silky and caramelised, their gentle bitterness mellowed by orange and a little honey. A classic Franco-Belgian winter vegetable dish that shows the pale forced chicory at its best.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Chicory (<i>Cichorium intybus</i>), leaf — Belgian endive / witloof chicons (~4), halved
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (or butter)
60 g	Sweet Orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>) — Orange juice (citrus); plus a little zest
2 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme
15 g	Honey — To balance bitterness
60 g	Water — For braising
3 g	Fine sea salt & black pepper — To taste

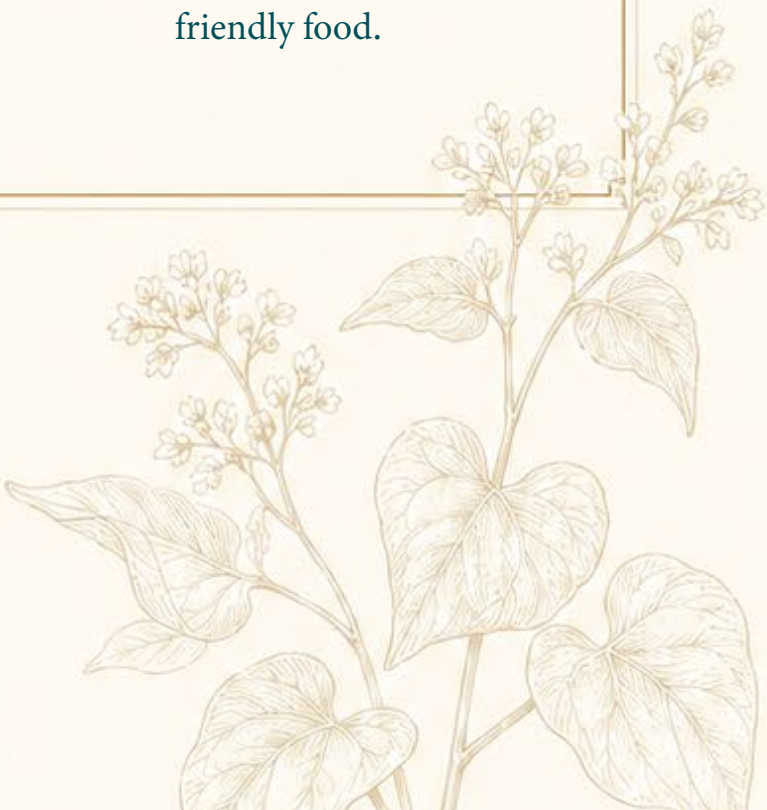
METHOD

1. Halve the chicons lengthways.
2. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan and lay the chicons cut-side down; cook 4-5 minutes until golden.
3. Turn, add the orange juice, honey, thyme and a pinch of salt, then pour in the water.
4. Cover and braise gently 20-25 minutes, turning once, until meltingly tender and the liquid is syrupy.
5. Uncover for the last few minutes to glaze. Finish with orange zest and black pepper; serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Chicory has been valued since antiquity: mentioned by the ancient Egyptians and praised by Greek and Roman writers (Pliny, Horace, Galen) as a bitter pot-herb and liver-friendly food.



Cicoria ripassata — Italian wilted chicory greens with garlic & chilli

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

A cornerstone of southern Italian home cooking: bitter chicory greens (*cicoria*) blanched, then “ripassata” — passed again through the pan with garlic, a little chilli and good olive oil, brightened with lemon. The classic way to turn a bitter wild green into a deeply savoury, nourishing side. Food-first cooking that keeps the green the star.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Chicory (<i>Cichorium intybus</i>), leaf — Chicory greens (<i>cicoria</i>), trimmed
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, to finish
1 g	Dried chilli flakes (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — To taste
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste, plus for blanching

METHOD

1. Trim and wash the chicory greens well. Blanch in plenty of boiling salted water 3-5 minutes until tender; drain and gently squeeze out excess water.
2. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan with the sliced garlic and chilli flakes until fragrant but not browned.
3. Add the drained greens and toss over medium heat 3-4 minutes to coat and finish cooking.
4. Season with salt, finish with a squeeze of lemon, and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

As a member of the bitter chicory–endive group it became a staple wild and garden green across the Mediterranean and Europe.



Horta — Greek boiled wild chicory greens with olive oil & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

Horta — boiled wild greens — is the heart of the Greek and wider Mediterranean table, and wild chicory (radíki) is among the most prized. Simply boiled until tender and dressed with good olive oil and a generous squeeze of lemon, it is one of the simplest, most nourishing ways to eat a bitter green. Food as medicine in the plainest sense.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Chicory (<i>Cichorium intybus</i>), leaf — Wild or cultivated chicory greens (radíki), trimmed
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil, to dress
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, generous
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste, plus for boiling

METHOD

1. Trim and wash the chicory greens very well.
2. Boil in plenty of salted water 8-12 minutes until tender (taste a stem); drain well.
3. Arrange warm or at room temperature on a plate.
4. Dress generously with extra-virgin olive oil, plenty of lemon juice and a little salt.
5. Serve with bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Let the kitchen smell of something
— a house should never be a stranger
to its stove.

Roasted chicory root “coffee” (caffeine-free)

Food / culinary • Makes 8 g

The famous caffeine-free hot drink made from the roasted, ground taproot of chicory — earthy, dark and faintly bitter-sweet. Drunk on its own or blended into coffee (as in New Orleans café au lait), it has been a coffee substitute and extender for over two centuries and is a nourishing way to enjoy chicory’s inulin-rich root.

INGREDIENTS

8 g Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), root — Chicory root, dried, roasted dark and ground

METHOD

1. Scrub and finely dice or slice the fresh chicory root; dry thoroughly.
2. Roast in a dry pan or low oven (about 150°C), stirring, until evenly dark brown and fragrant; do not burn. Cool.
3. Grind the roasted root finely.
4. Brew like coffee: 1-2 teaspoons (about 6-10 g) of ground roasted root per cup, steeped or simmered in just-boiled water for 3-4 minutes, then strained.
5. Drink black or with milk, or blend with ground coffee to taste.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Coffee was first noticed, the story goes, by a goatherd whose flock danced through the night after tasting the red berries.

Warming Cinnamon, Ginger & Cardamom Digestive Tea

Tea / infusion • Makes 100 g blend

A chai-inspired warming spice blend built around Ceylon cinnamon, with ginger, cardamom and a little fennel, for sluggish, bloated, cold-feeling digestion after rich or heavy meals.

INGREDIENTS

40 g	Cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>), bark — Ceylon cinnamon bark, broken
30 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), rhizome — Dried ginger, sliced or coarsely cut
20 g	Cardamom (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>), seed — Green cardamom pods, lightly crushed
10 g	Fennel (<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>), seed — Fennel seed, lightly crushed

METHOD

1. Combine the broken cinnamon, ginger, crushed cardamom and fennel and store in an airtight jar.
2. For each cup, simmer ~3 g (1 heaped tsp) of the blend in ~200 ml water for 5–10 minutes.
3. Strain; add milk or a little honey if liked.
4. Sip warm after meals, up to 3× daily.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fennel is one of the oldest cultivated herbs of the Mediterranean world.



Melancholy Thistle Young Stem — Foraged Spring Vegetable

Food / culinary • Makes 2 portions

*A traditional foraged preparation of young, peeled melancholy thistle stems eaten in the manner of asparagus. The practice is recorded in European ethnobotanical literature: the succulent young stems of *Cirsium heterophyllum*, before they toughen, were peeled and either boiled or eaten raw as a spring vegetable. This is documented traditional food use, not a health claim.*

INGREDIENTS

200 g *Cirsium heterophyllum* young stems — Young stems (20–30 cm), harvested spring before flowering, outer layer peeled away

METHOD

1. Harvest young stems in spring when 20–30 cm tall, before flowering begins. Confirm identification by the distinctively white-felted leaf undersides on the plant.
2. Peel away the outer fibrous skin of the stems using a vegetable peeler, revealing the tender inner portion.
3. Cut into lengths of 8–10 cm. Rinse in cold water.
4. Bring a pan of lightly salted water to the boil. Add stems and cook for 5–8 minutes until just tender. Drain well.
5. Serve immediately as a spring vegetable with butter, olive oil, or a light seasoning. The flavour is mild and slightly sweet, similar to young cardoon or artichoke stem.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The common name “melancholy thistle” derives from the doctrine of signatures and humoral medicine: the drooping, solitary flower heads were interpreted as signifying sadness (melancholia), and by that same logic the plant was employed as its cure.

Agua de sandía — Mexican watermelon agua fresca

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings (about 1.2 litres)

A traditional Mexican fresh-water drink (agua fresca) made by blending watermelon with water, a touch of lime and a little sweetener. Served over ice throughout Mexico and Central America, it is one of the most hydrating and refreshing summer drinks possible. Over 90% water by weight, with natural sugars, vitamin C and lycopene from the fruit.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Watermelon flesh (<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>) — About half a small watermelon, flesh only
400 g	Cold water
30 g	Fresh lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
20 g	Sugar or agave syrup (optional) — Reduce or omit for ripe, sweet watermelons
1 g	Pinch of salt

METHOD

1. Remove the rind from the watermelon. Cut the flesh into rough chunks, removing any seeds (seedless varieties are easier).
2. Place the watermelon chunks in a blender with the cold water, lime juice, optional sweetener, and a pinch of salt.
3. Blend on high speed for about 30 seconds until completely smooth.
4. Taste and adjust: add more lime juice for brightness or a little more sweetener if the watermelon is not very ripe.
5. For a perfectly smooth drink, strain through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing the pulp through with the back of a spoon. Skip straining if you prefer a fuller-bodied, pulpy drink.
6. Pour into a large jug, add plenty of ice, and serve immediately in tall glasses.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A shared meal lowers the guard
between strangers faster than almost
anything else we do.

Granita di anguria — Sicilian watermelon granita

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A centuries-old Sicilian summer dessert: watermelon juice sweetened lightly and frozen to a beautiful, grainy iced dessert. Traditionally flavoured with a little jasmine essence or orange-blossom water. Intensely flavoured, naturally dairy-free, gluten-free and vegan. The freezing concentrates the lycopene-rich flavour of ripe watermelon into a pure, refreshing dessert. Serve in chilled glasses on a hot afternoon.

INGREDIENTS

1200 g	Ripe watermelon flesh (<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>) — About 1.2 kg flesh yields approximately 1 litre juice
80 g	Caster sugar
30 g	Fresh lime or lemon juice
10 g	Orange-blossom water or jasmine water (optional) — Traditional Sicilian addition; use sparingly — 1–2 tsp

METHOD

1. Blend the watermelon flesh until completely smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve or muslin cloth, pressing to extract as much juice as possible. You should have about 1 litre of clear juice.
2. Whisk in the sugar until completely dissolved. Add lime or lemon juice and the optional orange-blossom water. Taste — the mixture should be sweet with a bright note; it will taste less sweet once frozen.
3. Pour into a shallow, flat metal tray or baking dish (about 30×20 cm). Freeze for 1 hour.
4. After 1 hour, use a fork to scrape and stir the icy edges into the centre, breaking up any large crystals. Return to the freezer.
5. Repeat the scraping every 30–45 minutes for the next 2–3 hours, until the granita has formed a completely uniform, fluffy, granular texture with no large ice blocks remaining.
6. Serve immediately scraped into chilled glasses. If the granita has frozen solid, allow to soften for 10 minutes at room temperature then scrape thoroughly with a fork to restore the texture.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every full pantry is a kind of hope,
a small wager that there will be a
tomorrow worth the feeding.

Bright Lemon Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g (approx. 6 servings)

The simplest, most versatile way to eat more lemon every day: a sharp, aromatic dressing made from fresh lemon juice, good olive oil and Dijon mustard. Dress green salads, roasted vegetables, grilled fish, legume salads, grain bowls or steamed asparagus. Serving suggestion: pour over a warm lentil salad with roasted red peppers and feta, or drizzle over grilled salmon with capers.

INGREDIENTS

45 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — About 2 medium lemons; approx 45 ml
75 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Best quality; approx 80 ml
5 g	Dijon mustard — 1 tsp; acts as emulsifier
5 g	Honey or maple syrup (optional) — 1 tsp; balances acidity
2 g	Sea salt and black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Combine the freshly squeezed lemon juice, Dijon mustard and honey (if using) in a small jar or bowl. Season with a pinch of sea salt and a grind of black pepper.
2. Add the olive oil. Seal the jar and shake vigorously for 30 seconds until emulsified, or whisk briskly in the bowl.
3. Taste and adjust: more lemon for sharpness, more oil for richness, a touch more honey if too sharp. Use immediately or refrigerate; re-shake before each use as the emulsion will separate on standing.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Ayurvedic tradition, lemon (nimbu) is classified as sour, light and stimulating to digestion. Medieval Arabic medicine used lemon to treat fevers, liver complaints and as a heart tonic.

Classic British Lemon Curd

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g (approx. 2 jars)

A velvety, tangy British preserve of lemon juice, zest, eggs, butter and sugar cooked gently to a thick, glossy curd. Brilliant on toast, scones or crumpets; used to fill Victoria sponge, lemon tart and meringue roulade. Serving suggestion: serve alongside plain scones with a little clotted cream, or spoon generously over Greek yoghurt for a quick pudding.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — About 3–4 medium lemons; unwaxed preferred
8 g	Lemon zest (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Zest of 2–3 unwaxed lemons; approx 1 tbsp
175 g	Caster sugar
100 g	Unsalted butter, cubed — Good-quality European-style butter gives richest flavour
120 g	Eggs (medium) — Free-range recommended; approx 3 x 40 g eggs beaten

METHOD

1. Set a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water (bain-marie), making sure the base of the bowl does not touch the water.
2. Add the lemon juice, finely grated zest, caster sugar and cubed butter to the bowl. Stir gently over the heat until the butter has melted completely and the sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and allow to cool for 2 minutes.
3. Lightly beat the eggs in a separate bowl, then strain them through a fine sieve into the warm lemon-butter mixture while whisking continuously.
4. Return the bowl to the bain-marie and cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or silicone spatula, for 8–12 minutes until the curd thickens to a custard consistency that coats the back of the spoon. Do not allow to boil.
5. Remove from heat. Pour immediately into warm sterilised jars, filling to within 5 mm of the rim. Place a disc of baking paper directly on the surface. Seal with lids while still hot.
6. Leave to cool at room temperature, then refrigerate. The curd will thicken further as it cools.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In European folk medicine, lemon juice was applied to corns, warts and freckles, and lemon peel was used as a digestive tonic and to repel insects. Traditional Romanian medicine used lemon oil dropped on sugar to relieve coughs.

Candied Orange Peel

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

A classic confection and zero-waste way to use the whole orange. The peel is simmered repeatedly in water to reduce bitterness, then slow-candied in sugar syrup until translucent and jewel-like. The flavedo is rich in hesperidin, d-limonene, and essential oils — candied peel captures these in a shelf-stable, flavourful treat. Eat as a confection, dip in dark chocolate, chop into cake batter, or add to mincemeat and panettone.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Sweet orange peel (from 3–4 unwaxed oranges) (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>)
400 g	White granulated sugar
200 g	Water

METHOD

1. Cut the orange peel into strips about 5–8 mm wide. Place in a saucepan, cover with cold water, bring to the boil, and drain. Repeat this blanching process 2 more times (3 times total) — each time starting with fresh cold water. This removes bitterness from the pith.
2. In a heavy-based saucepan, combine the sugar and 200 ml water. Heat over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves, then bring to a simmer.
3. Add the blanched peel to the syrup. Reduce heat to very low and simmer gently for 45–60 minutes until the peel is translucent and the syrup has thickened and mostly been absorbed. Stir occasionally and watch that it does not catch.
4. Using tongs or a fork, lift individual strips onto a wire rack set over baking paper. Space apart and allow to dry for several hours or overnight until the surface is dry to the touch.
5. Roll in caster sugar if desired for a crystallised finish, or dip in melted dark chocolate. Store in an airtight tin between layers of parchment paper.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The recipe ends where your own hands begin.

Butterfly Pea Blue Tea (Colour-Changing)

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

The deep-blue flowers of butterfly pea make a caffeine-free tea whose colour shifts to violet-pink the instant a squeeze of citrus is added, thanks to pH-sensitive anthocyanins.

INGREDIENTS

9 dried flowers	Butterfly pea (<i>Clitoria ternatea</i>) — Whole dried butterfly pea blossoms
250 ml	Water — Just off the boil, about 90 C
1 tsp	Honey — Optional, to sweeten
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Optional, turns the tea violet-pink

METHOD

1. Place the dried flowers in a cup or small teapot.
2. Pour over the hot water and steep 4-5 minutes until the liquid is a saturated indigo blue.
3. Strain out the flowers.
4. Sweeten with honey if desired, then add lemon juice at the moment of serving to shift the colour to violet-pink.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Yeast is alive, and a good sourdough starter can outlive the baker, handed down like an heirloom.



Fresh Coconut Milk

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

Home-made coconut milk from fresh grated kernel - the everyday cooking milk of South and Southeast Asian, Pacific and Caribbean kitchens, used in curries, rice, soups and sweets.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>), endosperm
500 g	Hot water

METHOD

1. Grate the flesh of a fresh mature coconut (or use unsweetened desiccated coconut).
2. Pour over the hot water and let it steep for 10-15 minutes.
3. Tip into a blender and blitz briefly, then strain through muslin, squeezing hard - this first press is the thick coconut cream/milk.
4. For a second, thinner milk, repeat the soak-and-press with fresh hot water on the same pulp. Refrigerate and use within a few days.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The smell of baking bread is said to make strangers kinder; some shops bake at the door for that very reason.

Classic Pour-Over Arabica Coffee

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

The roasted seeds of Coffea arabica give the world’s most-loved stimulant beverage. A simple hand pour-over highlights the clean, aromatic character of good arabica.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 15 g | Coffee (<i>Coffea arabica</i>) — Freshly ground arabica coffee, medium grind |
| 250 ml | Water — About 93 C, just off the boil |

METHOD

1. Rinse a paper filter in the dripper with a little hot water and discard the rinse water.
2. Add the ground coffee and level the bed.
3. Pour a small amount of hot water to wet the grounds and let them bloom for 30 seconds.
4. Pour the remaining water slowly in steady circles, keeping the bed submerged, over about 2.5-3 minutes.
5. Let it finish dripping, then serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Babies are born able to hear every sound of every language, and slowly keep only the ones of home.

Cooked Taro Leaf Greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 ml

Tender taro leaves simmered low and slow, in the style of Caribbean callaloo or Filipino laing, transforming an irritant raw leaf into a silky, mineral-rich cooked green.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Young taro leaves and stems, chopped (<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>)
400 ml	Coconut milk (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
1 whole	Onion, chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
2 clove	Garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, wash and chop the raw taro leaves and stems.
2. Sauté onion and garlic in a pot until soft.
3. Add the chopped taro leaves and stems along with the coconut milk.
4. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook uncovered for at least 30-45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until completely tender and no raw sharpness remains when tasting a cooled bit.
5. Season to taste and serve hot over rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

An ancient staple crop cultivated for thousands of years across the Pacific Islands (notably as poi in Hawaii, where taro/kalo holds deep cultural and genealogical significance), West Africa, and South/Southeast Asia.

Simple Steamed Taro Corms

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 g

A basic, thoroughly cooked preparation of taro corm that neutralizes the plant’s irritant calcium oxalate crystals and turns it into a soft, nutty staple, eaten across the tropics for millennia.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Taro corms, peeled (<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>)
1 L	Water — for boiling
1 tsp	Salt — optional

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, peel the raw taro corms under running water and cut into even chunks.
2. Place in a pot, cover with water, and add salt if using.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer uncovered for 30-45 minutes until completely fork-tender all the way through.
4. Drain and serve mashed, sliced, or as a side, checking that no raw or undercooked pieces remain.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Wash the greens as if the rain had asked you to finish its work.



Sautéed Common Inkcap (Strict Alcohol-Free Culinary Preparation)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A simple traditional European culinary preparation of *Coprinopsis atramentaria*, eaten as a food mushroom before the coprine–alcohol interaction was scientifically characterised. The mushroom has a mild, pleasant flavour when cooked fresh. THIS PREPARATION IS SUBJECT TO AN ABSOLUTE ALCOHOL CONTRAINDICATION — see Safety Cautions before proceeding.

INGREDIENTS

150 g fresh Common inkcap (*Coprinopsis atramentaria*) — fresh fruiting bodies, pileus — Young fruiting bodies with pure white gills only. Harvest same day.

METHOD

1. Confirm identification: gills must be pure white. Discard any mushroom with grey, pink, or black gills. If uncertain about identification, do not proceed.
2. Wipe caps clean with a damp cloth. Do not wash under running water (mushrooms absorb water and deteriorate faster). Slice caps and stipes into thick slices (8–10 mm).
3. Heat butter or a neutral oil in a wide pan over medium-high heat. Add mushroom slices in a single layer. Do not crowd the pan.
4. Sauté for 4–6 minutes, turning once, until golden brown. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Add fresh thyme or parsley if desired.
5. Serve immediately. Do not deglaze the pan with wine. Do not store leftovers. The entire preparation must be alcohol-free throughout.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

atramentaria itself grows on wood. The specific epithet *atramentarius* comes from the Latin *atramentum* (ink or a dark fluid), referencing the black ink produced by the deliquescing fruiting bodies.

Toasted Coriander & Cumin Dukkah

Food / culinary • Makes 150 g

An Egyptian-style dukkah built on toasted coriander seed — a fragrant nut-and-seed dip for bread and olive oil that doubles as a gentle after-meal carminative spice.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>), fruit — whole seed, dry-toasted
15 g	Cumin seed (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — whole, dry-toasted
60 g	Hazelnuts (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) — toasted, chopped
40 g	Sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — toasted
5 g	Sea salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Dry-toast the coriander and cumin seeds in a pan over medium heat until fragrant; cool.
2. Toast the hazelnuts and sesame seeds separately until golden; cool.
3. Coarsely grind the toasted spices, nuts and sesame together with the salt (a mortar or pulse-processor works well — keep it textured, not a paste).
4. Tip into a bowl and serve as a dip: dunk bread in olive oil, then in the dukkah.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Deep in the ear lie the three smallest bones of the body, handing the whole world's sound gently inward.

Dried Cornelian Cherries

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g (from 1 kg fresh)

Drying cornelian cherries is the oldest and simplest form of preservation, practised for centuries across the Caucasus, Anatolia and central Europe. Dried fruit can be eaten as a snack, stirred into rice dishes, added to savoury stews (their tartness lifts lamb and game), brewed as a simple fruit tea, or ground into sour powder for seasoning grilled meat — a Caucasian tradition. The dried fruit concentrates the iridoids and anthocyanins present in the fresh berry.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g Cornelian cherries (ripe) (*Cornus mas*) — Yield: approx. 200 g dried fruit (80% water loss)

METHOD

1. Select fully ripe, undamaged cornelian cherries. Wash under cold water and pat dry with a clean cloth.
2. If pitting: score or halve fruit and remove the stone. If drying whole (traditional): leave intact — inform eaters that the stone is present.
3. DEHYDRATOR METHOD: Arrange fruit in a single layer on dehydrator trays. Set temperature to 55–60 °C. Dry for 8–14 hours (halved fruit: 8–10 h; whole fruit: 12–14 h). Fruit is ready when pliable but not sticky — no moist pockets when pressed.
4. OVEN METHOD: Set oven to lowest setting (50–70 °C / fan). Arrange fruit on a wire rack over a baking tray. Leave oven door slightly ajar to allow moisture to escape. Dry for 10–16 hours, checking every 2 hours.
5. SUN-DRYING (traditional): Spread on clean wooden boards or trays in direct sun. Cover with fine mesh to exclude insects. Bring indoors each evening. Allow 3–5 sunny days depending on temperature and humidity.
6. Allow dried fruit to cool completely before packing. Condition: transfer to a sealed container for 5–7 days, shaking daily. If condensation appears on the inside, return to the dehydrator/oven. Store in a sealed jar in a cool dark place.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A meal made from the garden needs no apology and no announcement.

Homemade Hazelnut Milk

Food / culinary • Makes ~1250 ml

Hazelnuts, the sweet buttery seeds of *Corylus avellana*, blend into a naturally creamy, nutty plant milk that is lovely in coffee, porridge or on its own.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) — Raw shelled hazelnuts
500 ml	Water (for soaking) — Overnight soak, then discarded
750 ml	Water (for blending) — Fresh, filtered
1 whole	Pitted date (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>) — Optional, to sweeten
1 pinch	Salt

METHOD

1. Soak the hazelnuts in water overnight, then drain and rinse.
2. Blend the soaked nuts with the fresh water, date and a pinch of salt on high for about a minute until smooth.
3. Strain through a nut-milk bag or fine cloth into a jug, squeezing out the liquid.
4. Chill and shake before serving; save the leftover pulp for baking.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The hazelnut has held a prominent place in European mythology and folk tradition for millennia.

Cosmos sulphureus Edible Flower Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes 1 handful fresh petals

In Indonesia and Thailand, young shoots of Cosmos sulphureus are eaten as a vegetable (lalab), and the flowers are used in salads. In Western culinary tradition the petals make a striking edible garnish on salads, desserts, and summer drinks, contributing mild earthy floral notes. Only use organically grown flowers from pesticide-free gardens. This recipe describes the simple preparation of flowers as a fresh garnish.

INGREDIENTS

30 g *Cosmos sulphureus* fresh flower heads or petals
— Freshly picked, organically grown; orange or yellow cultivars; petals or whole small flower heads; rinsed gently.

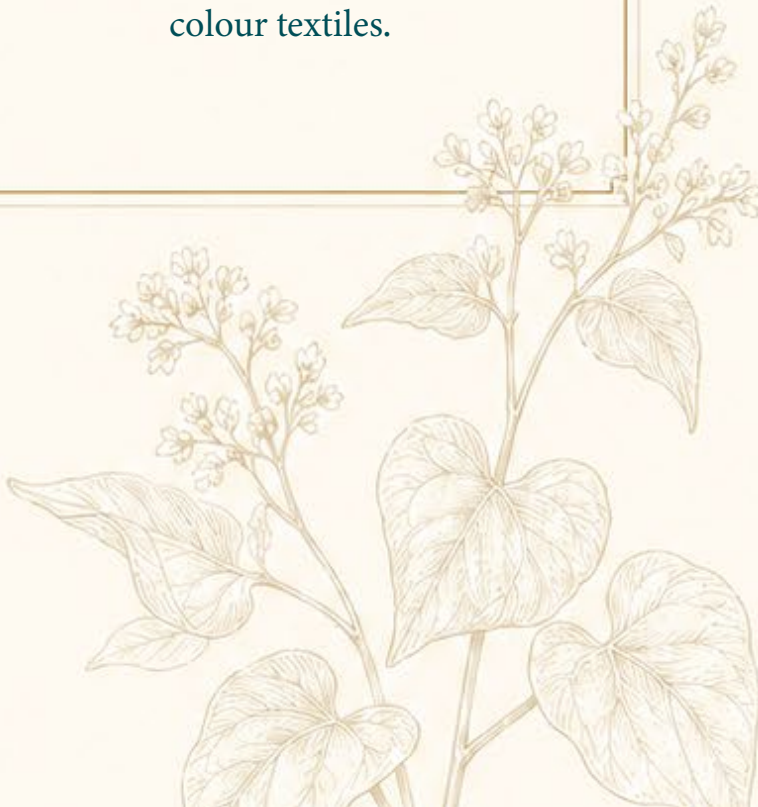
METHOD

1. Pick flowers early in the morning when they are freshly opened. Choose organically grown blooms that have not been sprayed with any chemicals. Select orange, golden, or yellow flower heads in good condition — undamaged petals with no browning.
2. Rinse gently in cool water and pat dry very lightly with a clean cloth or paper towel. Alternatively, leave to air-dry for a few minutes on a clean surface.
3. Use whole small flower heads or gently separate individual ray petals. Scatter over salads, cold soups, summer desserts, or cream-topped cakes immediately before serving. For floral ice cubes: place a single petal or small flower head in each ice cube compartment, half-fill with water, freeze, then top up with water and freeze again to suspend the flower in the centre.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cosmos sulphureus and closely related Cosmos / Bidens / Coreopsis species were important sources of yellow, orange, and gold dyes in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, used to colour textiles.



Saffron Golden Milk (Kesar Doodh)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 cups (400 ml)

A warming, nourishing drink from the Ayurvedic and Persian traditions. Saffron threads infused in warm milk with cardamom and a touch of honey: a naturally golden, calming beverage enjoyed before sleep or on cold mornings. The fat in the milk helps dissolve saffron’s colour and aroma compounds. Naturally caffeine-free.

INGREDIENTS

0.1 g	Saffron threads (<i>Crocus sativus</i>)
400 g	Whole milk (or oat milk for dairy-free) — full-fat for best flavour and crocin extraction
4 g	Cardamom pods, lightly crushed (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>) — about 4–5 pods
15 g	Raw honey or maple syrup — added off heat; adjust to taste
1 g	Ground turmeric (optional) (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — ¼ tsp for colour depth and additional anti-inflammatory benefit

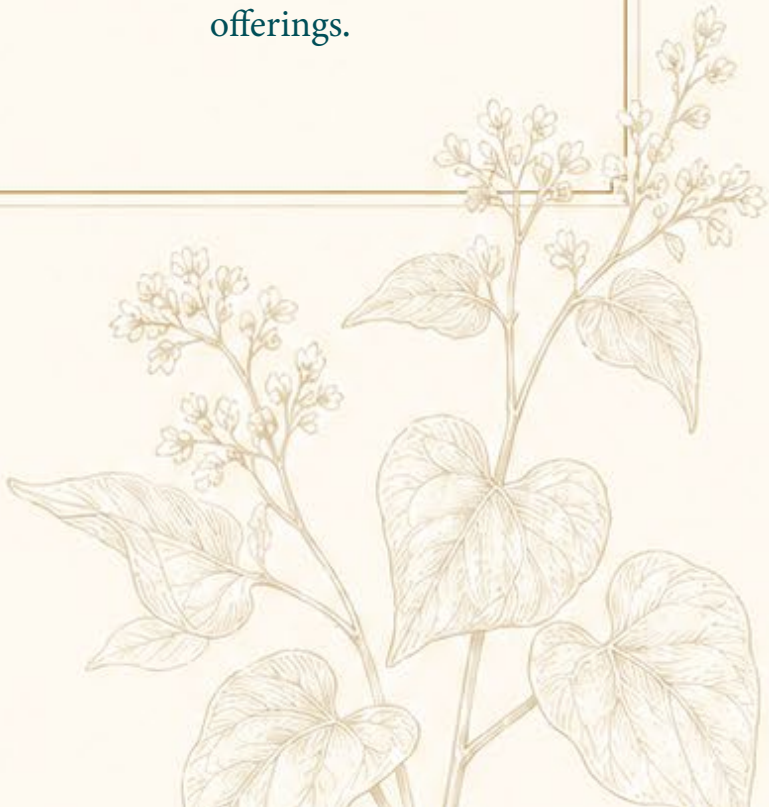
METHOD

1. Infuse: gently warm the milk in a small saucepan over low heat with the saffron threads and crushed cardamom pods. Do not boil. Heat to a bare simmer (about 70 °C) for 8–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the milk turns golden.
2. Optional turmeric: stir in ground turmeric if using.
3. Sweeten: remove from heat. Add honey and stir to dissolve.
4. Strain and serve: pour through a fine strainer into cups, removing the cardamom pods. Leave the saffron threads in if desired. Serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ancient Egyptians used it in cosmetics and textiles. Persian sources in the Achaemenid era describe saffron threads woven into royal robes and burned in temple offerings.



Swedish Saffron Buns (Lussekatter)

Food / culinary • Makes 20 buns

Lussekatter (St Lucia buns) are the iconic Scandinavian saffron-leavened bread rolls made each December for St Lucia Day (13 December). Their vivid golden colour and rich, slightly sweet crumb come entirely from saffron — no artificial colouring needed. Saffron has been a prestige ingredient in Scandinavian baking since the medieval spice trade, and these buns remain one of the most beloved uses of saffron in everyday cooking.

INGREDIENTS

0.5 g	Saffron threads (<i>Crocus sativus</i>) — ground with 1 tsp sugar in mortar
250 g	Whole milk, warm (40 °C)
500 g	Strong white bread flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)
75 g	Unsalted butter, softened
75 g	Caster sugar
7 g	Dried fast-action yeast
5 g	Salt
40 g	Raisins (for decoration) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — 2 raisins per bun, for the traditional eye
50 g	Egg, beaten (for glaze) — 1 medium egg

METHOD

1. Bloom saffron: grind saffron threads with 1 tsp sugar in a mortar to a fine golden powder. Dissolve in 2 tbsp of the warm milk. Leave 10 minutes.
2. Activate yeast: combine remaining warm milk, sugar and yeast in a large bowl. Rest 5 minutes until frothy.
3. Mix dough: add saffron milk, softened butter, salt and half the flour to the yeast mixture. Stir to combine, then gradually add remaining flour. Knead 8–10 minutes until smooth and elastic (or 5 minutes in a stand mixer with dough hook).
4. First rise: cover with a damp cloth or clingfilm. Leave in a warm place 60–90 minutes until doubled.
5. Shape: divide into 20 portions (~45 g each). Roll each into a 30 cm rope and curl both ends in opposite directions to form an S-shape. Press a raisin into the centre of each curl. Place on lined baking trays.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Saffron is the red thread of a purple crocus, and it takes a whole field of them to fill a single spoon.

6. Second rise: cover loosely; prove 30–40 minutes until puffed.
7. Bake: preheat oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan). Brush buns with beaten egg. Bake 8–10 minutes until deep golden. Cool on a wire rack.

Agua de Melón (Mexican Cantaloupe Water)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

A traditional Mexican *agua fresca* sold in every *mercado* in Mexico since pre-Hispanic times. Simply blended ripe cantaloupe with water and a little sweetener — nothing more needed when the melon is properly ripe. Highly hydrating, rich in provitamin A (beta-carotene) and vitamin C. Best made fresh on a hot day.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Cantaloupe (<i>Cucumis melo</i>) — Choose a fragrant, fully ripe cantaloupe
500 g	Cold water — 500 ml; adjust to preferred concentration
30 g	Lime juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — About 1 large lime
15 g	Sugar or honey (optional) — Omit if melon is very ripe and sweet
1 g	Fine sea salt — Optional pinch; enhances sweetness

METHOD

1. Cut the cantaloupe in half and scoop out the seeds and fibrous core. Remove the rind and cut the flesh into rough cubes.
2. Add the melon cubes, cold water, lime juice, and sugar (if using) to a blender. Blend on high for 60–90 seconds until completely smooth.
3. Taste and adjust sweetness or lime to your liking. Add a small pinch of sea salt to round out the flavour if desired.
4. For a clearer drink, strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a large pitcher, pressing the pulp gently. For a thicker, more nutritious result, skip straining.
5. Serve immediately over crushed ice, or refrigerate in a covered pitcher for up to 3 days. Stir or shake well before each serving as the pulp settles.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Melon has been cultivated for at least 4,000 years. Archaeological evidence places its early cultivation in ancient Egypt (seeds found in tombs from c. 2000 BCE) and in South and Central Asia.

Cantaloupe & Lime Sorbet

Food / culinary • Makes 750 ml

A bright, intensely flavoured sorbet made from nothing but ripe cantaloupe, lime and a little sugar — a showcase for the fruit’s natural beta-carotene richness and vivid colour. Dairy-free, gluten-free, and bursting with provitamin A and vitamin C. Serve as a palate cleanser, light dessert or a healthy frozen treat for children.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Cantaloupe (<i>Cucumis melo</i>) flesh — The riper and more fragrant the melon, the better the sorbet
45 g	Lime juice, freshly squeezed (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — About 1.5 limes; brightens and balances the sweetness
100 g	Caster (fine) sugar — Adjust to taste depending on melon sweetness; dissolve first in a small amount of water if needed
1 g	Fine sea salt — A small pinch sharpens the flavour
5 g	Fresh mint leaves (optional garnish) (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — For serving only

METHOD

1. Add the melon cubes, lime juice, sugar and salt to a blender. Blend until completely smooth, about 60 seconds. Taste and adjust sweetness or lime — the mixture should taste noticeably sweeter and more intensely flavoured than you want the final sorbet, as freezing dulls perception of sweetness.
2. Pour the mixture through a fine sieve into a large jug to remove any fibrous pulp. Press lightly; do not force through lumpy fibres.
3. ICE CREAM MACHINE METHOD: Chill the mixture in the refrigerator for 30–60 minutes. Churn in an ice cream machine according to the manufacturer’s instructions until thick and creamy (15–25 minutes). Transfer to a freezer-safe container, press parchment on the surface and freeze for at least 1 hour before serving.
4. NO-CHURN METHOD: Pour the blended mixture into a shallow, wide freezer-safe container. Freeze for 2 hours, then scrape and stir vigorously with a fork to break up ice crystals. Return to freezer. Repeat every 30–45 minutes for 3–4 cycles until the texture is light and granular (similar to a granita). Alternatively, blend the partially frozen mixture in a food processor for a smoother result.
5. Remove from the freezer 5–10 minutes before serving to soften slightly. Scoop into chilled bowls, garnish with fresh mint if desired.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans prized melon as a luxury food. Pliny the Elder described several varieties in *Naturalis Historia* (77 CE).

Prosciutto e Melone (Melon with Cured Ham)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic Italian summer antipasto requiring no cooking whatsoever. The sweetness of ripe cantaloupe balances the savoury, salty umami of paper-thin prosciutto crudo in a combination documented in Italian gastronomy since at least the Renaissance. Rich in provitamin A from the melon and protein from the ham. Ready in minutes.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Cantaloupe (<i>Cucumis melo</i>) — Must be fully ripe and fragrant; tasteless melon ruins the dish
120 g	Prosciutto crudo (Italian cured ham), thinly sliced — San Daniele or Parma; ask for it sliced to order
5 g	Fresh basil leaves (optional) (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) — Torn; adds fragrance
10 g	Extra virgin olive oil (optional drizzle) (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — A delicate drizzle rounds out the dish
1 g	Freshly cracked black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — To taste

METHOD

1. Chill your serving platter in the refrigerator for 10 minutes.
2. Halve the cantaloupe, scoop out the seeds, and slice into crescents about 2 cm thick. Peel each crescent or leave the rind on as a handle. Alternatively, use a melon baller for a more elegant presentation.
3. Lay the melon slices on the chilled platter. Drape a slice of prosciutto loosely over each melon wedge, ruffling it gently so it sits in soft folds rather than flat.
4. Scatter torn basil leaves, add a gentle drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and a few turns of freshly cracked black pepper. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Gratitude, written down at night, is one of the few small habits proven to make a life feel fuller.

Tzatziki — Greek cucumber & yoghurt dip

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A cooling Greek meze of grated cucumber folded through thick strained yoghurt with garlic, olive oil and mint or dill. The cucumber must be salted and squeezed first so the dip stays thick. A fresh, hydrating, food-first way to enjoy cucumber alongside grilled food, bread or vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>), fruit
2 count	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
8 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Or dill, to taste
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To taste
400 g	Thick strained (Greek) yoghurt
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Coarsely grate the cucumber, toss with a little salt, and leave to drain 10-15 minutes in a colander.
2. Squeeze the grated cucumber firmly to remove as much liquid as possible.
3. In a bowl, combine the strained yoghurt, crushed garlic, olive oil and lemon juice.
4. Fold in the drained cucumber and chopped mint or dill; season with salt to taste.
5. Chill at least 30 minutes before serving.
6. Serve as a dip or sauce with grilled vegetables, meat, fish or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Winter eats what summer wrote down.

Tzatziki — Greek cucumber, yoghurt & spearmint dip

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

A cooling Greek meze of strained yoghurt, grated cucumber, garlic and fresh spearmint with a little olive oil. Spearmint lifts the whole dish with its sweet, clean aroma — a food-first way to enjoy the herb.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Cucumber (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>) — Cucumber, coarsely grated and squeezed
6 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh spearmint, finely chopped
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed (~2 cloves)
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
280 g	Strained (Greek) yoghurt — Full-fat
8 g	Red wine vinegar or lemon juice — To taste
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Coarsely grate the cucumber, salt lightly and leave 10 minutes to draw out water.
2. Squeeze the cucumber hard to remove excess liquid.
3. Stir the drained cucumber into the strained yoghurt with the crushed garlic, chopped spearmint, olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice.
4. Season with salt to taste.
5. Chill 30 minutes so the flavours meld.
6. Serve as a dip with bread or vegetables, or alongside grilled food.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A candle’s flame stands the same gold
whichever way you turn the world;
some kinds of light take no side.

Kabocha no nimono — Japanese simmered squash (かぼちゃの煮物)

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

A classic Japanese home dish: chunks of kabocha (a *Cucurbita maxima* type) gently simmered in a sweet-savoury dashi, soy and mirin broth until meltingly tender, eaten warm or at room temperature. The squash skin is left on and becomes soft and edible.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Winter squash (<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>), fruit — Kabocha squash, skin on, cut in 4–5 cm chunks
300 g	Dashi stock
30 g	Soy sauce — Soy sauce (or tamari)
30 g	Mirin
12 g	Sugar
15 g	Sake — Sake (optional)

METHOD

1. Trim the hard ridges of the kabocha if needed and cut into even 4–5 cm chunks, leaving the skin on. Lightly bevel the cut edges if you want them to keep their shape.
2. Arrange the squash skin-side down in a single layer in a wide pan. Add the dashi, soy sauce, mirin, sugar and sake.
3. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover with a drop-lid or round of baking paper, and cook 15–20 minutes until a skewer slides through easily and most of the liquid has reduced.
4. Turn off the heat and let the squash rest in the liquid 10 minutes to absorb flavour. Serve warm or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pumpkins were carved and lit long ago to guide the wandering safely home on the dark nights of autumn.

Roasted winter squash with sage, garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

Wedges of sweet hubbard or kabocha squash roasted until caramelised and tender, with crisp sage, garlic and good olive oil — a simple autumn side that concentrates the squash’s natural sweetness and makes its provitamin-A carotenoids more available by roasting with a little fat.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Winter squash (<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>), fruit — Winter squash (hubbard/kabocha), deseeded, cut in wedges
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic cloves, lightly crushed (~4)
4 g	Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>) — Fresh sage leaves
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C (fan 180 °C). Scrub the squash; halve, scoop out seeds (save them to roast separately), and cut into 2–3 cm wedges — leave the skin on hubbard/kabocha as it softens and is edible.
2. Toss the wedges with the olive oil, crushed garlic, salt and pepper on a large baking tray in a single layer.
3. Roast 25–35 minutes, turning once, until deeply golden and tender. Scatter the sage leaves over for the last 5 minutes so they crisp.
4. Serve warm, spooning over any garlicky oil from the tray.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sage was thought to grow best in the garden of the wise, and to wither where the household quarrelled.

Traditional ground squash-seed food preparation

Food / culinary • Makes 60 g

Across many cultures the seeds of pumpkins and winter squash have a long folk reputation, taken simply as ground raw seed in food or with honey. Presented here as a traditional whole-food preparation; the related pumpkin-seed (*Cucurbita pepo*) is the subject of an EMA traditional-use monograph for urinary comfort. No medical claims are made.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|------|---|
| 45 g | Winter squash (<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>), seed — Raw shelled winter-squash seeds, freshly ground |
| 15 g | Honey — Runny honey (optional, to bind) |

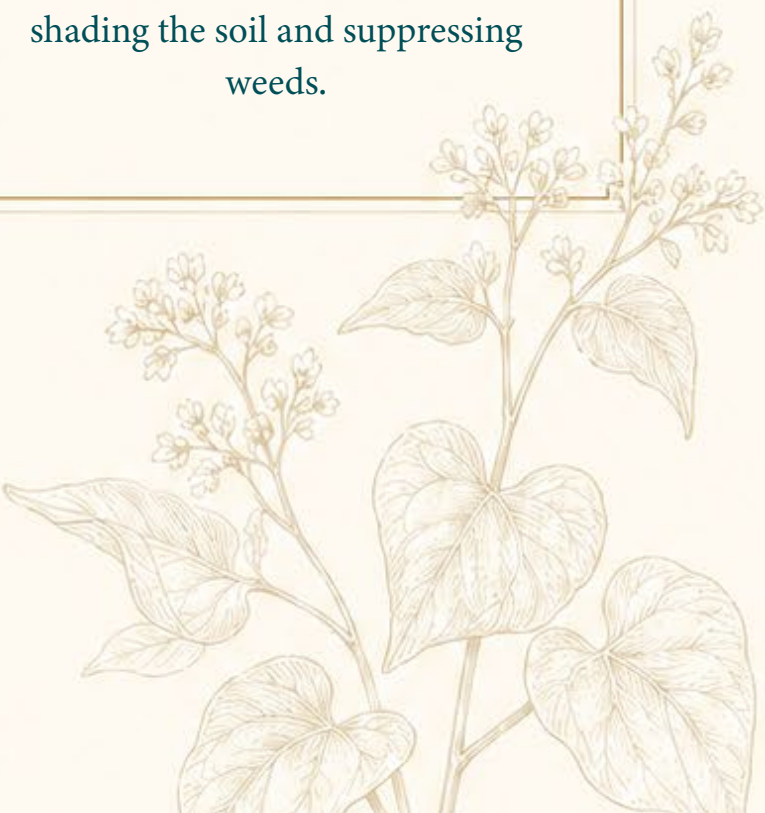
METHOD

1. Shell enough seeds to give about 45 g of kernels (or use ready-shelled raw seeds).
2. Grind them fresh to a coarse paste in a mortar or small grinder.
3. Eat by the spoonful as they are, or stir into a little honey, yoghurt or porridge. Enjoy as a nourishing food.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Squashes and pumpkins, together with maize and beans, formed part of the classic ‘Three Sisters’ companion-growing tradition of the Americas, the broad squash leaves shading the soil and suppressing weeds.



Winter squash & chickpea coconut curry

Food / culinary • Makes 1600 g

A hearty, naturally sweet curry of winter squash and chickpeas in a fragrant coconut-and-spice sauce — a nourishing plant-based main built around a whole-food vegetable, with turmeric, cumin, coriander, ginger and a little chilli.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Winter squash (<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>), fruit — Winter squash flesh, peeled and cubed
400 g	Cooked chickpeas (<i>Cicer arietinum</i>) — Cooked/ canned chickpeas, drained
400 g	Coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>) — Coconut milk
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, chopped (~3 cloves)
15 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, grated
3 g	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — Ground turmeric
4 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Ground cumin
4 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Ground coriander
2 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Chilli, to taste
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Oil for frying
5 g	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Soften the onion in the oil over medium heat for 6–8 minutes. Add garlic, ginger and chilli; cook 1 minute, then stir in the turmeric, cumin and coriander and cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
2. Add the squash and stir to coat in the spices. Pour in the coconut milk and a splash of water, bring to a simmer, cover and cook 15 minutes.
3. Stir in the chickpeas and continue to simmer uncovered 8–10 minutes more, until the squash is tender and the sauce has thickened. Season with salt.
4. Serve hot over rice or with flatbread, scattered with fresh coriander.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Turmeric has been central to South Asian life for thousands of years — as the golden cooking spice and dye, as a sacred and auspicious substance, and as a household skin and beauty preparation.

Calabaza & coconut curry

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A warming, fragrant curry of tender *Cucurbita moschata* simmered in coconut milk with turmeric, cumin, coriander, ginger, garlic and chilli — the way calabaza and kabocha-type squash are loved across the Caribbean and South and Southeast Asia. The squash drinks up the spices while keeping its sweet, silky flesh. A nourishing one-pot built food-first around a wholesome vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Butternut squash (<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>), fruit
400 g	Coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>) — Full-fat coconut milk
120 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
15 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
4 g	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
4 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
4 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Ground coriander seed
3 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Fresh or dried chilli, to taste
10 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander leaf, to finish
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice of lemon, to finish
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Peel and cube the squash.
2. Fry the onion, garlic and ginger in the oil until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the turmeric, cumin, ground coriander and chilli; cook 1 minute until fragrant.
4. Add the squash and coconut milk; bring to a gentle simmer.
5. Cook uncovered 20-25 minutes until the squash is tender but still holds its shape.
6. Stir in the fresh coriander and lemon juice; season with salt. Serve hot with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The first thing many of us do on waking, and the last before sleep, is reach for someone; we are built to be held.

Roasted butternut squash with sage & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The simplest, truest way to enjoy *Cucurbita moschata*: chunks of butternut roasted until the edges caramelize and the centre turns meltingly sweet, tossed with olive oil and crisp sage. A few ingredients, all food, letting the squash itself shine as a side or a base for grain bowls and salads.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Butternut squash (<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>), fruit
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
5 g	Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>), leaf — Fresh sage leaves
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Peel and cut the squash into 2-3 cm chunks.
3. Toss with olive oil, salt and torn sage leaves.
4. Spread in a single layer on a roasting tray.
5. Roast 25-35 minutes, turning once, until golden and tender.
6. Serve warm as a side, or over grains or leaves with a squeeze of lemon.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

“(Cur moriatur homo cui salvia crescit in horto?) was widely repeated in medieval and Renaissance herbals. The Romans gathered it with ceremony, and it was a staple of monastery physic gardens.

Simple butternut squash purée (gentle first food)

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

Steamed and blended butternut squash makes one of the gentlest, sweetest first vegetables for weaning babies — naturally soft, mild and rich in provitamin-A. Equally good as a smooth side or a base to stir into porridge, soups and mash for all ages. Pure food, nothing added.

INGREDIENTS

500 g Butternut squash (*Cucurbita moschata*), fruit —
Trimmed weight

METHOD

- 1. Peel, deseed and cube the squash.
- 2. Steam (preferred, to keep nutrients) or simmer in a little water for 12-18 minutes until very soft.
- 3. Blend or mash to a smooth purée, loosening with a little of the cooking water, milk or stock as needed.
- 4. For babies, cool to lukewarm and serve plain and smooth.
- 5. Serve warm, or refrigerate/freeze in single portions.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sharpen the knife, soften the heart,
and begin.



Roasted winter squash with thyme, garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

The simplest, most useful way with any winter squash or pumpkin: cut into wedges, tossed with olive oil, garlic and thyme, and roasted until caramelised and tender. A side dish, a salad component, or the base for soups and grain bowls.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Courgette (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>) — Winter squash / pumpkin, deseeded and cut into wedges (skin on for firm-skinned types)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil (~2 tbsp)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, ~4 cloves, lightly crushed
4 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme sprigs
4 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Cut the squash into wedges, leaving the skin on for firm-skinned types.
3. Toss with olive oil, crushed garlic, thyme sprigs, salt and pepper.
4. Spread in a single layer on a roasting tray.
5. Roast 30-40 minutes, turning once, until caramelised and tender.
6. Serve warm as a side, or fold into salads, grain bowls or soup.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Thyme was tucked into the armour of knights, a small green promise of courage worn over the heart.



Styrian pumpkin-seed oil dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g

A simple dressing built on dark-green, nutty cold-pressed pumpkin-seed oil — a speciality of Styria in Central Europe. Wonderful over leaf salads, ripe tomatoes, roasted squash or even a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Courgette (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>) — Cold-pressed pumpkin-seed oil (~4 tbsp)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~1 tbsp) or cider vinegar
10 g	Honey — Honey or maple syrup (~½ tbsp)
5 g	Dijon mustard — Dijon mustard (~1 tsp)
2 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & pepper, to taste

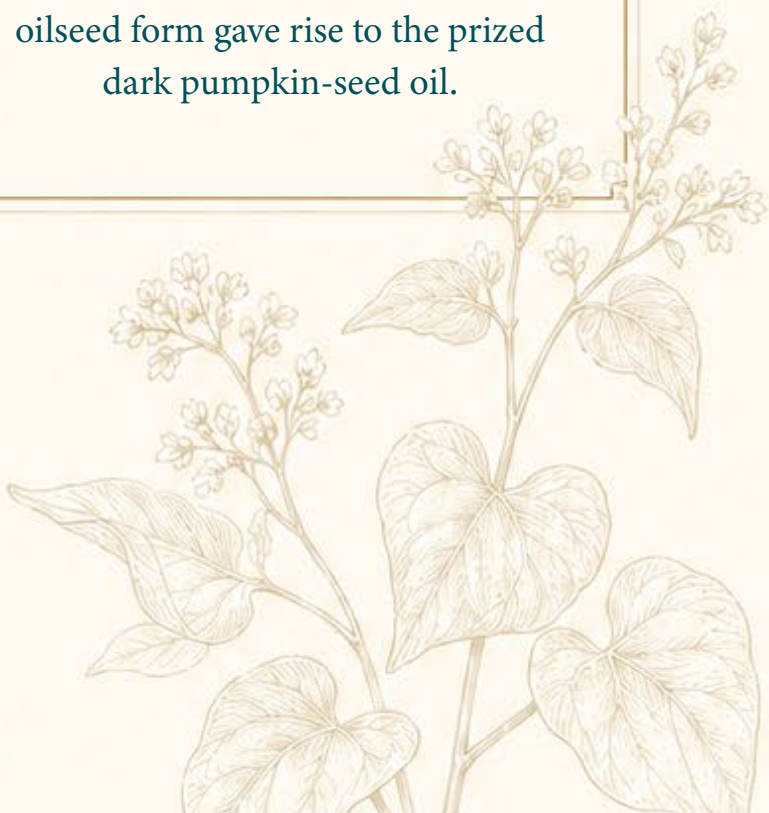
METHOD

1. Put the pumpkin-seed oil, lemon juice, honey, mustard, salt and pepper in a bowl or jar.
2. Whisk (or shake, if in a jar) until emulsified.
3. Taste and adjust the balance of acidity, sweetness and salt.
4. Drizzle over salads, roasted vegetables or soups just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried to Europe in the 16th century, squash and marrows became established kitchen-garden crops, and in Styria (Austria) and neighbouring regions a hull-less oilseed form gave rise to the prized dark pumpkin-seed oil.



Toasted Cumin & Yoghurt Dressing (Raita)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Raita — the cooling yoghurt condiment of the Indian subcontinent — uses toasted cumin as its defining spice. Dry-toasting the seeds and grinding them fresh releases a dramatically different aroma to pre-ground cumin: deeper, smokier, nuttier. Paired with the sourness of yoghurt, it creates a cooling counterpoint to spiced dishes. This raita also makes an excellent dressing for grain bowls, roasted vegetables, and grilled bread.

INGREDIENTS

5 g	Cumin seeds, dry-toasted then ground (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
400 g	Plain full-fat yoghurt
150 g	Cucumber, grated and squeezed (<i>Cucumis sativus</i>)
5 g	Fresh mint leaves, finely chopped (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
15 ml	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
4 g	Salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Dry-toast the cumin seeds (5 g / 1 tsp) in a small skillet over medium heat for 60–90 seconds, stirring constantly, until they darken a shade and smell deeply fragrant. Tip onto a plate and allow to cool completely.
2. Grind the toasted cumin seeds to a coarse powder in a spice grinder or with a pestle and mortar.
3. Whisk together the yoghurt (400 g), grated cucumber (150 g, squeezed of excess water), most of the ground cumin (reserve a pinch for garnish), mint leaves (5 g, finely chopped), salt and lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning.
4. Transfer to a serving bowl, dust the reserved cumin powder over the top and drizzle with a few drops of olive oil. Serve chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The Greek physician Dioscorides (De Materia Medica, c.60 CE) described cumin as warming and astringent and recommended it for flatulence and digestive complaints.

Gavar ki Sabzi (Cluster Bean Stir-Fry)

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 g

The young green pods of the guar plant are a staple vegetable across western India, cooked down with warming spices until their faint bitterness mellows into something nutty and savory.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	young guar (cluster) bean pods, trimmed and cut in 1 cm pieces (<i>Cyamopsis tetragonoloba</i>) — choose tender, snappable pods
2 tbsp	vegetable oil
1 tsp	cumin seeds (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
0.5 tsp	turmeric powder (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
1 pinch	asafoetida (hing) (<i>Ferula assa-foetida</i>) — aids digestion of the beans
0.75 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Rinse and trim the guar pods, snapping off the tips and pulling away any strings, then chop into short pieces.
2. Heat the oil in a pan and crackle the cumin seeds, then add the asafoetida.
3. Add the chopped pods, turmeric and salt, and toss to coat.
4. Add a splash of water, cover, and steam-cook on low heat 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the pods are tender and no longer bitter.
5. Uncover, raise the heat briefly to dry off any liquid, and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Guar has been cultivated in the Indian subcontinent for at least two millennia, primarily as a subsistence crop and fodder legume.



Membrillo — Spanish quince paste

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

Membrillo is the Iberian Peninsula’s defining preserve: slow-cooked quince purée with sugar until it sets into a firm, sliceable, rose-pink block. It has been made in Spain and Portugal since at least the 15th century — indeed, the word “marmalade” descends from the Portuguese marmelo (quince). This recipe produces a classic dulce de membrillo that keeps for months, needing nothing but quince and sugar.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Quince (<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>) — Ripe quinces, washed, peeled, cored and diced. Reserve peel and cores in a muslin bag to add during cooking for extra pectin, then discard bag before blending.
700 g	White caster sugar — Approximately 70% of the cooked drained quince weight; adjust to taste
30 g	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Prevents browning and brightens flavour

METHOD

1. Wash, peel and core the quinces, reserving the peel and cores in a muslin or cheesecloth bag. Dice the peeled flesh into 2 cm chunks. Discard seeds.
2. Place quince pieces and the muslin bag of peel/cores in a large heavy-based saucepan. Add just enough water to barely cover (about 300–400 ml). Bring to a boil, then simmer gently, covered, for 25–35 minutes until the flesh is completely soft and turning pink.
3. Remove the muslin bag and squeeze it gently to extract any pectin-rich liquid back into the pan. Discard the bag. Blend the cooked quince to a very smooth purée using a stick blender or food processor.
4. Weigh the purée and return to the pan with approximately 70% of its weight in sugar (e.g. 700 g sugar per 1 kg purée). Add the lemon juice. Stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves.
5. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 45–75 minutes. The paste is ready when it has turned deep rose-amber, is very thick, and pulls cleanly away from the sides of the pan. Take care — the paste can spit vigorously. Temperature should reach approximately 105 °C (220 °F) on a sugar thermometer.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Iceland grows a little wider each year, as the earth beneath it slowly, patiently pulls apart.

6. Pour into shallow lightly oiled tins or a baking dish lined with baking parchment. Smooth the top. Leave to cool at room temperature for at least 8 hours or overnight until firm and set. Cut into slabs, wrap in wax paper, and refrigerate.

Quince & apple crumble with oat topping

Food / culinary • Makes 6 portions

Pairing quince with apple in a crumble is an autumn classic: the quince’s intense floral perfume and natural pectin enrich and thicken the apple filling, while the oat crumble provides a satisfying crunch. This is everyday nourishing autumn food at its best — whole fruit, whole grains, minimal processing. The quince should be pre-cooked briefly before assembly as it takes longer to soften than apple.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Quince (<i>Cydonia oblonga</i>) — Ripe quinces, peeled, cored and diced into 2 cm cubes. Pre-cook gently in a splash of water with 2 tbsp sugar for 10–12 min until beginning to soften (they require more cooking time than apple).
400 g	Cooking apple (Bramley or similar) (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Peeled, cored, diced. Bramleys collapse into a soft, tart purée that contrasts beautifully with the firmer quince.
80 g	Caster or brown sugar (for filling) — Adjust to taste and quince sweetness
3 g	Ground cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — 1 tsp, for the fruit filling
100 g	Rolled oats (topping) (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
80 g	Plain flour (topping) (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)
90 g	Cold unsalted butter (topping) — Cut into small cubes and rubbed into oat-flour mixture until crumbly
60 g	Demerara or raw sugar (topping) — Sprinkle over topping before baking for extra crunch
2 g	Ground ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Optional; complements quince well

METHOD

1. Pre-cook the quince: place diced quince in a saucepan with 2 tbsp sugar and a splash of water. Cover and cook gently for 10–12 minutes until beginning to soften (quince takes longer than apple). Set aside.
2. Preheat oven to 180 °C (fan 160 °C / 350 °F). Combine the pre-cooked quince with the diced raw apple, sugar, and cinnamon (and ginger if using) in a 23–25 cm baking dish. Spread evenly.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Persian (Iranian) traditional medicine (Tibb), quince seed mucilage (behi daneh) has been used for centuries to soothe sore throats, dry coughs, and gastric irritation.

3. Make the topping: rub cold butter into the oats and flour until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Stir in the demerara sugar.
4. Spread the crumble topping evenly over the fruit. Bake for 35–45 minutes until the topping is golden-brown and the fruit juices are bubbling at the edges. Rest 5 minutes before serving.

Cardi alla parmigiana — baked cardoon gratin with Parmesan

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic Italian winter dish: blanched cardoon ribs are simmered until tender, then layered with butter and grated Parmesan and baked until golden and bubbling. Slow cooking turns the gently bitter, celery-meets-artichoke stalks meltingly tender — the food-first heart of this Mediterranean vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Cardoon (<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>)
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
80 g	Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated
50 g	Unsalted butter
5 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Strip the strings from the cardoon ribs, cut into 6–8 cm lengths and drop at once into a bowl of water with the lemon juice to stop browning.
2. Simmer the cardoon in plenty of salted water (a splash of lemon keeps it pale) for 30–45 minutes until tender to the point of a knife; drain well and pat dry.
3. Butter a gratin dish. Layer the cardoon, dotting with butter and scattering grated Parmesan and a little salt between the layers, finishing with a generous cheese topping.
4. Bake at 200 °C for about 20–25 minutes until golden and bubbling. Rest a few minutes and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The cardoon is the wild ancestral species (*Cynara cardunculus*) from which Mediterranean farmers selected two crops in antiquity: the leaf-stalk cardoon and the flower-bud artichoke.

Cardoon in bagna càuda — Piedmontese warm anchovy-garlic dip

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The great Piedmontese winter ritual: raw and blanched vegetables dipped into a warm, mellow bath of garlic, anchovy and olive oil. Cardoon is the classic, almost obligatory vegetable for bagna càuda — its gentle bitterness is tamed by the rich, savoury dip. A convivial, food-first way to eat the season’s cardoons.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Cardoon (<i>Cynara cardunculus</i>)
60 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
200 ml	Whole milk
200 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
60 g	Salted anchovy fillets
30 g	Unsalted butter (optional)

METHOD

1. String the cardoon ribs, cut into batons and soak in water with the lemon juice; blanch in salted water 20–30 minutes until just tender, then drain (or leave the tenderest inner ribs raw, Piedmontese-style).
2. Simmer the finely sliced garlic in the milk over very low heat until completely soft and sweet, 15–20 minutes — never letting it fry; mash the garlic into the little milk that remains.
3. Add the olive oil (and optional butter) and the anchovies, and stir over the lowest heat until the anchovies dissolve and everything becomes a smooth, pale, savoury cream.
4. Transfer to a warmed pot over a tabletop burner and dip the cardoon and other vegetables into the warm bagna càuda.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Leftovers are tomorrow’s freedom.

Carciofi alla romana — Roman braised artichokes with mint & garlic

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A classic Roman springtime dish: whole trimmed artichokes braised gently in olive oil, white wine and water with garlic, parsley and the characteristic Roman wild mint (mentuccia, here spearmint). Slow braising turns the artichoke meltingly tender and sweet — the food-first heart of the vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

4 count	Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), plant — Large globe artichokes, trimmed to the heart with 3–4 cm of stem
80 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~6 tbsp), for braising
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely chopped (~3 cloves)
6 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint leaves, chopped (Roman mentuccia; spearmint works)
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, chopped
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~half a lemon), to acidulate trimming water and finish
120 g	Dry white wine
5 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste

METHOD

- Trim the artichokes to the heart, removing tough outer leaves and the choke if present; rub with lemon juice and place in acidulated water.
- Mix the chopped garlic, mint and parsley with a little salt; press some into the centre and between the leaves of each artichoke.
- Stand the artichokes upright and tightly packed in a pot; pour over the olive oil, wine and enough water to come partway up the sides.
- Add lemon juice and salt, cover, and braise gently over low heat 30-40 minutes until a knife slides easily into the base.
- Let cool slightly in the liquid. Serve warm or at room temperature, drizzled with the braising oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Spanish and French settlers brought it to the Americas, and it became emblematic of coastal California. Folk tradition long valued the bitter leaf as a digestive and “liver” tonic, a use that underlies its modern study.

Marinated artichoke hearts in olive oil with garlic & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 1 jar (about 400 g)

A home preserve of tender artichoke hearts cooked in acidulated water, then steeped in olive oil with garlic, lemon and herbs — the antipasto-jar staple, far fresher than shop-bought. A simple way to keep the season’s artichokes for salads, pasta and bruschetta.

INGREDIENTS

8 count	Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), plant — Small/young artichokes, trimmed to hearts
120 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~2 lemons) for the cooking/acidifying liquid
250 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil, to cover
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, thinly sliced (~2 cloves)
1 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme sprigs (or a bay leaf)
120 g	White wine vinegar — White wine vinegar (with the lemon, for the cooking liquid)
5 g	Sea salt

METHOD

1. Trim the artichokes down to the tender hearts, rubbing cut surfaces with lemon to prevent browning.
2. Combine the lemon juice and white wine vinegar with water in a pan to make an acidulated cooking liquid, and add salt.
3. Simmer the artichoke hearts in this liquid 10-15 minutes until just tender; drain well and cool.
4. Pack the hearts into a sterilised jar with the sliced garlic and thyme.
5. Cover completely with olive oil, pressing out any air pockets.
6. Seal and refrigerate at least a day before using, keeping the hearts submerged under oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In medieval Europe thyme was a symbol of courage: ladies embroidered a sprig of thyme with a bee onto scarves for their knights, and it was tucked under pillows to ward off nightmares and ease melancholy.

Steamed whole artichokes with lemon-garlic dipping sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The simplest, most honest way to enjoy a globe artichoke: steamed whole until tender, then eaten leaf by leaf, each fleshy base dragged through a bright lemon-garlic-olive-oil sauce, ending with the prized heart. Pure food-first pleasure and a gentle, fibre-rich, prebiotic dish.

INGREDIENTS

2 count	Globe artichoke (<i>Cynara scolymus</i>), plant — Large globe artichokes, stems trimmed, tops cut and spiny tips snipped
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice (~half a lemon)
45 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~3 tbsp) for the dip
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, finely grated or crushed (~2 cloves)
6 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
3 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Trim the artichoke stems and snip off the spiny leaf tips.
2. Steam the artichokes upright in a covered pot over simmering water for 30–45 minutes, until a leaf near the base pulls away easily.
3. Meanwhile, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, parsley and salt for the dipping sauce.
4. Serve the artichokes warm with the sauce alongside.
5. Pull off each leaf, dip the base in the sauce and scrape the flesh off with your teeth; discard the fibrous choke and eat the tender heart with the remaining sauce.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

‘ It was long valued as a kitchen physic for the stomach, the kidneys and ‘the stone’, and chewed to sweeten the breath.

Peeled Indian-rhubarb spring stalks

Food / culinary

A simple, traditional wild nibble: the young peeled leaf-stalks of *Darmera* are juicy and pleasantly tart, eaten by Native Californian peoples much as we eat rhubarb. Treat them like rhubarb, in small amounts, and enjoy their fresh sourness in spring.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small handful umbrella plant (*Darmera peltata*) — Young, tender *Darmera peltata* leaf-stalks, peeled
- 1 tsp honey (optional, if stewing) — To soften the tartness when cooked

METHOD

1. Choose only young, still-tender leaf-stalks from a clean water margin; discard the leaf blades.
2. Rinse well and peel off the stringy outer skin, as you would a rhubarb stalk.
3. Eat raw in small pieces for a tart, juicy snack, or slice and stew gently with a teaspoon of honey and a splash of water until just tender.
4. Enjoy in modest amounts only.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Native peoples of its range, including Miwok and Pomo groups, peeled and ate the young leaf-stalks, raw or cooked, much as one eats rhubarb or wild celery, which gives the plant its common name ‘Indian rhubarb’.

Crystallised China Pink Petals

Food / culinary • Makes 30 petals

A traditional European confectionery technique for preserving edible flower petals as a decorative garnish for cakes, desserts, and sweet dishes. Carnation-family petals (including China pinks / *Dianthus*) have been used this way since at least the 17th century; the carnation is among the botanicals cited in accounts of the French liqueur Chartreuse. The petals have a pleasant, mild, clove-like flavour. **IMPORTANT:** use only organically grown, pesticide-free flowers; discard the bitter calyx and white petal base.

INGREDIENTS

30 grams China Pink petals (petal blades only) (*Dianthus chinensis*), flower — Organically grown, freshly picked, fully open flowers; calyx and white petal base removed — use coloured petal blades only

METHOD

1. Gently pick fresh, undamaged *Dianthus chinensis* flowers in the morning after dew has dried. Remove and discard the calyx (the green tube) and the bitter white base of each petal. Use only the coloured petal blades.
2. In a small bowl, lightly beat one egg white until it becomes frothy but not stiff. In a separate shallow dish, place about 50 g of caster (superfine) sugar.
3. Using a small clean paintbrush or your fingertips, coat each petal evenly all over with the beaten egg white, then lay it into the caster sugar. Spoon a little sugar over the top to coat both sides completely.
4. Gently lift each coated petal onto a piece of baking parchment or a wire rack. Allow to dry completely at room temperature in a dry, airy place, or in an oven set no higher than 60°C (140°F) with the door slightly ajar, for 2–4 hours until crisp.
5. Once fully dry and crisp, store in a single layer between sheets of parchment in an airtight container away from moisture. Use within 1–2 weeks. Use as a decorative garnish on cakes, cupcakes, or desserts immediately before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dianthus, from the Greek dios (divine, of Zeus) and anthos (flower), literally means ‘flower of the gods’ or ‘divine flower’, a name attributed to the ancient Greek botanist Theophrastus.

Simple Bhringraj Greens Stir-Fry

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

A quick South-Asian-style stir of tender false-daisy (bhringraj) leaves with garlic and mustard seed. Cooking softens the herb’s bitterness into a savoury, mineral-rich green eaten as a small medicinal side dish.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Fresh bhringraj (<i>Eclipta alba</i>) leaves — Washed well; tough stems removed
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Finely sliced
1 tsp	Black mustard seeds (<i>Brassica nigra</i>)
1 tbsp	Cooking oil
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a pan and add the mustard seeds; let them pop.
2. Add the sliced garlic and fry a few seconds until fragrant.
3. Add the washed bhringraj leaves and a pinch of salt.
4. Stir-fry over medium heat for 3-4 minutes until wilted and tender; serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

One of the great rasayana (rejuvenative) herbs of Ayurveda, celebrated for darkening and strengthening hair and supporting the liver; the fresh juice and medicated oils have centuries of use across South and Southeast Asia.

Bhringraj Greens Stir-Fry (Thorán-Style)

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

The tender leaves and shoots of false daisy, known as bhringraj in India, are cooked like a leafy green with coconut and mild spice, a nourishing everyday vegetable dish.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	young bhringraj (false daisy) leaves and shoots, washed (<i>Eclipta prostrata</i>) — tender growth only
3 tbsp	grated fresh coconut (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>)
1 tbsp	coconut or vegetable oil
0.5 tsp	mustard seeds (<i>Brassica juncea</i>)
1 piece	green chili, chopped (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — optional
0.25 tsp	turmeric powder (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
0.5 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Wash the bhringraj greens well and chop roughly.
2. Heat the oil and crackle the mustard seeds, then add the green chili.
3. Add the chopped greens, turmeric and salt, and stir-fry over medium heat until wilted and tender, 5-7 minutes.
4. Stir in the grated coconut, cook another 1-2 minutes, and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Eclipta prostrata has been known in Ayurvedic medicine for over 2,000 years under the Sanskrit name Bhringraj (“ruler of the hair”) or Kesharaja, where it ranks among the most celebrated herbs for scalp and liver health.

Braised Greens in Red Palm Oil

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 g

Unrefined red palm oil is the backbone of West African home cooking, prized for its deep carotenoid-orange colour and rich, earthy flavour. Here it carries a simple pot of greens the way it has done in Nigerian and Ghanaian kitchens for generations.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp	African oil palm (<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>) — unrefined red palm oil from the fruit
400 g	spinach or amaranth greens, chopped
1 medium	onion, sliced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 medium	tomato, diced (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
0.5 pepper	scotch bonnet or chilli, minced — to taste
1 tsp	salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Warm the red palm oil in a pot over medium heat until fluid and fragrant, not smoking.
2. Add the onion and chilli and soften for 3-4 minutes.
3. Stir in the tomato and cook down to a loose sauce, about 5 minutes.
4. Fold in the greens, season with salt, cover and steam-braise 4-5 minutes until just wilted.
5. Uncover, toss to coat everything in the orange oil and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Every kitchen has a season; learn yours.

Fresh Loquat Fruit Bowl

Food / culinary

Simple, juicy ripe loquats enjoyed at the peak of their brief spring season, seeds always removed.

INGREDIENTS

6 piece	Fresh ripe loquats (<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>) — 4-8 fruits, fully orange and slightly soft
1 tsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — Optional, to brighten flavor

METHOD

1. Wash the loquats well.
2. Halve each fruit and remove the seeds and any fibrous core.
3. Arrange in a bowl, drizzle with a little lime juice if desired, and serve fresh.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The deepest reach of the ocean is farther from the sun than the highest mountain is from the sea.



Rocket & cherry-tomato bruschetta

Food / culinary • Makes 4 pieces

Garlic-rubbed toasted bread topped with sweet cherry tomatoes and a tangle of peppery rocket, finished with olive oil and lemon. A fast, food-first snack or starter where the rocket's bite cuts the sweet tomato.

INGREDIENTS

40 g	Rocket (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>) — Fresh rocket leaves
200 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe cherry tomatoes, halved
25 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic clove, halved (for rubbing)
6 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
120 g	Sourdough or ciabatta bread — Rustic bread, 4 thick slices
2 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Toast or grill the bread slices until golden and crisp.
2. Rub each hot slice with the cut side of the garlic clove and drizzle with a little olive oil.
3. Toss the halved tomatoes with a pinch of salt, the lemon juice and the remaining oil.
4. Pile the tomatoes onto the toasts, top with a handful of rocket and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bread is one of the oldest things we make, older than the wheel, older than writing itself.

Rocket pesto (pesto di rucola)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

A sharp, peppery alternative to basil pesto built on rocket. Blitzed with pine nuts, garlic, hard cheese, lemon and good olive oil, it turns a glut of leaves into a vivid green sauce for pasta, bread, eggs or roast vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Rocket (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>) — Fresh rocket leaves, washed and dried
30 g	Stone pine (<i>Pinus pinea</i>) — Pine nuts, lightly toasted
90 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
5 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic (~1 small clove)
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
40 g	Parmesan / pecorino (grated) — Parmesan or pecorino, finely grated
2 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Toast the pine nuts gently in a dry pan until just golden, then cool.
2. Put the rocket, pine nuts, garlic, lemon juice and a pinch of salt in a food processor (or use a mortar and pestle).
3. Blitz to a coarse paste, then drizzle in the olive oil with the motor running until you have a loose, spoonable sauce.
4. Stir in the grated cheese, taste and adjust salt and lemon. Loosen with a little more oil if needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The stone pine has been cultivated around the Mediterranean since antiquity; pine nuts appear in Roman cookery and the umbrella pines line classical landscapes.

Wilted rocket with garlic & olive oil (rucola saltata)

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

A quick southern-Italian way to cook more mature, peppery rocket: a brief sauté in olive oil with garlic and a squeeze of lemon mellows the bite and makes a fast, savoury side. Cooking with a little fat helps the leaves’ fat-soluble vitamins.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Rocket (<i>Eruca vesicaria</i>) — Rocket (mature leaves are fine), washed
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
8 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, to finish
2 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste
1 g	Dried chilli flakes (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Chilli flakes (optional)

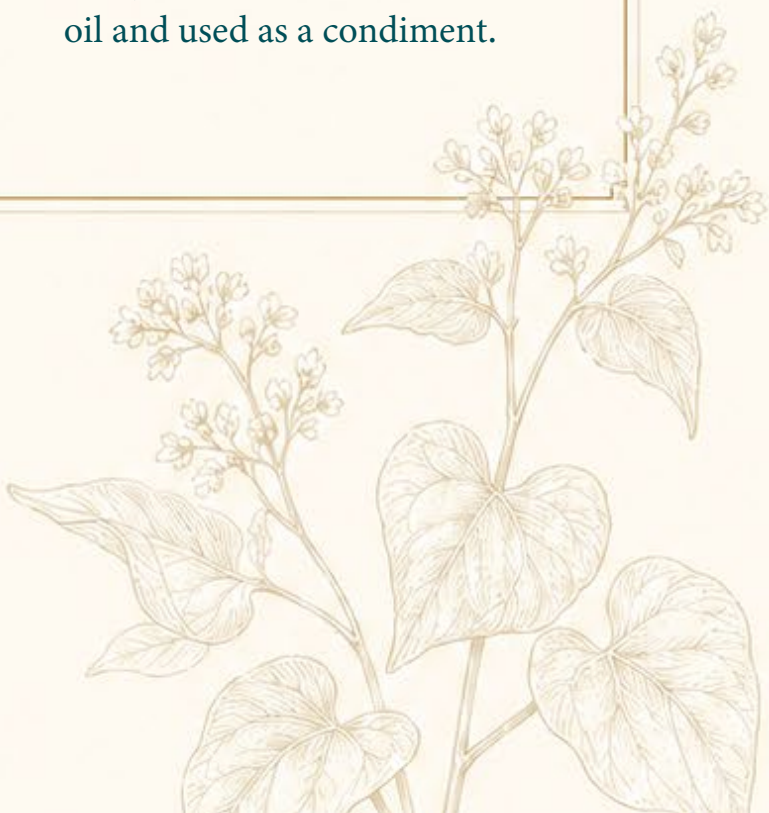
METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat and add the sliced garlic (and chilli, if using); cook gently until fragrant but not browned.
2. Add the rocket in handfuls, tossing, and cook just until wilted — 1–2 minutes.
3. Season with salt, finish with a squeeze of lemon and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Through the medieval and Renaissance periods it remained a common pot-herb and salad green; in the Indian subcontinent the seed has long been pressed for taramira oil and used as a condiment.



Classic açai smoothie bowl

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

The globally loved açai bowl: frozen açai pulp blended thick with banana into a deep-purple, spoonable base, then crowned with fresh fruit, granola and seeds.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	açai (<i>Euterpe oleracea</i>) — Frozen unsweetened açai pulp (<i>Euterpe oleracea</i>), pasteurised
1 whole	Frozen banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>) — For natural sweetness and a thick, creamy base
60 ml	Plant milk or juice — Just enough to blend; keep it thick
1 handful	Granola, fresh berries and banana slices — Toppings

METHOD

1. Add the frozen açai pulp, frozen banana and a small splash of plant milk to a blender.
2. Blend on high, pausing to scrape down, until thick, smooth and deep purple; keep it thick enough to eat with a spoon.
3. Spoon into a chilled bowl and smooth the top.
4. Arrange granola, fresh berries and banana slices over the top and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A staple of Amazonian, especially Pará, cuisine and culture for generations, where thick açai pulp is eaten daily, traditionally with cassava flour and often with fish, as everyday sustenance.

Wilted wild-buckwheat greens

Food / culinary

The young shoots of black bindweed, gathered from clean ground before it becomes a nuisance in the beds, make a simple wilted green in the manner of its knotweed and dock relatives. A humble, ancient food with a mild, slightly tangy flavour, best cooked and eaten in moderation.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 2 large handfuls | black bindweed (<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>) —
Young black-bindweed shoots and leaves, washed |
| 1 tbsp | butter or olive oil — For wilting |
| 1 clove | garlic clove, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Optional,
for flavour |
| 1 pinch | salt — To taste |

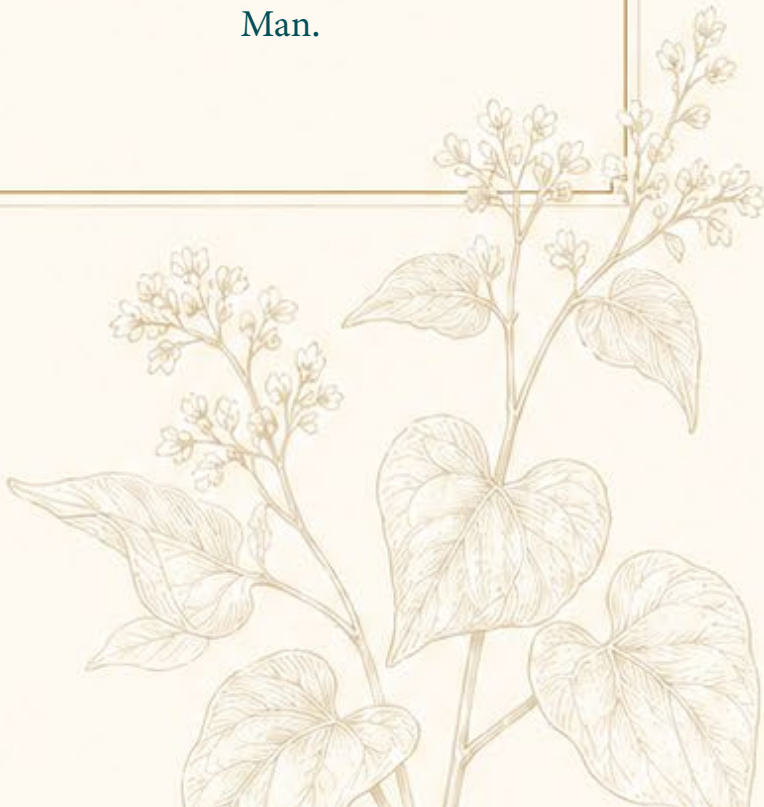
METHOD

1. Wash the young shoots and leaves well and drain.
2. Warm the butter or oil in a pan and soften the sliced garlic, if using, without browning.
3. Add the greens and toss over medium heat until just wilted and tender, a couple of minutes.
4. Season with a pinch of salt and serve straight away as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Also called wild buckwheat, its seeds were gathered as food in prehistory, with charred remains found in Bronze Age deposits and in the stomach of the preserved Tollund Man.



Dried fig & walnut energy bars

Food / culinary • Makes 12 bars (approx. 40 g each)

A no-bake whole-food snack bar built on dried figs as the primary sweetener and binder — no refined sugar added. Dried figs bring natural sugars, potassium, calcium, fibre and a rich caramel-honey flavour. Walnuts add omega-3 fatty acids and protein; oats provide slow-release complex carbohydrate. A traditional Middle Eastern flavour combination adapted for modern meal-prep. Urður original formulation.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Dried figs (<i>Ficus carica</i>)
150 g	Walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>)
100 g	Rolled oats (certified gluten-free if needed) (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
4 g	Ground cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>)
2 g	Flaked sea salt
15 g	Water (to adjust consistency, if needed)

METHOD

1. Place the dried figs in a food processor and pulse until they form a rough paste (about 30 seconds). If the figs are very dry, add 1 tablespoon of water and pulse again.
2. Add walnuts, oats, cinnamon and salt to the processor. Pulse until the mixture just comes together into a rough, sticky dough — do not over-process; texture is best with some walnut pieces visible.
3. Line a 20 cm × 20 cm tin with baking paper. Press the mixture in firmly and evenly using damp hands or the back of a spoon.
4. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour until firm. Lift out by the paper and cut into 12 bars with a sharp knife.
5. Wrap bars individually in baking paper. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks, or freeze for up to 3 months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Foxes seem to use the earth’s own magnetism to hunt, pouncing to the north as if the world were a compass.

Toasted Fennel Seed Mukhwas (After-Meal Mouth Freshener)

Food / culinary • Makes 100 g

The classic South Asian after-dinner mukhwas — lightly toasted fennel and anise seeds taken by the pinch to freshen the breath and settle the stomach after a meal. A culinary, food-amount use of fennel’s sweet aromatic seed.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Fennel (<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>), fruit — fennel seed (saunf), lightly toasted
20 g	Anise (<i>Pimpinella anisum</i>), fruit — aniseed, lightly toasted

METHOD

1. Warm a dry pan over low heat and toast 80 g fennel seed and 20 g aniseed for 1–2 minutes, stirring, until fragrant (do not brown).
2. Tip onto a plate to cool completely.
3. Store in a small airtight tin; take a pinch and chew after meals.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The soup remembers every hand
that stirred it.

Ocotillo Flower Cooler

Food / culinary • Makes ~750 ml

In late spring the ocotillo’s whip-like stems blaze with scarlet flowers. Desert peoples such as the Cahuilla soaked these blossoms in water to make a tangy, refreshing summertime drink.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Ocotillo (<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>) — fresh ocotillo flowers, rinsed
750 ml	cool water
1 tbsp	honey (optional) — to taste
1 tbsp	lemon or lime juice (optional)

METHOD

1. Rinse the fresh ocotillo flowers gently to remove dust and insects.
2. Place them in a jar and cover with the cool water.
3. Let steep at room temperature for a few hours, or overnight in the fridge, until the water turns pale and tangy.
4. Strain out the flowers, sweeten and add citrus to taste.
5. Serve well chilled over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ocotillo is integral to the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts.



Fraises des Bois with Cream — Wild Strawberries Simply Served

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The simplest and most celebrated way to eat wild strawberries in Scandinavia and France: perfect ripe berries, a little cream or crème fraîche, and nothing else to compete with their extraordinary fragrance. A food-first pleasure — nothing is more nutritious than fresh fruit eaten at peak ripeness.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Strawberry (<i>Fragaria vesca</i>)
200 ml	double cream or crème fraîche
10 g	icing sugar (optional)
4 g	fresh lemon verbena or mint leaves (optional)

METHOD

1. Rinse the berries very gently in cold water and spread on a clean cloth for a moment — do not leave them in water or they will become waterlogged.
2. Hull each berry with a small knife or twist off the calyx. If using icing sugar, dust lightly over the berries and leave to macerate for 10 minutes at most — this draws out a little juice without dissolving the fruit.
3. Divide the berries among four small bowls or glasses. Pour or spoon a generous amount of chilled cream or crème fraîche over each serving.
4. Tuck in a leaf or two of lemon verbena or mint if you like, and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Turtles carry the map of their birth-beach within them, and cross whole oceans to return there and nest.

Strawberry Eton Mess

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

The most joyful British summer pudding: a tumble of fresh strawberries, softly whipped cream and crushed meringue. Nothing is tidy, everything is delicious. The strawberry is the star — vitamin C, ellagic acid and anthocyanins in the most pleasurable delivery possible.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Ripe strawberries, hulled (<i>Fragaria x ananassa</i>)
300 g	Double cream (heavy cream)
100 g	Meringue nests (shop-bought or homemade), crushed
15 g	Icing (powdered) sugar
10 g	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Hull and halve the strawberries. Set aside one-third of the berries. Crush the remaining two-thirds lightly with a fork in a bowl with the icing sugar and lemon juice to make a rough, juice-rich compote. Leave 10 minutes.
2. Whip the double cream to soft peaks — just holding shape when the whisk is lifted, not stiff.
3. Break the meringues into rough irregular pieces of varying sizes.
4. Fold together the cream, the strawberry compote and most of the meringue pieces in large, gentle swooping movements — do not over-mix. The beautiful swirls of red through cream are the whole point.
5. Spoon into glasses or bowls. Top with the reserved whole berries and the remaining meringue shards. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Medieval Europeans considered the strawberry a symbol of righteousness and perfection — it is carved into the stonework of Notre-Dame and other cathedrals. The fruit was associated with the Virgin Mary.

Toasted Bladderwrack Sea Seasoning

Food / culinary

Bladderwrack is a common Atlantic brown seaweed long gathered along northern coasts. Dried and crumbled, it makes a savoury, mineral-rich sea seasoning to scatter sparingly over soups, grains and eggs.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 handful Bladderwrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) — clean dried bladderwrack fronds
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (optional) (*Sesamum indicum*) — for a furikake-style blend

METHOD

1. Make sure the bladderwrack is fully dried and clean.
2. Toast it briefly in a dry pan over low heat, 1-2 minutes, until crisp and fragrant - do not let it scorch.
3. Cool, then crumble or grind to coarse flakes.
4. Mix with the sesame seeds if using.
5. Store in a jar and use a small pinch to season dishes.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A spider's silk is, ounce for ounce,
stronger than steel, spun fresh each
night and often eaten and spun
again.



Kokum Sharbat (Cooling Kokum Cooler)

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 ml

*Kokum, the dried purple rind of *Garcinia indica*, is a beloved souring agent along India’s Konkan coast. This sweet-tart-salty cooler is a classic monsoon and summer drink, prized for settling the stomach in the heat.*

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Kokum (<i>Garcinia indica</i>) — dried kokum rinds
150 g	sugar
300 ml	water
0.5 tsp	salt
0.5 tsp	roasted cumin powder (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — optional

METHOD

1. Soak the kokum rinds in the water for 30 minutes, then simmer gently for 10 minutes until deep ruby.
2. Mash and strain out the rinds, pressing to extract the colour.
3. Return the liquid to low heat, dissolve the sugar and salt, and simmer 5 minutes to a light syrup; cool.
4. To serve, pour a few tablespoons into a glass, top with chilled water and ice, and dust with roasted cumin.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cows form close friendships and grow uneasy when they are kept apart from the friend they have chosen.

Fresh Mangosteen with Lime and Mint

Food / culinary

Mangosteen, the ‘queen of fruits,’ hides snow-white, segmented flesh inside a thick purple rind. Its delicate sweet-tart flavour is best enjoyed fresh and barely dressed.

INGREDIENTS

6 whole	Mangosteen (<i>Garcinia mangostana</i>) — ripe mangosteens
1 tsp	lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
1 tsp	honey — optional
6 leaves	fresh mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — torn

METHOD

1. Score around the equator of each purple rind with a knife, taking care not to cut deep into the flesh.
2. Twist to open and lift out the white segments, removing any large flat seeds.
3. Arrange the segments in a bowl and dress very lightly with lime juice and, if using, a trickle of honey.
4. Scatter torn mint over the top and serve chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Garcinia mangostana has been cultivated in Southeast Asia for at least a millennium and is deeply embedded in the cultural and medicinal traditions of the region.



Stemless Gentian Digestive Bitter

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 ml

Alpine gentian root is one of the most intensely bitter plants in Europe, and that bitterness is exactly the point: a small cup of gentian tea before meals is a classic digestive tonic in mountain herbal tradition.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 0.75 g | Stemless gentian (<i>Gentiana acaulis</i>) — dried gentian root, chopped |
| 150 ml | cool water |

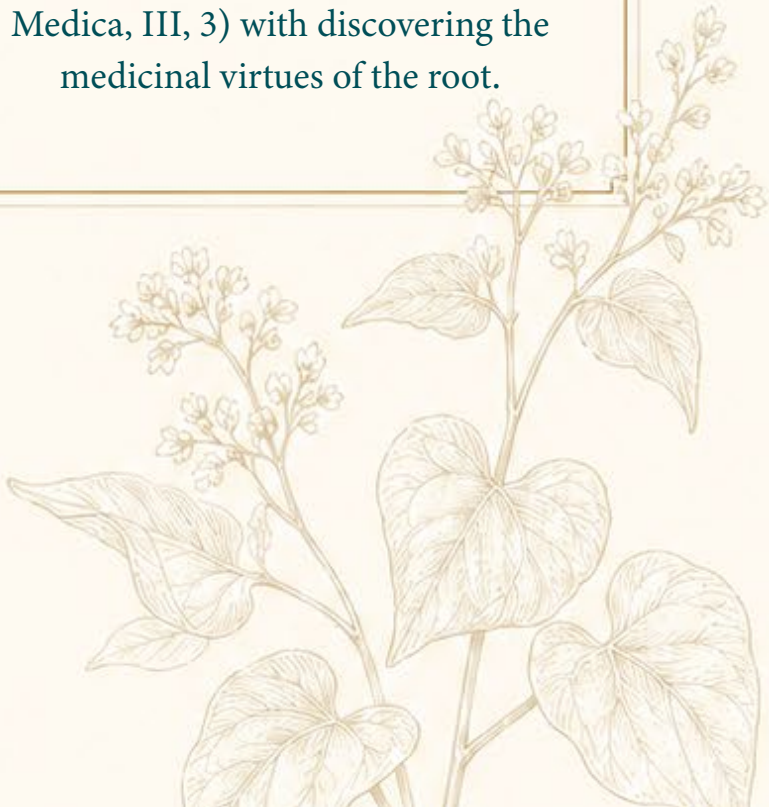
METHOD

1. Place the chopped dried root in a cup of cool water (a cold infusion keeps it aromatic and less harsh).
2. Leave to steep 6-8 hours or overnight.
3. Strain into a small glass.
4. Sip a little before meals; gentle warming is fine but avoid long boiling.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The genus *Gentiana* takes its name from Gentius, king of Illyria (180–168 BCE), credited by both Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia*, Book XXV, 34) and Dioscorides (*De Materia Medica*, III, 3) with discovering the medicinal virtues of the root.



Bottle Gentian Bitter Tonic

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 ml

Bottle gentian, a North American cousin of the European bitters, shares the family’s powerfully bitter root. Frontier and Indigenous herbalists used a little of the root as a stomach-settling bitter tonic.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 0.75 g | Closed bottle gentian (<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>) —
dried bottle-gentian root, chopped |
| 150 ml | cool water |

METHOD

1. Steep the chopped dried root in cool water for 6-8 hours to draw out the bitters gently.
2. Strain into a small glass.
3. Sip a little 15-30 minutes before meals.
4. Keep any remainder chilled and use the same day.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Grow what you love; love what grows anyway.



Willow gentian digestive bitters

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 ml

A few drops of this intensely bitter tincture on the tongue before a meal wake up the whole digestive system, in the old Alpine and Balkan tradition of taking gentian root as an aperitif.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Willow gentian (<i>Gentiana asclepiadea</i>) — Dried willow gentian root, chopped small
100 ml	Vodka (40% abv) — Food-grade spirit as menstruum

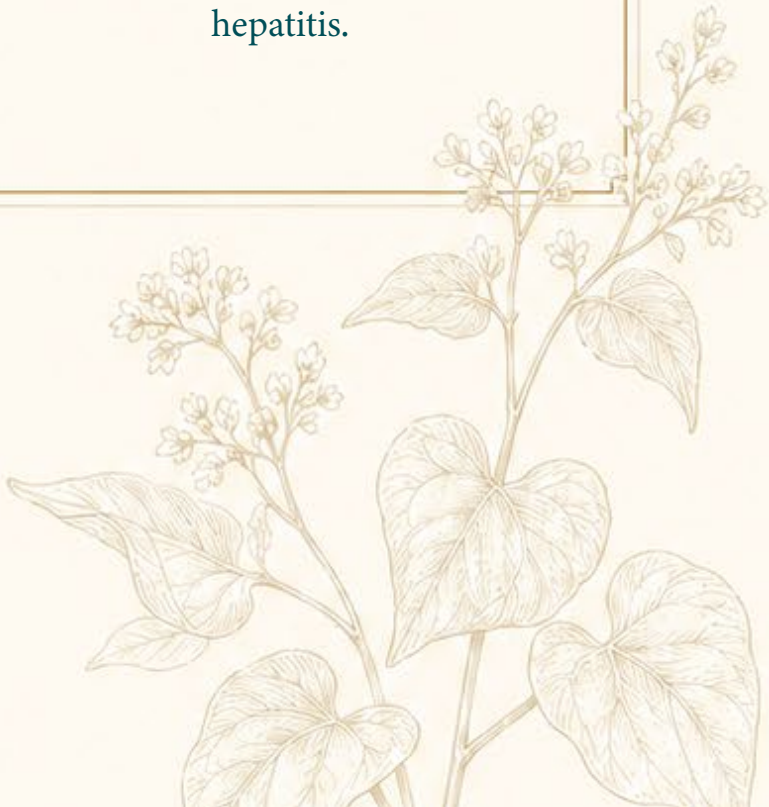
METHOD

1. Place the chopped dried root in a clean glass jar.
2. Pour over the vodka so the root is fully covered, and seal.
3. Label and steep in a cool, dark place for four weeks, shaking the jar daily.
4. Strain through muslin, squeezing the root well, and decant into a dark dropper bottle.
5. Take before meals as directed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long used in the folk medicine of the Balkans and Alps for stomach complaints, poor appetite and liver disorders; in Serbia the root is called ‘grass of jaundice’ and taken for hepatitis.



Aromatic Gentian Aperitif Bitters (cocktail bitters)

Tea / infusion • Makes 300 ml

A culinary aromatic bitters in the classic aperitif tradition: gentian root gives the clean, lingering bitterness that defines alpine aperitifs and cocktail bitters, with bitter-orange peel, cinnamon and cardamom for fragrance. Used by the dash to flavour aperitifs, sparkling water and cocktails.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Yellow gentian (<i>Gentiana lutea</i>), root
12 g	Bitter orange (<i>Citrus aurantium</i>)
5 g	Cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>)
3 g	Cardamom (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>)
300 g	Neutral spirit

METHOD

1. Combine the dried gentian root, bitter-orange peel, broken cinnamon and crushed cardamom in a clean glass jar.
2. Cover with about 300 ml of 45–55% (V/V) neutral spirit.
3. Seal, label and macerate 2–3 weeks in a cool dark place, shaking daily; taste for balance.
4. Strain through muslin and then a coffee filter for clarity; decant into a dasher-top bottle.
5. Label and use by the dash in drinks.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cinnamon has been among the most prized spices since antiquity. It is named in the Hebrew scriptures as an ingredient of holy anointing oil, and the ancient Egyptians used it in embalming and incense.

Neromantilida — Corn Marigold Shoots Wilted in Olive Oil (Traditional Cretan)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A traditional preparation from Crete and mainland Greece, where young leaves and shoot tips of *Glebionis segetum* (locally called *neromantilida*, νερομαντηλίδα) are gathered in early spring from fields and roadsides and eaten as part of the *horta* (wild greens) food culture. This simple preparation — tender shoots quickly wilted in olive oil with a squeeze of lemon — is the documented traditional use.

INGREDIENTS

- 200 grams

Corn marigold young shoots (*neromantilida*) (*Glebionis segetum*), shoot tips — Young spring shoots and leaves only, gathered before flowering. Rinse well.
- 20 grams

Olive oil (*Olea europaea*) — Extra-virgin preferred
Lemon juice and sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1.

Pick young leaves and tender shoot tips of *Glebionis segetum* in early spring, before the plant begins to flower. Choose fresh, undamaged, bright green growth. Rinse thoroughly in cold water.
2.

Bring a small pot of salted water to the boil. Blanch the shoots for 1-2 minutes until just wilted. Drain well and press out excess water.
3.

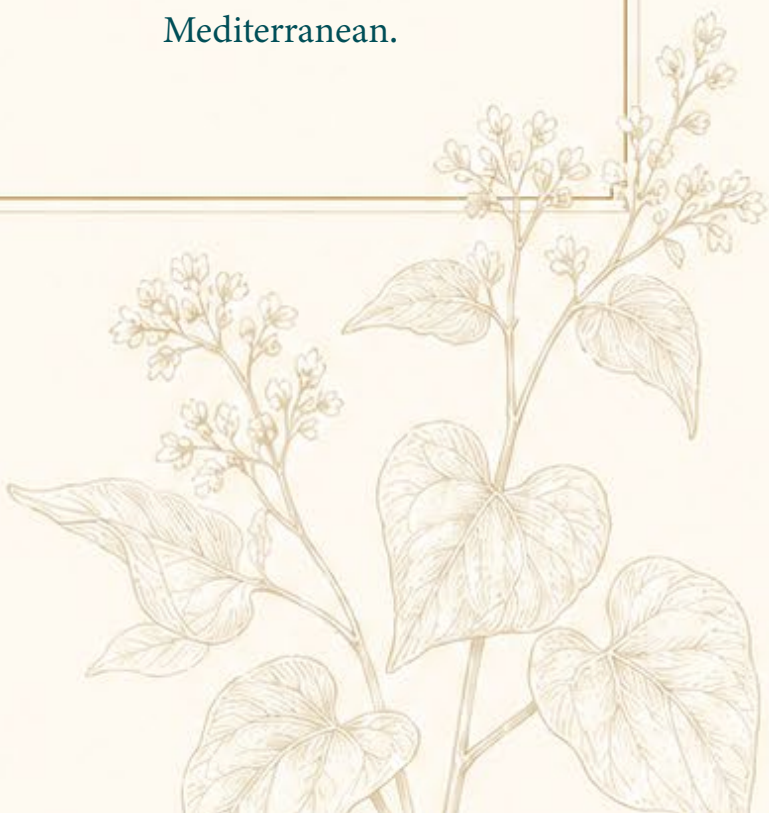
Heat the olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat. Add the blanched shoots and toss briefly — just 1-2 minutes — until heated through and coated in the oil.
4.

Season with sea salt and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. Serve warm as a side dish alongside other *horta*, grilled fish, or bread. Eat in a moderate portion as part of a varied meal.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Corn marigold has been a companion of grain agriculture since at least the Iron Age and is recorded archaeobotanically across Britain, continental Europe, and the Mediterranean.



Maitake Sauté — Traditional Japanese Method

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Grifola frondosa has been prized in Japanese cuisine for centuries for its rich, earthy, meaty flavour and firm texture. The traditional dry-fry method (no oil added initially) concentrates the flavour by driving off excess moisture before adding seasoning. Fresh or rehydrated dried maitake can be used. This is a culinary, food-framing preparation, not a supplement.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Fresh maitake (<i>Grifola frondosa</i>) fruiting body — Fresh or rehydrated cultivated <i>Grifola frondosa</i> , torn into bite-sized clusters
1 tbsp	Sake (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Japanese sake or dry sherry
1 tbsp	Soy sauce / tamari — Soy sauce or tamari (use tamari for gluten-free)

METHOD

1. Separate 200 g of fresh maitake into small, bite-sized clusters by hand (do not use a knife — tearing reveals the natural structure and preserves texture). If using dried maitake, rehydrate in warm water for 20 minutes, then gently squeeze out excess liquid.
2. Heat a wide, dry (no oil) skillet or cast-iron pan over medium-high heat until hot. Add the maitake clusters in a single layer. Press gently with a spatula and leave undisturbed for 2–3 minutes until the underside is lightly golden. This dry-fry step drives off moisture and concentrates the flavour.
3. Add 1 tablespoon of Japanese sake (or dry sherry) and 1 tablespoon of soy sauce or tamari. Toss gently to coat. Continue to cook for 2–3 minutes until the liquid is absorbed and the mushroom edges are lightly caramelised.
4. Optional: finish with a few drops of toasted sesame oil and a sprinkle of toasted sesame seeds or thinly sliced spring onions. Serve immediately over steamed rice, noodles, or alongside miso soup.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The gap between one heartbeat and the next is the small dark room where the whole of your life is happening.

Homemade Sunflower Seed Butter

Herbal butter • Makes 300 g

A smooth, nutty spread made from roasted sunflower kernels — a nut-free alternative to peanut or almond butter, naturally rich in vitamin E and unsaturated fats.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>), seed — raw hulled sunflower kernels
2 g	Salt (optional) — fine salt, to taste (optional)
10 g	Oil to loosen (optional) — neutral oil if needed to loosen (optional; sunflower oil works well)

METHOD

1. Roast the kernels at 160°C for 8–10 minutes (or toast in a dry pan) until golden and fragrant; cool slightly.
2. Tip the warm seeds into a food processor and blend, scraping down the sides often.
3. Keep blending through the crumbly stage (5–10 minutes) until the seeds release their oil and turn smooth and pourable.
4. Add salt to taste and, if you want it looser, a little sunflower oil. Blend to combine.
5. Spoon into a clean jar, cool, and refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sunflowers turn to follow the sun while young, then settle for life facing east, warming their faces for the morning bees.

Tamari Roasted Sunflower Seeds

Food / culinary • Makes 150 g

A savoury, crunchy snack and salad topper: hulled sunflower kernels toasted and tossed with a little tamari. A nutritious nibble rich in unsaturated fats, vitamin E and minerals.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 150 g | Sunflower (<i>Helianthus annuus</i>), seed — raw hulled sunflower kernels |
| 15 g | Tamari (soy sauce) — tamari (≈1 tbsp) |

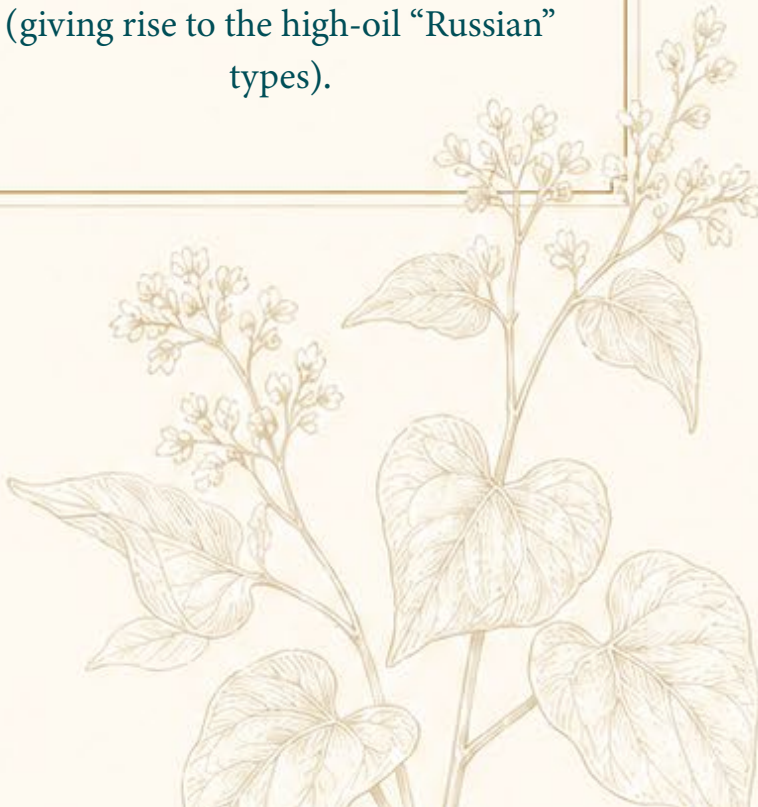
METHOD

1. Toast the kernels in a dry frying pan over medium heat, stirring constantly, until golden and fragrant (4–6 minutes). Watch closely — they burn fast.
2. Take off the heat and immediately add the tamari; it will sizzle and coat the seeds.
3. Stir until the tamari has dried onto the seeds and the pan is dry again (about 1 minute).
4. Tip onto a plate to cool completely (they crisp as they cool), then store airtight.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried to Europe by Spanish explorers in the 16th century as a curiosity, it became a major oilseed crop after large-scale selection in Russia in the 18th–19th centuries (giving rise to the high-oil “Russian” types).



Dehydrated Sunchoke Chips

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g (dried weight)

Dehydrating Jerusalem artichoke is one of the best long-term preservation methods for this quickly perishable vegetable. The result is a crisp, intensely flavoured chip — earthy, nutty, and mildly sweet — that can be eaten as a snack, crumbled over salads and soups as a topping, or ground into flour for baking. The drying process concentrates the inulin and all the minerals, and the chips keep beautifully for up to a year.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Jerusalem artichoke tubers (<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>) — Yields approx 200 g dried chips (80% water loss)
30 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To acidulate soaking water and prevent browning; 2 tablespoons
3 g	Sea salt (optional) — Light pinch to sprinkle before drying; optional

METHOD

1. Scrub tubers well. Using a mandoline, slice uniformly to 2–3 mm thickness — even slices are essential for even drying. Drop slices into a bowl of cold water with lemon juice immediately to prevent browning.
2. Drain slices and pat thoroughly dry with clean cloths or paper towels — removing surface moisture speeds drying and gives crisper results.
3. If using a dehydrator: arrange in a single layer on dehydrator trays; set to 55–65°C; dry for 8–12 hours, turning trays halfway, until completely crisp and brittle (no pliable pieces).
4. If using an oven: preheat to 70°C (or lowest setting with door slightly ajar). Arrange on wire racks over baking trays. Dry for 3–5 hours until brittle and crisp throughout.
5. Let cool completely on the trays before storing — any residual warmth causes condensation. Store in airtight glass jars or sealed bags. Label with date.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The alternative name topinambur may derive from the Tupinamba people of Brazil, brought to France around the same time.

Roasted Sunchokes with Thyme and Garlic

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A simple, deeply satisfying way to eat Jerusalem artichoke at its very best. High-heat roasting caramelises the natural sugars and turns the inside to creamy, almost buttery flesh while the skin crisps up beautifully. Post-frost tubers are the sweetest.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Jerusalem artichoke tubers (<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>) — Choose firm, unblemished tubers
45 g	Extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — 3 tablespoons; density ~0.91 g/ml
8 g	Fresh thyme sprigs (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Whole sprigs
40 g	Garlic cloves, unpeeled (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 4–5 cloves, whole
5 g	Flaky sea salt
15 g	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To finish; 1 tablespoon

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220°C (425°F / Gas 7). Scrub tubers thoroughly under cold water — no need to peel; the skin is delicious and nutritious.
2. Halve or quarter larger tubers so all pieces are roughly 3–4 cm. Toss in a large bowl with olive oil, salt and pepper until well coated.
3. Spread in a single layer on a large baking tray or roasting tin (do not crowd). Tuck in garlic cloves and thyme sprigs.
4. Roast for 25–30 minutes, turning once halfway through, until deep golden-brown and caramelised on the cut surfaces, tender all the way through when pierced.
5. Remove from oven, squeeze the soft garlic flesh from the skins over the sunchokes, and add a squeeze of lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A wooden spoon never argues.

Nannari Sharbat (Indian Sarsaparilla Cooler)

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 ml

The fragrant roots of *Hemidesmus indicus*, called nannari or anantmool, are simmered into a dark aromatic syrup that becomes South India’s classic summer cooler, cutting through the heat with a rooty, faintly vanilla sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Indian sarsaparilla (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>) — dried nannari (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>) root, rinsed
500 ml	water — for the decoction
400 g	sugar — or jaggery
2 tbsp	lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>) — added at serving

METHOD

1. Simmer 30 g nannari root in 500 ml water for 20-25 minutes until deeply coloured and aromatic.
2. Strain the decoction into a clean pan, pressing the root.
3. Add the sugar (or jaggery) and dissolve over low heat, then simmer 8-10 minutes to a light syrup.
4. Cool completely and bottle the syrup; refrigerate.
5. To serve, stir 2-3 tbsp syrup and a squeeze of lime into a glass of cold water over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Hemidesmus indicus, known in Sanskrit as Sariva or Anantamul (“root without end,” referring to the long, spreading rhizome), is one of the most celebrated alterative and blood-purifying herbs in the Ayurvedic materia medica.

Swamp Rose Mallow Tender Greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

Like its cousin okra, the swamp rose mallow yields tender young leaves that turn silky and lightly mucilaginous when cooked, gently thickening a simple pot of greens the way mallows have nourished cooks for centuries.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Swamp rose mallow (<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>) — young swamp rose mallow leaves, washed
1 tbsp	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 clove	garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — thinly sliced
1 pinch	salt
1 tsp	lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — to finish

METHOD

1. Wash 200 g young mallow leaves and shake off excess water.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
3. Add the leaves with a pinch of salt and a splash of water.
4. Cover and cook 5-7 minutes, stirring once, until silky and tender.
5. Finish with a squeeze of lemon and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The medicinal use of *H. moscheutos* among Indigenous peoples of North America is well recorded.

Flower-of-an-Hour Young Potherb

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 ml

A cheerful garden self-seeder, *Hibiscus trionum* (flower-of-an-hour) offers tender young shoots that, like many mallows, are gathered before flowering and briefly cooked as a mild, faintly mucilaginous potherb in parts of Asia and Africa.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Flower of an Hour (<i>Hibiscus trionum</i>) — young flower-of-an-hour shoots and leaves
500 ml	water — salted, for blanching
1 tsp	sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 tsp	soy sauce

METHOD

1. Wash 150 g young shoots and pick over for any tough stems.
2. Blanch in lightly salted boiling water for 2-3 minutes until just tender.
3. Drain and briefly refresh under cool water, then squeeze gently.
4. Toss with sesame oil and soy sauce and serve warm or at room temperature.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Hibiscus trionum has long straddled the boundary between ornamental and weed.



Sea Buckthorn Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 120 ml

A bright, fruity salad dressing that brings the sea buckthorn berry into everyday eating — no special equipment needed. The natural acid of the berry replaces vinegar entirely; extra-virgin olive oil rounds it out. Toss with rocket and cold smoked salmon, with roasted root vegetables and walnuts, or over a grain bowl with feta. The carotenoids in the dressing are fat-soluble — the olive oil helps you absorb them.

INGREDIENTS

60 ml	Sea buckthorn juice (strained, unsweetened) (<i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>) — Make by blending berries with a little water and straining; or use sea buckthorn syrup diluted 1:1 with water for a sweeter dressing
60 ml	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Use a mild-flavoured olive oil; or substitute half with walnut oil for a nuttier result
10 g	Raw honey or agave syrup — Balances the tartness; adjust to taste; omit for a sharper dressing
5 g	Dijon mustard — Emulsifier — helps the dressing stay combined and adds depth
2 g	Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper — To taste

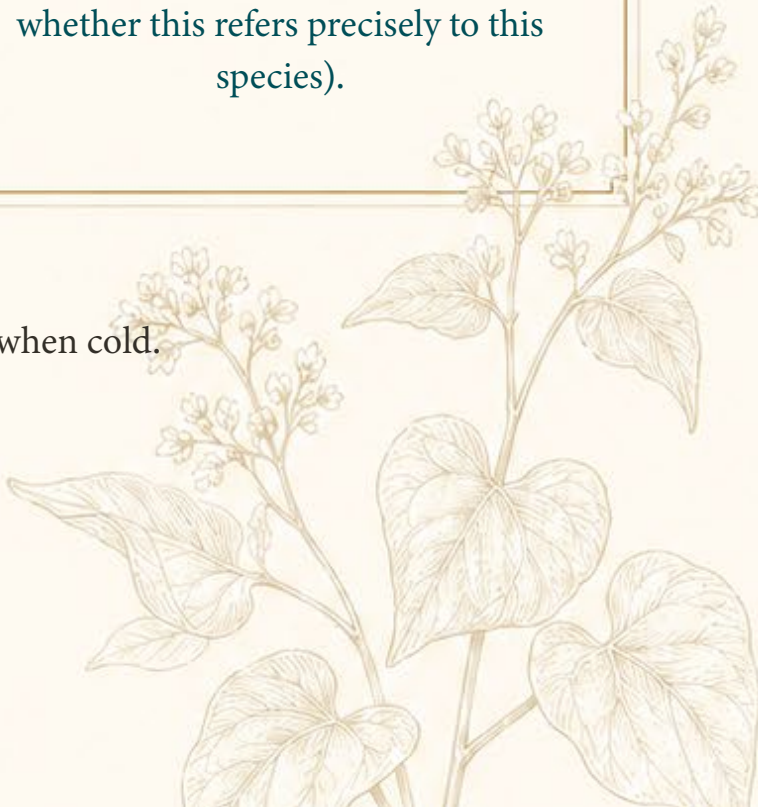
METHOD

1. Combine the sea buckthorn juice, honey, and mustard in a small jar or bowl. Whisk together until combined.
2. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil while whisking constantly (or add to the jar and shake vigorously) until emulsified.
3. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and more honey or juice as preferred.
4. Use immediately or refrigerate in a sealed jar. Shake well and bring to room temperature before each use as olive oil will set when cold.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sea buckthorn has been valued across Eurasia for well over a millennium. The ancient Greek physician Dioscorides mentioned “Ippophaes” (though it is debated whether this refers precisely to this species).



Sautéed Spring Hop Shoots

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A seasonal vegetable dish made from the tender young spring shoots of the hop bine (“hop shoots” or, in Italy, bruscandoli), cooked briefly like thin asparagus. A genuine traditional food use of *Humulus lupulus* quite separate from its calming herbal use.

INGREDIENTS

200 g Hops (*Humulus lupulus*), shoot — tender young hop shoots (top few cm of new spring bines)

METHOD

1. Trim and rinse the tender young hop shoots.
2. Blanch 1-2 minutes in salted boiling water; drain.
3. Warm a little olive oil (or butter) with the garlic clove in a pan.
4. Add the shoots and sauté 2-3 minutes until just tender.
5. Season with salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon.
6. Serve warm, or fold into a frittata or risotto.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bees keep their winter hive as warm as a summer’s day, shivering in shifts so that none of them will freeze.



Hyssop Herb Vinegar

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

A traditional Mediterranean pantry staple: hyssop leaves and flowers macerated in good-quality white wine vinegar to create an aromatic, lightly bitter culinary vinegar. Use in vinaigrettes, marinades for lamb or pork, deglazing sauces, or as a finishing splash over roasted vegetables and pulses.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> (hyssop) — Lightly bruise fresh herb before adding
500 ml	White wine vinegar (5% acidity) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>) — Use a good-quality white wine vinegar; apple cider vinegar is an acceptable substitute
5 g	Garlic clove (optional) (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Optional — adds depth; remove after 1 week if using

METHOD

1. If using fresh hyssop, rinse and pat completely dry (water dilutes acidity and can cause spoilage). Lightly bruise the leaves and stems by crushing gently between your palms.
2. Place the hyssop (and optional garlic) into a clean 500–600 ml glass jar or bottle with a plastic or cork lid — do not use metal lids as vinegar corrodes them.
3. Pour the white wine vinegar over the herb, ensuring it is fully submerged. Seal the container.
4. Store at room temperature in a dark cupboard for 2–4 weeks, shaking or inverting gently every few days.
5. Taste after 2 weeks; continue infusing for a stronger flavour. When the flavour is to your liking, strain through a fine-mesh sieve or muslin cloth into a clean bottle. Discard the spent herb.
6. Seal the finished vinegar and label with the date.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Hyssop carries one of the oldest documented ethnobotanical records of any European herb.



Hyssop Herbal Tisane

Food / culinary • Makes 200 ml

A warming, aromatic herbal tea made from dried hyssop leaves and flowers — a traditional European tisane appreciated for its minty, slightly camphoraceous character. Served as a digestive tea after rich meals, or enjoyed on its own as a warming, flavourful drink in cold weather. A teaspoon of hyssop-infused honey makes a delightful pairing.

INGREDIENTS

2 g	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> (hyssop) — Approximately 1 heaped teaspoon of dried herb; use 4–5 g fresh if substituting
200 ml	Water (just off the boil, 90–95°C) — Do not pour aggressively boiling water directly onto the herb — 90–95°C is ideal
5 g	Raw honey (optional) — Hyssop-infused honey (see companion recipe) is ideal

METHOD

1. Place 2 g (1 heaped teaspoon) of dried hyssop leaves and flowers into a tea infuser, teapot, or cup.
2. Pour 200 ml of water that is just off the boil (90–95°C) over the herb.
3. Cover and steep for 7–10 minutes. Covering prevents volatile aromatic compounds from escaping with the steam.
4. Strain the tea into your cup. Discard the spent herb.
5. Allow to cool slightly, then sip slowly. Sweeten with honey if desired.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

You share half of your genes with a banana, and very nearly all of them with the stranger beside you.



Mediterranean Hyssop & Garlic Herb Marinade

Food / culinary • Makes 120 ml

A boldly aromatic marinade rooted in Mediterranean herbal-cooking tradition. Fresh hyssop, garlic, lemon, and olive oil combine to create a savoury, slightly bitter-floral paste that transforms lamb chops, pork, chicken, or thick slices of halloumi and courgette. Inspired by the same aromatic sensibility that places hyssop alongside thyme and rosemary in the southern European kitchen.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> (hyssop) — Fresh preferred; 5 g dried is an acceptable substitute
12 g	<i>Allium sativum</i> (garlic) — About 3 medium cloves
80 ml	<i>Olea europaea</i> (extra virgin olive oil) — Use a good-quality extra-virgin olive oil
20 ml	<i>Citrus limon</i> (lemon) — Both juice and zest contribute flavour; use unwaxed lemon
4 g	Sea salt — Approximately 3/4 tsp fine sea salt
2 g	Black pepper, freshly ground (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Approximately 1 tsp freshly ground

METHOD

1. Strip hyssop leaves from stems. Finely chop leaves and flowers until you have a rough paste; a mezzaluna or food processor works well.
2. Mince or grate the garlic into the chopped hyssop.
3. Combine hyssop, garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, salt, and pepper in a bowl or jar. Stir or whisk until well combined.
4. Taste and adjust seasoning — the marinade should be bold and aromatic. A pinch of dried chilli flake is a good optional addition.
5. Coat meat or vegetables thoroughly. Refrigerate: lamb chops or pork 4–8 hours; chicken 2–4 hours; firm vegetables 30 minutes at room temperature.
6. Cook as desired — grill over high heat, roast at 200°C, or pan-sear. A caramelised crust develops as the herbs char slightly at the edges.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The garden teaches faster than the book — but the book waits patiently.

Traditional Yerba Mate

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 ml

In the gourd-and-bombilla ritual of southern South America, dried yerba mate leaves are steeped again and again with warm water, yielding a grassy, bittersweet, gently caffeinated brew shared hand to hand among friends.

INGREDIENTS

50 g	Yerba mate (<i>Ilex paraguariensis</i>) — dried yerba mate leaves (fills the gourd about two-thirds)
200 ml	water — warm, about 70-80 C, not boiling

METHOD

1. Fill a mate gourd about two-thirds with dried yerba mate.
2. Cover the opening, tip and shake gently, then settle the leaves at an angle to form a slope.
3. Trickle a little cool water into the low side to moisten the leaves, then insert the bombilla there.
4. Pour warm (not boiling) water down the same side and sip through the bombilla.
5. Refill with fresh warm water and share, drawing several infusions from the same leaves.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Yerba mate was used by the indigenous Guaraní people of the Río de la Plata basin for centuries before European contact.

Candied Elecampane Root

Food / culinary • Makes ~450 g

Since medieval monastery gardens, the big aromatic roots of elecampane (*Inula helenium*) have been slowly candied into a warming, bittersweet lozenge, half sweetmeat and half cough remedy, its camphor-and-banana scent unmistakable.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Elecampane (<i>Inula helenium</i>) — fresh elecampane root, peeled and sliced thin
300 ml	water
300 g	sugar
3 tbsp	caster sugar — for coating

METHOD

1. Peel and thinly slice 150 g fresh elecampane root.
2. Simmer the slices in the 300 ml water for 20-25 minutes until tender, then drain, reserving the liquid.
3. Return the reserved liquid to the pan with 300 g sugar and dissolve, then add the root.
4. Simmer very gently 30-40 minutes until the syrup is thick and the slices are translucent.
5. Lift the pieces out to a rack to drain, then toss in caster sugar and dry until firm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Elecampane carries one of the oldest and most romantic herbal lineages in Western medicine.



Maple Walnut Candy

Food / culinary • Makes ~20 clusters

A homely northeastern confection of buttery walnut kernels candied in dark maple syrup.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Shelled walnut halves or pieces
240 ml	Maple syrup (<i>Acer saccharum</i>) — Dark grade for deeper flavour
1 tbsp	Butter
1 pinch	Fine salt

METHOD

1. Toast the nutmeats in a dry pan over medium heat until fragrant, then set aside.
2. Simmer the maple syrup with the butter and salt until it reaches the soft-ball stage (about 115 C / 240 F).
3. Stir in the nuts to coat, then drop small clusters onto parchment paper.
4. Let cool and set firm before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The walnut’s Latin name *Juglans* comes from *Jovis glans* — ‘Jupiter’s acorn’: the Romans held the tree sacred to the king of their gods.

Toasted Black Walnut Kernels for Baking

Food / culinary • Makes 100 g

Black walnut (Juglans nigra) KERNELS are the mature nut and a true FOOD — bolder, earthier and more astringent than the common English walnut, and a classic North American baking nut. Eat them raw or roasted as a snack; fold into breads, cakes, cookies, puddings, fudge and the celebrated black-walnut ice cream and desserts; grind to a meal to thicken soups and sauces; or use cold-pressed black-walnut oil as a finishing culinary oil. (Black-walnut oil is delicate and rancidifies fast — keep refrigerated and use quickly.) Lightly toasting the shelled nutmeats deepens their flavour.

INGREDIENTS

100 g Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), seed — shelled black walnut kernels

METHOD

1. Shell the black walnuts and pick out the kernels carefully.
2. Spread the kernels on a tray and toast in a moderate oven (170 °C) for 6–10 minutes until fragrant, watching closely.
3. Cool completely.
4. Eat as a snack, or chop and fold into cake, cookie, brownie or bread batter (about 50–100 g per standard loaf/batch).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cut herbs speak their name to the whole kitchen.



Walnut Sauce (Salsa di Noci)

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

A traditional Ligurian walnut sauce for pasta - creamy, rich and made from walnut kernels. A delicious everyday way to enjoy the nutritious, omega-3-rich walnut as food.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>), seed — shelled walnut kernels
30 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>), seed oil — walnut oil (or olive oil)

METHOD

1. Soak the piece of soft white bread in a little milk until softened, then squeeze out excess milk.
2. Put the walnuts, garlic, soaked bread and a pinch of salt in a food processor or mortar.
3. Blend or pound to a paste, then work in the walnut or olive oil and a splash of milk or cream until smooth and creamy.
4. Stir in grated Parmesan if using, and adjust seasoning.
5. Loosen the sauce with a little hot pasta cooking water and toss through freshly cooked, drained pasta.
6. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The walnut has been cultivated around the Mediterranean and across Asia for several thousand years; the Romans associated it with Jupiter (Jovis glans, “Jove’s acorn”, giving Juglans) and scattered walnuts at weddings as a fertility symbol.

Grilled cos lettuce with garlic, lemon & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Charring sturdy cos (romaine) hearts over high heat is a revelation — the outside smokes and crisps while the inside stays juicy, with a sweet, faintly bitter edge. A quick warm side or base for a salad.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Lettuce (<i>Lactuca sativa</i>) — Cos / romaine hearts (about 4 small), halved
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic clove, halved (~2)
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Fresh lemon juice
2 g	Sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Halve the cos hearts lengthways through the root so the leaves stay attached; brush the cut sides with olive oil.
2. Grill or griddle cut-side down over high heat for 2-3 minutes until charred and just wilted, keeping the heart slightly crisp.
3. Lay cut-side up on a plate, rub with the cut garlic clove, and squeeze over the lemon juice.
4. Drizzle with the remaining oil, season with salt and pepper, and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Lettuce was cultivated in ancient Egypt, where it was associated with the fertility god Min and depicted in tomb art, and was prized by the Greeks and Romans both as food and as a mild soporific — Roman writers noted it was eaten to encourage sleep.

Purple Dead-Nettle Spring Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes ~140 g

A vivid green foraged pesto that turns one of the first weeds of spring into something delicious. Purple dead-nettle’s mild, earthy flavour blends beautifully with toasted nuts, garlic and olive oil.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Young purple dead-nettle tops (<i>Lamium purpureum</i>) — Washed, tough lower stems removed
40 g	Walnuts or sunflower seeds — <i>Lightly toasted</i>
40 g	Parmesan cheese, grated
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
100 ml	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

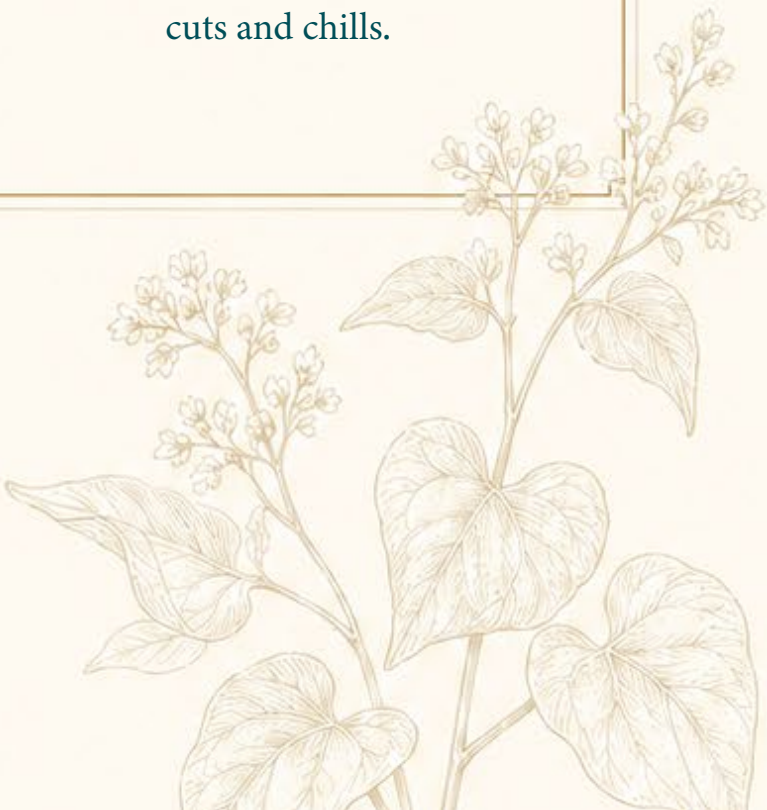
METHOD

1. Blend the washed dead-nettle tops with the toasted nuts, garlic and a pinch of salt to a coarse paste.
2. Add the grated Parmesan and pulse to combine.
3. Stream in the olive oil to a loose, spoonable pesto; adjust salt to taste.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long known as ‘purple dead-nettle’ or ‘red dead-nettle’ - ‘dead’ because it looks like a nettle but cannot sting. A traditional pot-herb of the lean early spring and a folk remedy for minor cuts and chills.



Simple sauteed wood nettle greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

Gathered with gloves in spring and quickly cooked, wood nettle loses every trace of its sting and becomes a tender, mineral-rich green with a sweet, nettle-and-spinach flavour, exactly as generations of foragers have enjoyed it.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Wood nettle (<i>Laportea canadensis</i>) — Young wood nettle shoots and tender leaves, well washed (handle with gloves)
1 tbsp	Olive oil or butter — For sauteing
1 clove	Garlic clove, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Optional aromatic
1 pinch	Salt — To taste
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Optional, to finish

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, rinse the young nettle shoots thoroughly in cold water.
2. Blanch briefly in boiling water for 1-2 minutes to knock out the sting, then drain (or add straight to the hot pan and cook until wilted).
3. Warm the oil or butter in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
4. Add the drained greens and saute 2-3 minutes until tender and glossy.
5. Season with salt, finish with a squeeze of lemon, and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

What simmers gently keeps its soul.



Bay-infused béchamel (classic white sauce)

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

The classic French white sauce, gently perfumed by infusing whole bay (with a little onion and a clove or two) into the warm milk, then straining it out before the sauce is built. This is bay used the way it shines: aroma steeped into a dish and the stiff leaf removed before serving. The base of gratins, lasagne, moussaka and creamed vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Whole dried bay leaf (1-2 leaves) infused into the milk and removed
40 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, a thick slice, studded with the cloves (infused and removed)
0.3 g	Clove (<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>) — Whole cloves (1-2), to stud the onion
600 g	Whole milk — Whole milk, gently warmed for the infusion
40 g	Butter — Unsalted butter
40 g	Plain (all-purpose) flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Plain wheat flour for the roux
2 g	Sea salt and grated nutmeg — To season, to taste

METHOD

1. Stud the onion slice with the cloves. Put the milk, bay leaf and clove-studded onion in a pan and bring just to a simmer; turn off the heat and leave to infuse 15-20 minutes, then strain, discarding the bay, cloves and onion.
2. Melt the butter in a clean pan, stir in the flour and cook the roux gently for 1-2 minutes without colouring.
3. Gradually whisk in the warm infused milk a little at a time, keeping it smooth.
4. Simmer gently, stirring, for 8-10 minutes until thickened and the raw-flour taste has cooked out. Season with salt and a little grated nutmeg.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Clove has been one of the most coveted spices in history.

Classic bouquet garni (bay, thyme & parsley bundle)

Food / culinary • Makes 8 g

The little tied bundle of aromatic herbs that flavours French and Mediterranean stocks, soups, braises and stews. Bay leads, thyme and parsley fill it out; the bundle is dropped into the pot, simmered, and lifted out whole before serving — the tidiest way to use bay and never leave the stiff leaf in the dish.

INGREDIENTS

1 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Whole bay leaf (1-2)
3 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Thyme, a few sprigs
4 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Parsley stalks, a small handful

METHOD

1. Gather the bay leaf, thyme sprigs and parsley stalks into a small bundle.
2. Tie firmly with kitchen string (leave a long tail to tie to the pot handle for easy retrieval), or wrap in a piece of leek leaf or muslin.
3. Add to the pot at the start of cooking; simmer with the dish.
4. Lift out and discard the whole bundle before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Through the Middle Ages and beyond it kept a reputation as a protective, purifying and luck-bringing plant, hung in homes and used in folk cooking as a warming digestive and to flavour and preserve food.

Lavender Sugar

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

Fragrant lavender-scented sugar for baking, shortbread, scones, custards and tea — a simple way to bring the gentle flavour of culinary lavender to the table.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Lavender (<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>), flower — dried culinary lavender flowers
250 g	Sugar — caster or granulated sugar

METHOD

1. Stir the dried culinary lavender flowers through the sugar.
2. Seal in a clean jar and leave at least a few days (ideally 1–2 weeks) for the scent to infuse, shaking occasionally.
3. Use as is, or sieve out the flowers before using if you prefer a smooth sugar.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Lavender has been valued around the Mediterranean since antiquity. Its name derives from the Latin lavare, “to wash” — the Romans added it to their baths and laundry, and it has scented linen, soap and toiletries ever since.

Daily Maca Energy & Balance Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

A simple everyday smoothie that carries a measured daily dose of maca powder — an easy, palatable way to take maca for energy, stamina and general wellbeing, using the typical 1.5–3 g range.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Maca (<i>Lepidium meyenii</i>), hypocotyl — maca powder (gelatinised preferred)
250 g	Milk or plant milk
1	Banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>) — ripe banana

METHOD

1. Add the milk, banana and maca powder to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth and frothy.
3. Pour and drink straight away, earlier in the day for the energising effect.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The tallest trees lift the sea up to the sky one leaf at a time, higher than seems at all possible.



Lovage herb butter

Food / culinary • Makes 130 g

A savoury compound butter that captures lovage’s celery-savour for melting over steamed vegetables, baked potatoes, grilled fish or fresh bread. A simple, food-first way to keep the fresh leaf to hand.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Lovage (<i>Levisticum officinale</i>) — Fresh lovage leaves, very finely chopped
110 g	Unsalted butter, softened — At room temperature
3 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice / fine zest
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Beat the softened butter until creamy.
2. Mix in the finely chopped lovage, lemon, salt and pepper until evenly combined.
3. Spoon onto baking paper, roll into a log, twist the ends and chill until firm. Slice coins as needed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its botanical name links to Liguria in Italy (*Ligusticum*), and old herbalists from Dioscorides onward noted its warming, carminative and urine-promoting reputation.



Lovage salt (celery-savour seasoning)

Food / culinary • Makes 220 g

A simple way to capture lovage’s intense celery-and-yeast savour for year-round use: chopped fresh leaves cured with sea salt and dried. A pinch lifts soups, eggs, roasted vegetables and dressings — a homemade, single-herb alternative to celery salt.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Lovage (<i>Levisticum officinale</i>) — Fresh lovage leaves, finely chopped (stalks removed)
180 g	Coarse sea salt — Flaky or coarse sea salt

METHOD

1. Pound or pulse the chopped lovage leaves with about a third of the salt to a coarse green paste, releasing the aromatics.
2. Mix in the remaining salt until evenly green and crumbly.
3. Spread thinly on a tray and dry at room temperature for 1–2 days (or in a very low oven / dehydrator at ~50 °C for 1–2 hours) until completely dry.
4. Break up any clumps, then store airtight. Grind finer if you prefer a fine seasoning salt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The heaviest harvest fits in a small basket, carried often.



Scots Lovage Seed Seasoning Salt

Food / culinary • Makes 80 g

A simple Nordic coastal seasoning combining dried Scots lovage seeds with flaky sea salt. The seeds carry a warm, peppery, fenugreek-like aroma that complements fish, coastal vegetables, eggs and root soups — exactly as coastal communities in Scotland and Norway historically used this plant. Use as a finishing salt or rub.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Scots lovage (<i>Ligusticum scoticum</i>) — Lightly crush in a mortar just before combining.
60 g	Flaky sea salt (e.g. Maldon) — Use a good-quality unrefined flaky salt.

METHOD

1. Place the dried Scots lovage seeds in a dry mortar and crush lightly — aim for roughly broken seeds, not a fine powder. The aroma will release immediately.
2. Combine the crushed seeds with the flaky sea salt in a small bowl and mix thoroughly.
3. Taste and adjust seed-to-salt ratio to preference. The seasoning should be aromatic and gently peppery.
4. Funnel into a clean, dry, sealed jar. Label with the date. Allow to sit 24 hours before first use for flavours to meld.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A river is never the same water twice,
and yet we call it, all its life, by a
single name.



Flax Egg (Plant-Based Egg Replacer)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 egg-equivalent

A kitchen staple: one tablespoon of ground flaxseed whisked with water sets into a thick, gel-like mixture that binds baking in place of one egg. It works because the seed mucilage and fibre swell and gel, and it adds gentle fibre and a nutty note to muffins, pancakes and cookies.

INGREDIENTS

7 g	Flax (<i>Linum usitatissimum</i>), seed — ground flaxseed (1 tbsp)
45 g	Water — 3 tbsp water

METHOD

1. Grind 1 tablespoon (about 7 g) of flaxseed to a fine meal.
2. Whisk it together with 3 tablespoons (about 45 ml) of water in a small bowl.
3. Let it stand 5–10 minutes until thick and gel-like.
4. Stir into your recipe’s wet ingredients in place of one egg, then bake as usual.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A clean pot is an invitation.

Traditional Debittered Lupini Beans

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 g

The classic Mediterranean salted lupin-bean snack, made safe only through a full multi-day debittering process.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Dried white lupin (<i>Lupinus albus</i>) seeds, bitter/high-alkaloid landrace — must undergo full debittering process below before eating; alternatively substitute commercially pre-debittered ‘sweet lupin’ seed and skip to step 4
3 L	Water — for soaking and rinsing, changed daily
2 tbsp	Coarse salt — for final brine

METHOD

1. Rinse dry seeds and soak in fresh water for 24 hours.
2. Drain, cover with fresh water, and boil for 60-90 minutes until tender.
3. Drain and place seeds in a container covered with fresh cold water; refrigerate or keep cool.
4. Change the soaking water completely at least twice a day for 4-5 days, tasting a bean occasionally — the bitterness must fully disappear before the beans are safe to eat.
5. Once no bitterness remains, prepare a brine with salt and water, submerge the beans, and refrigerate at least 24 hours before serving as a snack.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The word recipe once meant simply take; and so every dish begins with an open hand.

Mediterranean Brined Lupini Beans

Food / culinary • Makes ~280 g

Firm, savoury lupini beans in a lemony brine, a classic Mediterranean snack once the bitterness has been patiently soaked away.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Dried sweet lupin seeds (<i>Lupinus angustifolius</i>) — Sweet (low-alkaloid) cultivar.
3 l	Water for soaking and rinsing — Changed daily throughout debittering; total volume is approximate.
30 g	Salt for the finishing brine
30 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Soak the dried seeds in plenty of cold water for 12 hours, then drain.
2. Boil the soaked seeds in fresh water for 30 minutes and drain.
3. Cover with fresh cold water and soak for 5 to 7 days, changing the water twice daily, until the beans taste clean with no bitterness.
4. Taste-test carefully: if any bitterness remains, continue rinsing; discard if it will not clear.
5. Dissolve the salt in fresh water with the lemon juice, pour over the debittered beans, and refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Lupin seeds have been eaten around the Mediterranean since antiquity as ‘lupini’ beans, always after long soaking to leach out the bitterness; modern ‘sweet’ cultivars were bred in the twentieth century to lower the alkaloids.

Apple Scrap Cider Vinegar

Food / culinary • Makes 750 ml

A zero-waste fermented apple vinegar made from peels and cores left over from baking or sauce-making — a traditional two-stage ferment (alcoholic → acetic) that produces a raw, live apple cider vinegar with a natural mother culture. This is kitchen alchemy: scraps become a useful condiment and digestive tonic in a jar on the windowsill. Note that the fermentation process results in a true vinegar; it is NOT a fast or commercial substitute, but a genuine, traditionally fermented product. Use in salad dressings, marinades, shrubs (drinking vinegars), pickling brines, and hair rinses.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Organic apples preferred to avoid pesticide residue on peel; rinse but do not scrub
750 ml	Filtered or non-chlorinated water — Chlorine in tap water inhibits fermentation; use filtered, boiled-and-cooled, or bottled water
30 g	Raw honey or unrefined cane sugar — Feeds the wild yeasts; approximately 1 heaped tbsp per 750 ml water

METHOD

1. Place the apple peels and cores (no seeds) into a clean 1-litre glass jar. Dissolve the sugar or honey in the water, stirring until fully dispersed, then pour over the apple scraps. The liquid should cover the scraps completely; weigh them down with a small clean weight or a zip-lock bag filled with water if needed.
2. Cover the jar with a piece of muslin or a double layer of kitchen paper secured with a rubber band — you want air in but flies out. Place in a warm spot (18–24 °C), away from direct sunlight.
3. Stir once daily for the first 1–2 weeks. You will see bubbling and smell a mild alcoholic/yeasty aroma — this is the first fermentation (wild yeast converting sugar to alcohol).
4. After 2–4 weeks, strain out the solids through a fine-mesh sieve or muslin. Return the liquid to the clean jar. A thin film or raft (the mother culture) will begin to form on the surface — this is beneficial acetic acid bacteria doing their work.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Apples moved westward along the Silk Road to Persia, Greece, and Rome; Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis Historia*, 77 CE) listed at least 23 cultivated varieties and described grafting technique.

5. Leave to ferment for a further 3–6 weeks, stirring gently every few days. Taste weekly: when it smells and tastes sharply of vinegar with no alcoholic notes, it is ready. Total time: 6–10 weeks.
6. Strain once more if you prefer a clear vinegar, or leave the mother in for a live product. Bottle in sealed glass and store at room temperature or refrigerate. Reserve the mother to start the next batch.

Classic Apple Sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

Silky, gently spiced apple sauce — the traditional British and Nordic accompaniment to roast pork, duck, and goose, but equally wonderful stirred into porridge, served alongside pancakes, or spooned over vanilla ice cream. Made from cooking apples (Bramley or Granny Smith give the best fluffy result), this is the simplest and most versatile preserve in the apple larder.

INGREDIENTS

750 g	Apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Bramley, Granny Smith, or other cooking cultivar
60 ml	Water
20 g	Caster sugar or honey (to taste) — Start with 1 tbsp; adjust to sweetness of apples
15 g	Unsalted butter (optional) — Stir in at end for richness
1 g	Ground cinnamon (optional) (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — A pinch only

METHOD

1. Peel, core, and roughly chop the apples into even chunks of about 3–4 cm. Work quickly and drop them into a pan with the water to prevent browning.
2. Add a pinch of cinnamon if using. Cover and cook on a low heat for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the apple has completely collapsed.
3. Beat with a wooden spoon or pass through a sieve for a smooth sauce. If the apple is very tart, stir in the sugar or honey to taste.
4. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter if using — this adds gloss and a rounded flavour.
5. Taste and adjust sweetness. Serve warm, or cool and refrigerate/freeze. For a shelf-stable preserve, pack into sterilised jars while hot, seal, and water-bath process for 15 minutes.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Norse mythology, the goddess Iðunn guards the golden apples of immortality that keep the gods young — a recurring motif across northern European tradition. In Greek myth the golden apple inscribed “to the fairest” set off the Trojan War.

Dried Apple Rings

Food / culinary • Makes 100 g dried

Dried apple rings are one of the oldest and simplest forms of food preservation — a concentrated, chewy, naturally sweet snack that retains significant fibre and polyphenols. Use as a trail-mix ingredient, a porridge topping, or reconstituted in warm water, apple juice, or tea for use in baked goods and compotes. A traditional winter-store food across northern Europe, dried over the hearth or in the bread oven.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Any cultivar works; Cox, Braeburn, and Fuji give good flavour; Bramley cooks down too much
500 ml	Citric acid solution (1 tsp citric acid per 500 ml cold water) — For pre-treatment to prevent browning; can substitute with 2 tbsp lemon juice per 500 ml water

METHOD

1. Prepare the citric acid or lemon juice solution in a large bowl. Core the apples using an apple corer, then slice into rings 4–6 mm thick. A mandoline gives consistent thickness.
2. Drop each ring immediately into the citric acid solution as you go. Leave to soak for 5 minutes, then drain and pat dry gently with a clean cloth.
3. OVEN METHOD: Arrange rings in a single layer on wire cooling racks set over baking trays. Dry at 55–65 °C (fan oven if possible) for 6–8 hours, turning once halfway. The rings are ready when leathery and flexible, with no moisture at the centre when you tear one.
4. DEHYDRATOR METHOD: Arrange on dehydrator trays at 55°C for 6–10 hours depending on thickness and moisture content of the apple.
5. Allow to cool completely before packing into airtight jars — condensation from warm rings will shorten shelf life. Leave jar unsealed for 24 hours and check: if condensation appears inside, the rings need more drying time.
6. Store in a cool, dark, dry place. Check weekly in the first month — any soft or sticky rings should be discarded or re-dried.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The biblical association of the forbidden fruit with the apple derives from the Latin ambiguity of ‘malum’ (both ‘apple’ and ‘evil’); the original Hebrew merely says ‘fruit.’

Simple wild apple sauce

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 g

Small, tart wild apples like the Sievers apple cook down into a fragrant, softly sweet sauce, the simplest way to enjoy the fruit that every orchard apple descends from.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Sievers apple (<i>Malus sieversii</i>) — Ripe wild (Sievers) apples, washed, cored and chopped, pips discarded
60 ml	Water — To start the cooking
1 tbsp	Honey or sugar — To taste, depending on tartness
1 pinch	Cinnamon or a strip of lemon peel — Optional aromatic

METHOD

1. Wash, core and chop the apples, discarding the pips (the skins can be left on for colour and fibre).
2. Put the apples and water in a saucepan, cover, and cook gently over low-medium heat.
3. Stir now and then and cook 15-20 minutes until the fruit collapses into a soft pulp.
4. Sweeten to taste with honey or sugar and add cinnamon or lemon peel if using.
5. Mash for a rustic sauce or blend for a smooth one; serve warm or chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Domesticated in Central Asia some 3,000-4,000 years ago and carried west and east along the Silk Road to become the apple of orchards worldwide; its wild Kazakh forests are celebrated as the birthplace of the apple and are a focus of conservation.

Cooling Mango Lassi

Food / culinary

A silky yogurt drink from the Indian subcontinent that turns a ripe mango into the most refreshing glass on a hot day. Naturally rich in vitamin C and gut-friendly cultures.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Ripe mango flesh (<i>Mangifera indica</i>) — About one large mango, peeled and stoned
1 cup	Plain yogurt — Whole-milk or plant-based
0.5 cup	Cold milk or water — To adjust thickness
1 tsp	Honey or sugar — Optional, to taste
1 pinch	Ground cardamom (<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>) — Optional aromatic

METHOD

1. Peel the mango and cut the flesh away from the stone.
2. Add the mango, yogurt, milk or water and optional honey to a blender.
3. Blend until completely smooth and frothy, about 30 seconds.
4. Taste and adjust sweetness; add a pinch of cardamom if you like.
5. Pour over ice and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Revered in India for over 4,000 years; the mango is sacred in Hindu tradition, its leaves strung over doorways at weddings and festivals as a symbol of prosperity, and it is celebrated in Ayurveda.

Boiled Cassava (Yuca)

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 g

The safe, everyday way to enjoy cassava as a starchy side dish. Correct peeling and boiling are what make this root wholesome, so follow the steps exactly.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Fresh sweet cassava root (<i>Manihot esculenta</i>) — Firm, unblemished roots only
2 l	Water — For boiling; discarded
1 tsp	Salt
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — For serving

METHOD

1. Cut the root into 8 cm sections and peel away all brown skin and the pink inner layer completely.
2. Halve each section lengthwise and remove the woody central fibre.
3. Place in a pot, cover generously with fresh water, add salt and bring to a rolling boil.
4. Boil uncovered 20-30 minutes until fork-tender.
5. Drain and discard all the cooking water.
6. Drizzle with olive oil and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Eat what the day gives; save what it spares.



Simple Cooked Water Clover Greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

A gentle, cooling potherb of tender water-clover leaves, lightly stir-cooked in the Asian home-kitchen manner, always thoroughly cooked to make it safe.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Young water clover leaves and stems (<i>Marsilea quadrifolia</i>) — From clean water, washed well.
15 ml	Neutral cooking oil
2 cloves	Garlic, finely chopped (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
2 g	Salt — To taste.

METHOD

1. Wash the greens thoroughly in several changes of clean water.
2. Heat the oil in a pan or wok over medium heat and soften the garlic briefly.
3. Add the greens and stir-cook until fully wilted and tender, at least 5 minutes, ensuring they are thoroughly cooked.
4. Season with salt and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A famine and everyday leaf vegetable in parts of Asia, eaten cooked; in Ayurvedic and folk traditions the plant was used for its cooling, calming reputation.



Stock Flower Edible Garnish (*Matthiola incana*)

Food / culinary • Makes 10 florets

*Stock flowers (*Matthiola incana*) have a long tradition of use as edible garnishes in European cuisine, particularly in Italy and in Elizabethan-era cookery, where they were valued for their sweet, spicy clove-like fragrance and ornamental appeal. The flowers are members of the cabbage family (*Brassicaceae*), making them safe for culinary use at garnish quantities when pesticide-free. They are suited to desserts, salads, and spring celebrations where both colour and scent are desired. This is an edible-garnish preparation only — the flowers are not cooked or processed.*

INGREDIENTS

5 grams *Matthiola incana* flowers — Freshly harvested, fully open florets; pesticide-free only

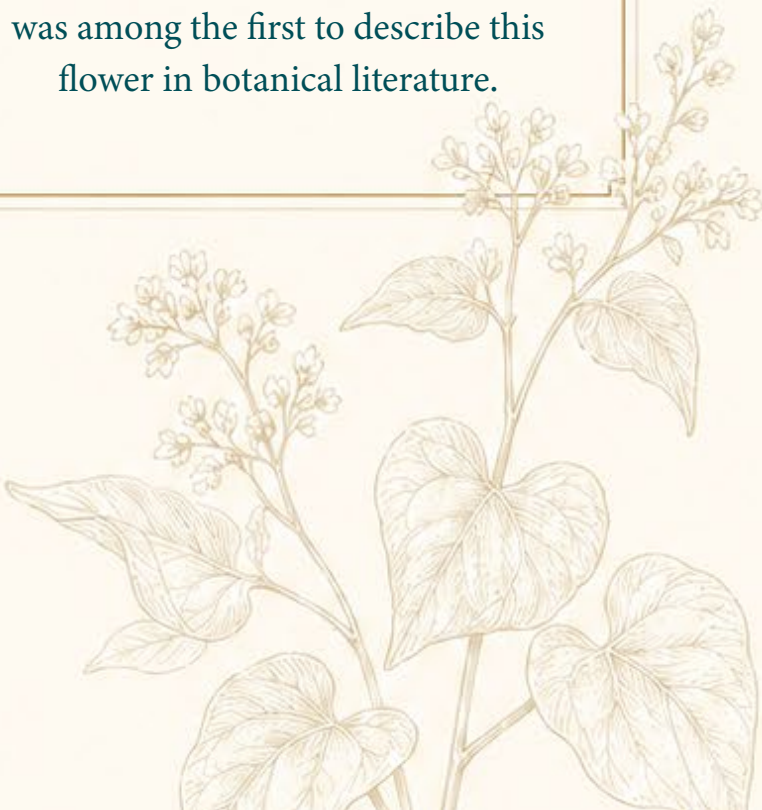
METHOD

1. Harvest stock florets on the morning of use, selecting fully open flowers from plants that have received no pesticide treatment. Gently rinse under cool water and pat dry on a clean cloth.
2. Inspect each floret and discard any with damaged petals, browning edges, or signs of pest damage.
3. Scatter the florets directly onto the dish immediately before serving — desserts, salads, spring cheeses, or iced cakes. For a traditional crystallised version: lightly brush each floret with lightly beaten egg white, dust with caster sugar, and allow to dry on baking paper for 30–60 minutes before using as a decoration.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The genus *Matthiola* was named in honour of Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1500–1577), the Venetian physician and botanist who commented extensively on Dioscorides and was among the first to describe this flower in botanical literature.



Wild Mint Yogurt Sauce

Food / culinary

A cooling, tangy yogurt sauce brightened with chopped fresh wild mint, in the tradition of Middle Eastern and Central Asian mint-yogurt condiments served alongside grilled foods and rice dishes.

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp	Fresh wild mint leaves, chopped (<i>Mentha longifolia</i>)
1 cup	Plain yogurt
0.5 clove	Garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — optional
0.25 tsp	Salt

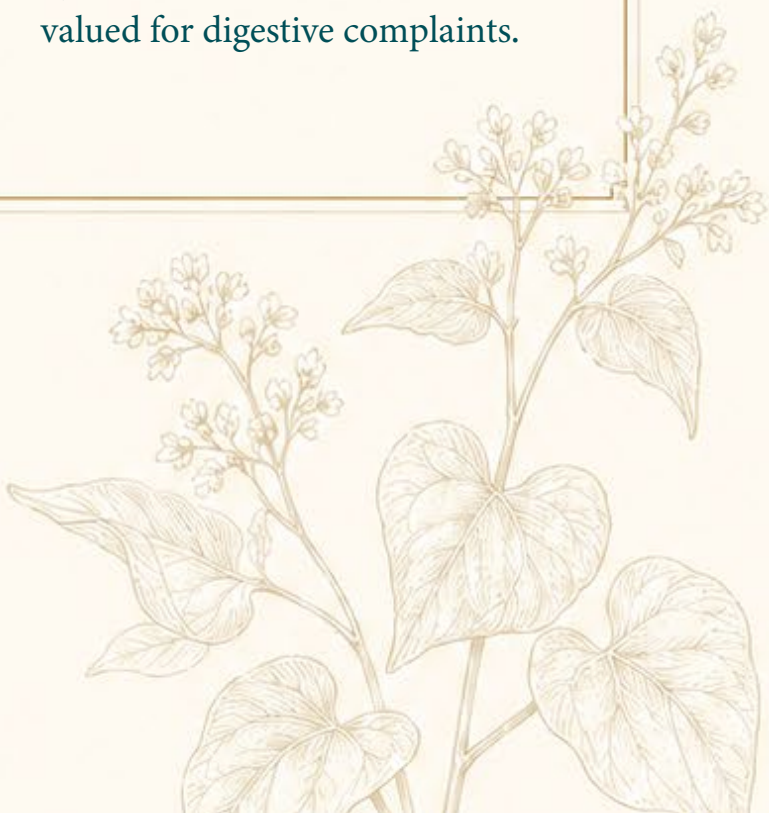
METHOD

1. Finely chop the fresh mint leaves.
2. Stir mint, minced garlic, and salt into the yogurt.
3. Chill for at least 15 minutes to let the flavors meld.
4. Serve alongside grilled vegetables, meats, or rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long-standing use in Middle Eastern, North African, and Central Asian tea culture and traditional medicine, referred to historically in English herbals as ‘horse-mint’ and valued for digestive complaints.



Fresh mint & coriander chutney (hari chutney)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The bright green Indian table chutney: fresh spearmint and coriander blitzed with green chilli, lemon and a little salt. Spearmint gives it its sweet backbone — a food-first, raw-herb relish.

INGREDIENTS

40 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh spearmint leaves
40 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander (leaves & stems)
10 g	Chili Pepper (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Green chilli (to taste)
20 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
3 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
30 g	Water — As needed to blend

METHOD

1. Put the spearmint, coriander, green chilli, lemon juice and salt into a blender.
2. Add a little water and blend to a smooth paste.
3. Taste and adjust salt, chilli or lemon, adding more water if needed to loosen.
4. Serve as a dip or relish with snacks, grilled food, rice or sandwiches.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Culpeper and later herbalists kept it as a warming, wind-dispelling stomach remedy.



Moroccan-style fresh spearmint tea (atay bi naâna)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

The classic North-African hospitality tea: green gunpowder tea brewed with a generous bunch of fresh spearmint and sugar, poured from height to build a light foam. Spearmint at its most everyday and welcoming — food-first, simply a fragrant, refreshing drink.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — A generous bunch of fresh spearmint sprigs
8 g	Tea Plant (<i>Camellia sinensis</i>) — Green gunpowder tea
40 g	Sugar (to taste) — Traditional; adjust or omit
1000 g	Boiling water

METHOD

1. Rinse a small handful of green gunpowder tea briefly with a little boiling water in the pot; discard this first wash.
2. Add the fresh spearmint sprigs and the sugar to the pot with the tea.
3. Fill with boiling water and brew for 3–5 minutes.
4. Pour from a height into small glasses to aerate, building a light foam on top.
5. Serve hot immediately as a refreshing after-meal tea.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Legend credits its discovery to the mythical emperor Shennong, into whose pot of boiling water tea leaves are said to have drifted; the 8th-century scholar Lu Yu codified its culture in the Cha Jing (“Classic of Tea”).

Moroccan-style fresh mint tea (atay bi naana)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

The North African classic: green tea brewed with a generous bunch of fresh peppermint (or spearmint) and sugar, poured from a height to crown each glass with foam. A hospitable, digestive after-meal drink and the everyday face of mint as food.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Peppermint (<i>Mentha x piperita</i>), leaf — A large bunch of fresh peppermint sprigs
8 g	Tea Plant (<i>Camellia sinensis</i>) — Chinese gunpowder green tea
40 g	Sugar — To taste, traditionally generous
1000 ml	Boiling water

METHOD

1. Rinse the green tea briefly with a little boiling water in the teapot and discard this first wash.
2. Add the green tea back to the pot with the fresh peppermint sprigs and the sugar.
3. Fill the pot with boiling water and steep for 3–5 minutes.
4. Pour a small glass, taste, and adjust sugar to taste, then return it to the pot.
5. Pour from a height into small glasses to aerate and build a light foam.
6. Serve hot, especially after a meal.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The mints carry older symbolism inherited from spearmint and wild mints of antiquity — in Greek myth the nymph Minthe was crushed by Persephone and transformed into the fragrant herb, and mint was a strewing herb and symbol of hospitality.

Bogbean Appetite Bitter

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 ml

A small cup of this intensely bitter leaf infusion, taken before meals, is the traditional northern way to wake up a sluggish appetite and digestion.

INGREDIENTS

1.5 g	Dried bogbean leaf (<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>) — About 1 tsp; do not exceed
150 ml	Freshly boiled water

METHOD

1. Place the dried leaf in a cup.
2. Pour over the freshly boiled water.
3. Cover and steep 5-10 minutes.
4. Strain and sip slowly before eating; do not sweeten (the bitterness is the point).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A revered northern bitter, used as a hop substitute in beer, a spring tonic, and a folk remedy for scurvy, fevers, poor appetite and aching joints across Scandinavia and Britain.



Medlar Cheese (Fruit Paste)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 jars (200 ml each)

Medlar cheese is a dense, sliceable fruit paste in the tradition of quince paste (*membrillo*) — a recipe with roots in Roman antiquity. The finished paste is dark amber-brown, fragrant with spiced apple, and firm enough to slice and serve on a cheeseboard. It is made from the entire bletted fruit pulp (sieved to remove seeds and skin), cooked slowly with sugar until very thick. The natural pectin in the medlar gives a firm, clean set.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Bletted medlar fruit (<i>Mespilus germanica</i>) — Fully bletted fruit. Cook whole in a little water until soft, then sieve through a food mill to remove seeds and skin — yields approximately 700 g pulp from 1 kg fruit.
500 g	White granulated sugar — 500 g per 1 kg sieved pulp (1:1 by weight once pulped — weigh pulp and adjust).
15 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Juice of ½ lemon; optional but brightens flavour.
2 g	Ground spices — Optional: a pinch of ground cinnamon and/or ginger (approx. ½ tsp total).

METHOD

1. Place bletted medlar fruit (quartered) in a pan with just enough water to prevent sticking (approximately 100 ml). Cook over low heat, stirring, until completely soft — about 20 minutes.
2. Press the cooked fruit through a food mill or fine mesh sieve to remove seeds and skin. Weigh the resulting pulp.
3. Return pulp to a clean, heavy-bottomed pan. Add 500 g sugar per 1 kg pulp (1:1 by weight) and the lemon juice. Add spices if using.
4. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a silicone spatula, for 45–75 minutes until the mixture is very thick, dark amber, and the spatula leaves a clear trail across the bottom of the pan.
5. Spoon into warm sterilised jars or lightly oiled moulds. Allow to cool completely — the paste will set firm. Seal jars. Store in a cool, dark place.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Even the weed is a herb where it is wanted.

Medlar Fool

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A medlar fool is one of the most luxurious and simplest ways to enjoy the seasonal harvest — bletted medlar pulp folded through lightly whipped cream with spices and a touch of honey. The result is a pale amber cream with a complex, warming flavour of baked apple, dates, and vanilla. A classic English autumn dessert.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Bletted medlar pulp (<i>Mespilus germanica</i>) — Scooped and sieved from approximately 6–8 fully bletted medlars. Discard seeds and skin.
200 ml	Double cream — Lightly whipped to soft peaks.
15 g	Raw honey — About 1 tablespoon — adjust to taste.
1 g	Ground cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — A generous pinch (approx. ¼ tsp).
3 ml	Vanilla extract (<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>) — ½ tsp; optional.

METHOD

1. Scoop the soft flesh from fully bletted medlars. Discard the skin and all 5 hard seeds. Sieve the flesh through a fine mesh to produce smooth pulp.
2. Mix the medlar pulp with honey, cinnamon, and vanilla. Taste and adjust sweetness.
3. Whip double cream to soft peaks — do not over-whip.
4. Gently fold the medlar mixture through the cream — a few folds keep a marbled effect; fully combined gives a uniform amber cream.
5. Spoon into serving glasses or bowls. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve garnished with toasted hazelnuts or a drizzle of honey alongside shortbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Possibly the oldest cultivated fruit in Europe after the grape and olive. *Mespilus germanica* has been cultivated for at least 3,000 years: introduced to Greece around 700 BCE and to Rome about 200 BCE.

Bitter Melon Stir-Fry with Egg and Garlic

Food / culinary

A classic home stir-fry that mellows bitter melon’s edge with salt, garlic and egg, keeping the bright vegetable flavour that makes this gourd so loved across Asia.

INGREDIENTS

2 medium	Bitter melon (<i>Momordica charantia</i>) — Halved, seeded, thinly sliced
1 tsp	Salt — For salting to reduce bitterness
2 whole	Eggs — Lightly beaten
3 cloves	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Minced
2 tbsp	Cooking oil
1 tbsp	Soy sauce

METHOD

1. Toss sliced bitter melon with salt and let sit 15-20 minutes, then rinse and squeeze out excess liquid to reduce bitterness.
2. Heat oil in a wok over medium-high heat and fry the garlic until fragrant.
3. Add the bitter melon and stir-fry 3-4 minutes until just tender-crisp.
4. Push to one side, pour in the beaten eggs, let set slightly, then fold everything together.
5. Season with soy sauce, toss once more, and serve hot with rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A staple of Asian, African and Caribbean cooking and folk medicine, prized as a cooling ‘blood-cleansing’ vegetable and a traditional remedy for diabetes and digestive sluggishness.

Hong Qu Traditional Culinary Use — Food Colourant and Flavouring (Safety Note)

Food / culinary

In East Asian cuisine, red yeast rice (Hong Qu / ang-kak) has been used for over 1000 years as a natural food colourant and flavouring for dishes including red-braised pork (hong shao rou), Peking duck, rice wine (sake, Shaoxing), red rice vinegar, and Okinawan tofuyo (fermented tofu). This culinary use is distinct from supplement use, though monacolin K content in culinary quantities is variable and not zero.

INGREDIENTS

Dried red yeast rice powder (ang-kak / Hong Qu) (*Monascus purpureus*), mycelium — Food-grade dried and milled red yeast rice. Ensure from reputable supplier. Not a standardised supplement product.

METHOD

1. Source food-grade dried red yeast rice (ang-kak) powder from a reputable supplier.
2. Store it airtight in a cool, dry, dark place away from moisture.
3. Weigh out about 0.5-2% of the dish’s weight in powder for the desired red colour.
4. Stir the powder into marinades, braises, sauces or rice wine early in cooking so the colour develops evenly.
5. Adjust the amount to taste and colour; use sparingly, and avoid entirely if any contraindication applies.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The first documented use of Hong Qu (red yeast rice) in China dates to the Tang Dynasty (618 to 907 CE), recorded as a food colourant and digestive aid. The Ming Dynasty pharmacopoeia Ben Cao Gang Mu Dan Shi Bu Yi (ca.

Moringa Leaf and Lentil Dal

Food / culinary • Makes ~750 ml

A comforting South-Indian-style dal brightened with tender moringa leaves stirred in at the end, simple and deeply nourishing.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups	Fresh moringa leaves (<i>Moringa oleifera</i>) — Stripped from stalks and washed.
200 g	Red lentils (<i>Lens culinaris</i>) — Rinsed.
750 ml	Water
1 medium	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Chopped.
1 medium	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Chopped.
1 tsp	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
1 tsp	Cumin seeds (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
2 tbsp	Oil
1 tsp	Salt — To taste.

METHOD

1. Simmer the rinsed lentils with the water, turmeric and chopped tomato until soft and collapsing, about 20 minutes.
2. In a separate pan, heat the oil and fry the cumin seeds, then soften the onion until golden.
3. Stir the onion mixture into the cooked lentils and season with salt.
4. Add the washed moringa leaves and simmer for a further 4-5 minutes until just wilted and tender.
5. Serve warm with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Called the ‘miracle tree’ and ‘tree of life’ across South Asia and Africa, moringa has been eaten and used medicinally for millennia, and is promoted today against malnutrition for its dense nutrition and rapid growth.

Seasoned mukdenia spring greens (namul)

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 g

A simple Korean-style preparation of tender young mukdenia leaves: briefly blanched to soften and set the colour, then dressed with sesame and garlic. A gentle way to enjoy this cool-season woodland green.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	mukdenia (<i>Mukdenia rossii</i>) — Young mukdenia leaves and shoots, well washed
1 tsp	toasted sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 tsp	soy sauce
1 clove	garlic, finely grated (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 tsp	toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 litre	water for blanching — with a pinch of salt

METHOD

1. Bring the salted water to a rolling boil.
2. Blanch the young mukdenia leaves for 30-60 seconds until just wilted and bright.
3. Drain and plunge into cold water, then gently squeeze out excess moisture.
4. Toss the greens with sesame oil, soy sauce, garlic and sesame seeds.
5. Taste, adjust seasoning, and serve at room temperature as a side dish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known in Korea as an edible wild green among the country's spring 'namul' vegetables, and prized in gardens for its fan-shaped, colour-shifting foliage (hence common names 'rock fatsia' and 'red-leaf mukdenia').

Curry Leaf & Mustard Seed Tempering (Tadka)

Food / culinary

The fragrant South Indian finishing technique: fresh curry leaves crackled in hot oil with mustard seeds to crown dals, yoghurt rice and vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

15 leaves	Fresh curry leaves (<i>Murraya koenigii</i>) — Pat dry to reduce spattering.
2 tbsp	Neutral oil or ghee — Must be hot before adding spices.
1 tsp	Black mustard seeds (<i>Brassica nigra</i>) — Should pop when hot.
1 whole	Dried red chilli (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Broken, optional for heat.
1 pinch	Asafoetida (hing) (<i>Ferula assafoetida</i>) — Optional, adds savoury depth.

METHOD

1. Heat the oil or ghee in a small pan over medium-high until shimmering.
2. Add the mustard seeds and wait until they begin to pop.
3. Add the dried chilli and asafoetida for a few seconds.
4. Add the fresh curry leaves and stand back; they will splutter and crisp in about 5 seconds.
5. Immediately pour the hot tempering over your dal, rice or vegetables and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

An everyday flavouring and Ayurvedic remedy of India, used for digestion, nausea and diabetes; leaves are traditionally believed to strengthen hair and eyesight.

Camu Camu Berry Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 ml

A bright, tangy tropical smoothie that folds tart camu camu powder into sweet fruit, an easy way to enjoy its vitamin C without the raw fruit’s sharpness.

INGREDIENTS

1 tsp	Camu camu powder (<i>Myrciaria dubia</i>) — Start with 1 tsp; 1-2 tsp to taste.
1 whole	Banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>) — Ripe, for sweetness and body.
100 g	Frozen mango or berries (<i>Myrciaria dubia</i>)
200 ml	Yoghurt or plant milk
1 tsp	Honey — Optional, to balance the tartness.

METHOD

1. Peel the banana and add it to a blender with the frozen fruit.
2. Add the yoghurt or plant milk and the camu camu powder.
3. Blend until completely smooth and thick.
4. Taste, sweeten lightly with honey if needed, and drink straight away.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A traditional food of Amazonian peoples, camu camu was long gathered from flooded forests by canoe; too sour to eat raw in quantity, it is now prized worldwide as a vitamin-C-dense superfruit.

Sardinian Myrtle-Scented Roast Potatoes

Food / culinary • Makes ~800 g

Crisp roast potatoes perfumed with myrtle leaves in the Sardinian style, where the aromatic shrub flavours everything from game to bread.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Waxy potatoes, cut in chunks (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Parboiled and roughed up for crisp edges.
12 leaves	Fresh myrtle leaves and small sprigs (<i>Myrtus communis</i>) — Tuck among the potatoes.
3 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — For crisping.
2 cloves	Garlic cloves, crushed (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Skin left on.
1 tsp	Sea salt — To taste.

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 210 C and parboil the potato chunks for 8 minutes, then drain and shake to roughen the edges.
2. Tip the potatoes into a roasting tin with the olive oil, crushed garlic and salt; toss to coat.
3. Scatter the fresh myrtle leaves and sprigs among the potatoes.
4. Roast for 35-40 minutes, turning once, until deep golden and crisp.
5. Discard the woody myrtle sprigs and serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The kettle sings loudest for the tired cook.

Crisp Stir-Fried Lotus Root

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

A quick, crunchy stir-fry that shows off the lotus rhizome’s lacy cross-section, a beloved everyday dish across East Asia.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Fresh lotus root, peeled and sliced (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>) — Slice into thin rounds and rinse.
1 tbsp	Neutral oil — For high-heat stir-frying.
1 tbsp	Soy sauce — For seasoning.
1 tsp	Rice vinegar (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — Keeps the root pale and crisp.
1 stalk	Spring onion, sliced (<i>Allium fistulosum</i>) — To finish.
1 tsp	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — To garnish.

METHOD

1. Soak the sliced lotus root briefly in water with a splash of the vinegar to keep it pale, then drain.
2. Heat the oil in a wok or frying pan over high heat.
3. Stir-fry the lotus root for 3-4 minutes until crisp-tender.
4. Add the soy sauce and remaining rice vinegar and toss for another minute.
5. Scatter with spring onion and sesame seeds and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The sacred lotus of Hindu and Buddhist tradition, emblem of purity rising unstained from the mud; every part is used in Chinese medicine, with seeds (Lian Zi) and leaf (He Ye) recorded in classical texts.

Catnip & Lemon Tisane

Food / culinary • Makes 300 ml

A simple, fragrant herbal tea brewed in the old English tradition — catnip was the everyday cuppa in Britain before Chinese tea arrived. Mild minty-lemony flavour, naturally caffeine-free. Serve hot with honey and a slice of lemon.

INGREDIENTS

4 g	Catnip (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>), aerial parts
300 g	Water, just off boil (~95°C)
10 g	Raw honey (to taste, optional)
5 g	Fresh lemon juice (to taste, optional) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Bring 300 ml fresh water to just off the boil (about 95 °C — let the kettle rest 30 seconds after boiling).
2. Place 4 g (about 1 heaped teaspoon) of dried catnip herb in a teapot or infuser-mug.
3. Pour the hot water over the herb and cover immediately — covering keeps the aromatic nepetalactone-rich oils in the cup rather than escaping as steam.
4. Steep for 10 minutes.
5. Strain into a clean mug. Add honey and a squeeze of lemon to taste. Drink warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Nepeta cataria has been recorded as a medicinal and kitchen herb since at least the 11th century in European herbalism, appearing in *De viribus herbarum*.



Catnip Herb Butter

Food / culinary • Makes 125 g

A simple compound butter blending fresh catnip leaves with unsalted butter — the minty, slightly lemony flavour of catnip pairs beautifully with fish, chicken, steamed vegetables, and crusty bread. A lovely way to use a garden glut of fresh leaves.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Catnip (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>), leaf
100 g	Unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
5 g	Fresh lemon zest (from 1/2 lemon) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
2 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Freshly ground black pepper (optional) (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Wash and dry the catnip leaves thoroughly. Finely chop 10 g of fresh young catnip leaves.
2. In a bowl, beat the softened butter until fluffy. Add the chopped catnip, lemon zest, salt, and pepper.
3. Mix thoroughly until evenly combined. Taste and adjust seasoning.
4. Spoon the butter onto a sheet of greaseproof paper. Shape into a log by rolling and twisting the ends like a cracker.
5. Refrigerate until firm (at least 1 hour). Slice as needed. Freeze in portions for longer storage.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Before Chinese tea became the British daily drink, catnip tea was widely drunk in England as an everyday beverage — Maude Grieve records it as “taken as a people’s daily cuppa by many folk.

Catnip, Mint & Lemon Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 150 g

A bright, minty vinaigrette using fresh catnip and spearmint leaves — excellent drizzled over roasted vegetables, grain salads, grilled chicken, or a simple green salad. Catnip adds a distinctive lemony-herbal note to the dressing.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Catnip (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>), leaf
5 g	Fresh spearmint leaves, finely chopped (<i>Mentha spicata</i>)
90 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
30 g	Fresh lemon juice (about 1 lemon) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
10 g	Apple cider vinegar (<i>Malus domestica</i>)
5 g	Raw honey
2 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Freshly ground black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

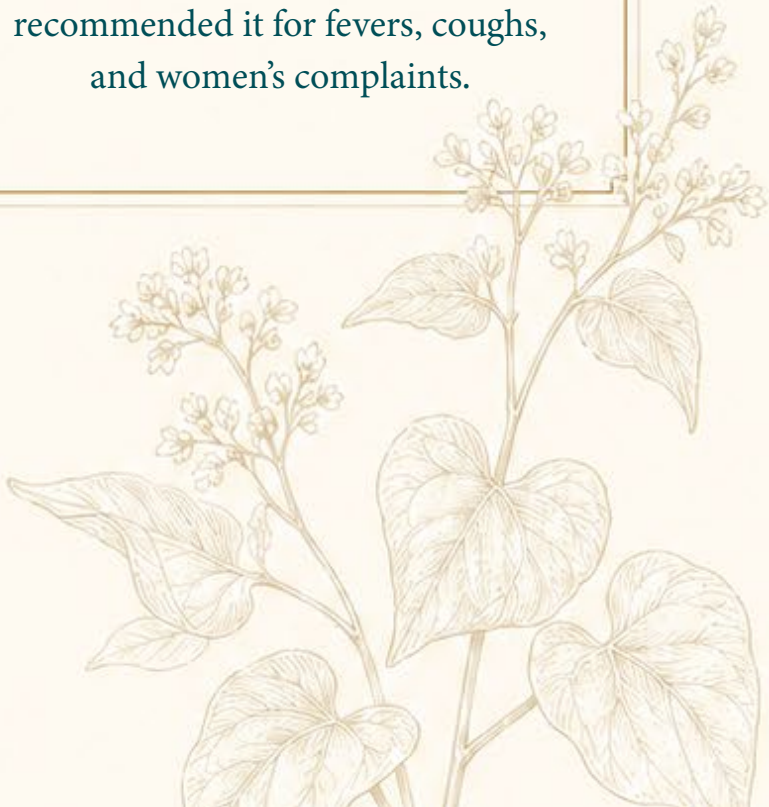
METHOD

1. Finely chop the fresh catnip and spearmint leaves.
2. Combine the lemon juice, cider vinegar, honey, salt, and pepper in a small bowl or jar. Whisk until the honey dissolves.
3. Add the olive oil in a steady stream while whisking (or add to the jar and shake vigorously) to create an emulsion.
4. Stir in the chopped catnip and mint. Taste and adjust seasoning — add more lemon for brightness or honey for sweetness.
5. Let stand 5 minutes for the flavours to meld before using. Transfer to a jar with a tight lid for storage.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

“ In France, the leaves and young shoots were used in cooking as a kitchen seasoning (Grieve, *A Modern Herbal*, 1931). Culpeper (1653) placed it under Venus and recommended it for fevers, coughs, and women’s complaints.



Classic Basil Pesto (Pesto alla Genovese)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The classic Ligurian green sauce — fresh sweet basil pounded with garlic, pine nuts, hard cheese and good olive oil. A traditional culinary preparation that showcases basil at its most fragrant.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>), leaf — fresh basil leaves (large bunch)
8 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>), bulb — garlic (1–2 cloves)
30 g	Pine nuts (<i>Pinus pinea</i>)
50 g	Hard cheese — Parmesan / Pecorino, grated
100 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Pound the garlic with a pinch of salt to a paste in a mortar (or pulse in a food processor).
2. Add the basil leaves a handful at a time, pounding or pulsing until broken down.
3. Add the pine nuts and continue pounding to a coarse paste.
4. Stir in the grated cheese, then work in the olive oil a little at a time until you have a loose, creamy sauce.
5. Taste and adjust salt. Use at once or store under a film of oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Basil has a long history as both a culinary and symbolic plant. Its name is usually traced to the Greek *basileus*, “king” — the 17th-century herbalist Parkinson wrote that “the smell thereof is so excellent that it is fit for a king’s house.”

Holy Basil Stir-Fry Finishing Herb

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Holy basil (Thai kaphrao) is the defining herb of the classic Thai stir-fry pad kaphrao. Its peppery, clove-like leaves are tossed in at the very end so the aroma stays fresh and bright.

INGREDIENTS

15 g Holy basil (tulsi) (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*), leaf — a generous handful of fresh holy basil leaves

METHOD

1. Have your stir-fry (meat or vegetables with garlic, chilli and sauce) cooked and hot in the pan.
2. Add the fresh holy basil leaves and toss for 30–60 seconds, just until wilted and fragrant.
3. Serve immediately over rice while the aroma is at its brightest.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Salt draws the sweetness out of nearly everything, in the cooking pot as, perhaps, in sorrow.

Sauteed Evening Primrose Spring Greens

Food / culinary

A simple wild-food side dish using the tender first-year leaves gathered before the plant bolts, when they are mildest.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 handfuls Young evening primrose leaves and shoots (*Oenothera biennis*) — First-year rosette leaves, washed
- 1 tbsp Olive oil or butter
- 1 clove Garlic clove (*Allium sativum*) — Thinly sliced
- 1 pinch Salt and lemon — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the leaves well and drain; remove any tough stems.
2. Warm the oil or butter in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
3. Add the greens and toss until wilted and tender, about 3-5 minutes.
4. Season with salt and a squeeze of lemon and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The heart of a home was, for most of human history, wherever the cooking fire happened to be lit.



Everyday Mediterranean Olive Oil Dressing

Food / culinary • Makes 200 ml

A classic kitchen vinaigrette built on extra-virgin olive oil — the heart of the Mediterranean diet. A simple culinary preparation, not a remedy.

INGREDIENTS

137 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>), oil — Extra-virgin olive (fruit) oil
47 g	Wine or balsamic vinegar (or lemon juice) — the acid
5 g	Dijon mustard (optional, helps emulsify)
2 g	Salt — to taste
1 g	Black pepper, freshly ground (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — to taste

METHOD

1. Put the vinegar (or lemon juice), mustard if using, salt and pepper in a jar.
2. Add the olive oil, seal, and shake hard until emulsified (or whisk the oil in slowly).
3. Taste and adjust seasoning; dress salads or vegetables just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dinner is the day forgiving itself.

Hyssop Flower & Lemon Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 80 ml

Hyssop flowers have a milder, floral-minty flavour than the leaves — delicate enough to scatter over green salads, stone-fruit platters, or goat’s cheese. This simple vinaigrette uses hyssop-infused vinegar (or hyssop herb vinegar, see companion recipe) to dress a summer salad. The edible purple flowers of hyssop double as a garnish, adding visual beauty and gentle aromatic complexity.

INGREDIENTS

60 ml	<i>Olea europaea</i> (extra virgin olive oil) — Use a mild, fruity extra-virgin olive oil
20 ml	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> — hyssop herb vinegar — Substitute plain white wine vinegar + 1/4 tsp dried hyssop if hyssop vinegar is unavailable
5 ml	<i>Citrus limon</i> (lemon) — zest and juice — Approximately 1 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
5 g	Dijon mustard — Acts as natural emulsifier; approximately 1 tsp
5 g	Raw honey — Approximately 1 tsp; balances acidity
3 g	<i>Hyssopus officinalis</i> — flowers (garnish) — A small handful of fresh hyssop flowers to scatter over the finished salad
2 g	Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper — Season to taste

METHOD

1. In a small jar or bowl, combine the Dijon mustard and honey. Add a pinch of salt and a twist of black pepper.
2. Add the hyssop vinegar and lemon juice to the mustard-honey base. Whisk together.
3. Slowly pour in the olive oil while whisking continuously (or seal the jar and shake vigorously) until the vinaigrette emulsifies.
4. Taste and adjust: add more honey for sweetness, more vinegar for acidity, or salt to round the flavour.
5. Dress the salad leaves lightly — a little goes a long way. Toss gently.
6. Scatter fresh hyssop flowers over the plated salad as a garnish immediately before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dioscorides (first century CE) described it in *De Materia Medica* for coughs and respiratory ailments. Hildegard of Bingen (twelfth century) commended hyssop for digestion and lung support.

Nopalitos Saute (Fresh Cactus Pad Preparation)

Food / culinary

The everyday way fresh prickly pear pads are turned into food across Mexico — tender and tangy, and shown in studies to blunt the blood-sugar rise of a meal.

INGREDIENTS

4 pad	Fresh prickly pear cactus pads (nopales), spines removed (<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>) — choose young, tender, bright-green pads
0.5 cup	White onion, diced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
1 whole	Tomato, diced (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
0.25 tsp	Salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Using tongs and gloves, scrape off all glochids/spines from the pads and trim the edges.
2. Dice the cleaned pads into small squares.
3. Blanch in boiling salted water 5-8 minutes to reduce sliminess, then drain and rinse.
4. Saute onion in olive oil until soft, add tomato and diced nopales, and cook 8-10 minutes until tender.
5. Season with salt and serve warm as a side or taco filling.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Being read to as a child shapes the growing mind for life; a bedtime story is a kind of building.

Prickly Pear (Tuna) Agua Fresca

Food / culinary

A vividly pink, naturally sweet cooling drink made from ripe prickly pear fruit — a favorite refresco across Mexico and the US Southwest.

INGREDIENTS

6 whole	Ripe prickly pear fruit (tuna), peeled (<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>) — deep red-purple fruit is sweetest
4 cup	Water
2 tbsp	Lime juice (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)
2 tbsp	Honey or sugar — adjust 1-3 tbsp to taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, peel the fruit and roughly chop the flesh.
2. Blend the flesh with 1 cup of the water until smooth.
3. Strain through a fine sieve to remove seeds.
4. Stir in remaining water, lime juice, and sweetener to taste.
5. Chill and serve over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Roots know the way down; cooks
know the way home.



Marjoram & garden-herb compound butter

Food / culinary • Makes 130 g

A soft compound butter built around sweet marjoram with parsley, thyme and a little garlic and lemon — melt it over grilled meat, fish, corn, baked potatoes or steamed vegetables. A simple way to carry marjoram’s warm aroma into everyday food.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Unsalted butter, softened — Room temperature
6 g	Marjoram (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) — Fresh marjoram leaves, finely chopped (~2 tbsp)
6 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme leaves
3 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed (~1 small clove)
3 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon zest & a squeeze of juice
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Mash the softened butter in a bowl until creamy.
2. Fold in the chopped marjoram, parsley, thyme, crushed garlic, lemon zest and juice, and salt until evenly combined.
3. Roll into a log in baking paper or press into a small jar; chill until firm.
4. Slice or spoon onto hot food to serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its botanical name is often linked to the Greek oros + ganos, “joy of the mountains,” and the Greek myth of Amarakos (a youth turned into the fragrant herb) gave it the old name amaracus.

Marjoram-forward dried herb blend (Provençal style)

Food / culinary • Makes 45 g

A store-cupboard dried-herb blend in the herbes-de-Provence spirit, leaning on sweet marjoram with thyme, oregano and rosemary. Sprinkle over roast vegetables, chicken, focaccia, tomato dishes and grains.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Marjoram (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) — Dried marjoram
12 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Dried thyme
10 g	Oregano (wild marjoram) (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>) — Dried oregano
5 g	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) — Dried rosemary, crushed
3 g	Bay laurel (<i>Laurus nobilis</i>) — Dried bay, finely crumbled

METHOD

1. Combine all the dried herbs in a bowl.
2. Rub between your palms to break them down to an even, fragrant mix.
3. Funnel into a clean airtight jar and label with the date.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Rosemary was called the herb of remembrance, carried at weddings and funerals alike so that love would not be forgotten.



Greek-Style Oregano & Lemon Dressing (Ladolemono)

Food / culinary • Makes ~90 ml

A simple Aegean dressing of olive oil, lemon, and oregano, classically drizzled over grilled fish, vegetables, or salad.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp	<i>Origanum onites</i> (Turkish oregano), dried, crumbled
60 ml	extra virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
30 ml	fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	sea salt

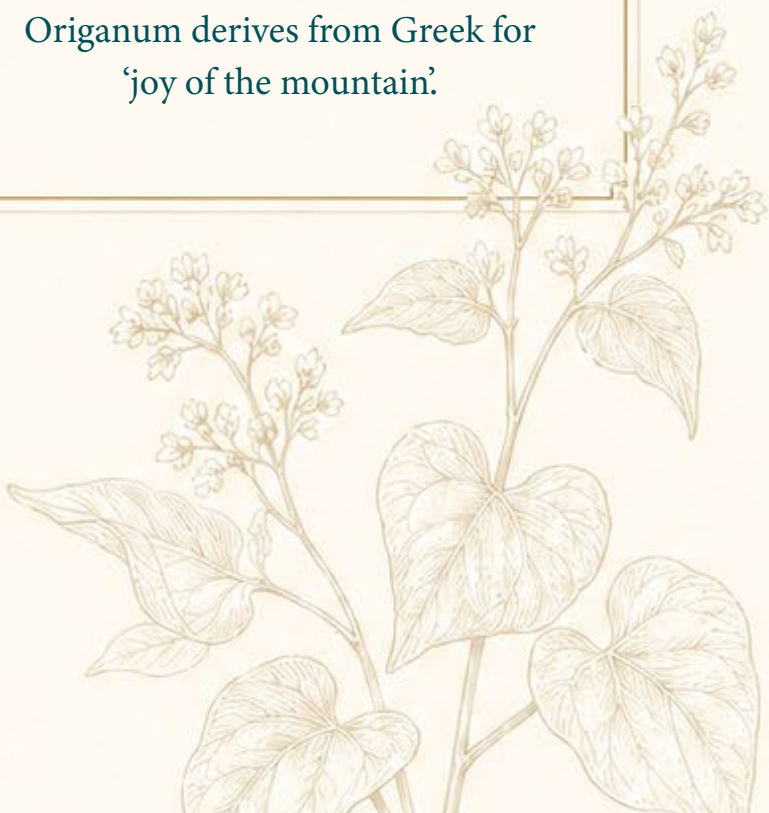
METHOD

1. Whisk olive oil and lemon juice together until slightly emulsified.
2. Stir in the crumbled oregano and a pinch of salt.
3. Drizzle over grilled fish, vegetables, or salad just before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sold and used in Turkey as ‘kekik’ and in Greece as ‘rigani’; central to Aegean cooking and folk medicine for digestive and respiratory complaints. The genus name *Origanum* derives from Greek for ‘joy of the mountain’.



Greek Oregano & Olive Oil Dressing (lادolemono)

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g

The classic Greek oil-and-lemon dressing (lادolemono) lifted with dried oregano — the everyday Mediterranean way to enjoy oregano’s warm, peppery flavour over salads, grilled vegetables, fish and meat.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Oregano (wild marjoram) (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>), leaf — dried oregano (about 1 tbsp), preferably Greek (rigani)
90 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
30 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 g	Salt and pepper — salt and pepper, to taste

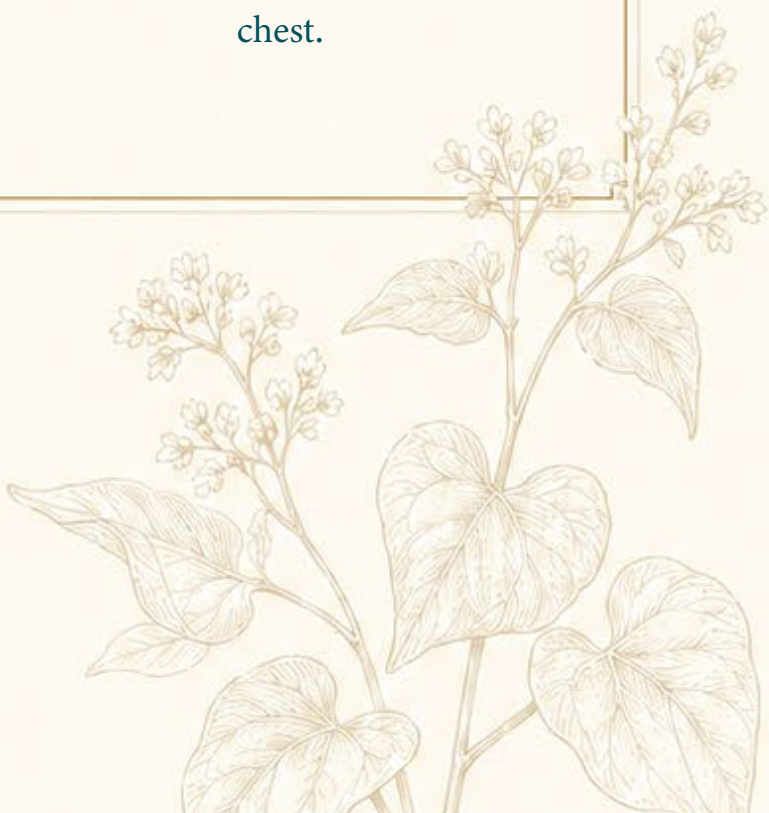
METHOD

1. Put the olive oil, lemon juice and crumbled dried oregano in a jar.
2. Season with salt and pepper, close the jar and shake well until emulsified.
3. Let stand 10 minutes for the oregano to infuse, then drizzle over salads, grilled vegetables, fish or meat.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Dioscorides and the classical herbalists used it for digestive and respiratory complaints, and it was long taken as a warming tea for coughs, colds and “tightness of the chest.”



Toasted dulse (söl) savoury flakes

Food / culinary • Makes ~20 g

The simplest and most traditional way to enjoy dulse: a quick toast that turns the leathery frond crisp and deeply savoury, to crumble over food like a smoky, mineral-rich seasoning.

INGREDIENTS

20 g dulse (*Palmaria palmata*) — Dried *Palmaria palmata* (dulse / söl) fronds from clean water

METHOD

1. Wipe any grit from the dried dulse fronds; there is no need to wash them.
2. Warm a dry frying pan over medium heat.
3. Lay the fronds flat in the pan and toast for 20–40 seconds per side, pressing lightly, until they darken slightly and turn crisp and fragrant. Do not let them burn.
4. Lift out and let cool for a minute, when they will crisp further.
5. Crumble or grind into flakes and store, or scatter straight over your dish.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

One good broth can carry a whole week.

Field Poppy Seed Topping (Baking)

Food / culinary • Makes 30 g

The tiny blue-black seeds of *Papaver rhoeas* are edible and safe — they contain none of the alkaloids found in the plant’s green parts or petals. Poppy seeds from this species have been used in traditional European baking (breads, pastries, rolls) much as *Papaver somniferum* seeds are today, valued for their mild nutty flavour and decorative appearance. This simple preparation shows how to toast and use them as a bread topping or salad sprinkle.

INGREDIENTS

30 g Common Poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), seed — Dry seeds, cleaned and free of chaff

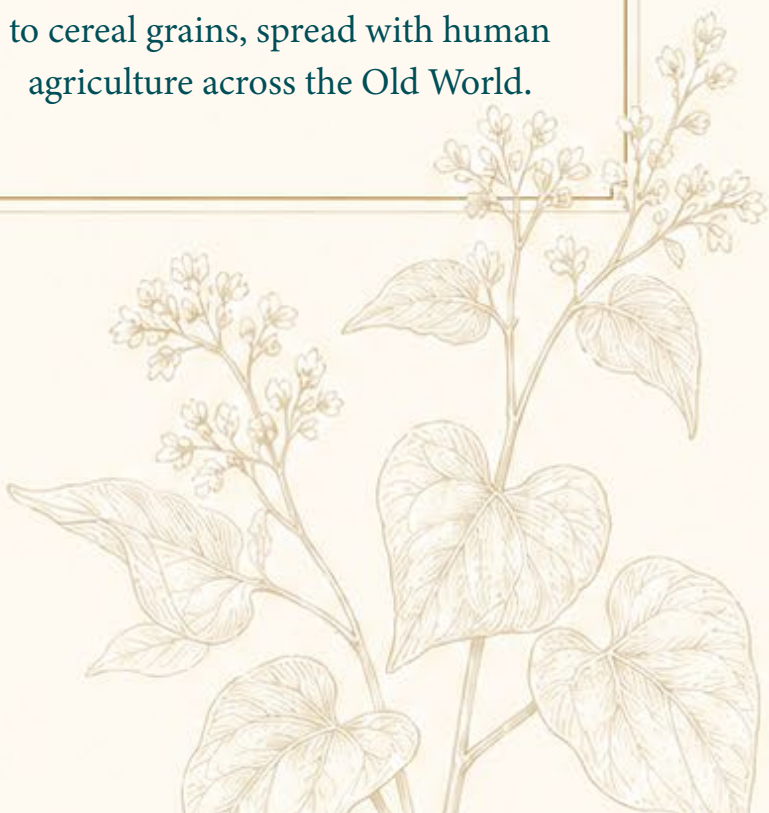
METHOD

1. Place the dry seeds in a small dry frying pan over medium-low heat.
2. Toast gently for 2–3 minutes, stirring or swirling the pan continuously, until a light nutty aroma develops. Do not allow to scorch.
3. Tip onto a cold plate to halt cooking and allow to cool completely before use.
4. Use immediately as a bread or roll topping (press onto dough before baking), or store in a sealed jar for up to 6 months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Papaver rhoeas has been woven into European culture for millennia. It was a constant companion of wheat cultivation from the Neolithic period — its seeds, closely matched in size to cereal grains, spread with human agriculture across the Old World.



Passion Fruit Curd

Food / culinary • Makes ~240 g

A silky, tangy curd that captures the bright perfume of ripe passion fruit. Spread it on toast and scones, swirl it through yoghurt, or fold it into whipped cream for an instant dessert.

INGREDIENTS

120 ml	Fresh passion fruit pulp (with seeds) (<i>Passiflora edulis</i>) — About 6 ripe fruits, pulp scooped out
3 whole	Eggs — Lightly beaten
150 g	Caster sugar
90 g	Unsalted butter — Cubed

METHOD

1. If you prefer a smooth curd, sieve half the passion fruit pulp to remove some seeds; leave the rest for texture and colour.
2. In a heatproof bowl set over gently simmering water, whisk together the eggs and sugar until pale.
3. Add the passion fruit pulp and the butter, and stir constantly over the low heat.
4. Continue stirring for 8-12 minutes until the curd thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon; do not let it boil.
5. Pour into a clean sterilised jar, cool, then refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Spanish missionaries read the flower as a symbol of the Passion of Christ, the corona as the crown of thorns. Passion fruit has since become a beloved tropical flavour in juices, desserts and drinks across the Americas, Australia and Asia.

Baked parsnip crisps

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

Thin ribbons of parsnip baked until golden and crisp — a naturally sweet, wholesome snack or salad topper that needs nothing but a little oil and salt. A simple way to enjoy the root’s sugars. Food-first.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Parsnip (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>) — Large parsnips, peeled and sliced into long thin ribbons with a peeler or mandoline
15 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil (~1 tbsp), to coat lightly
2 g	Sea salt — A good pinch

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 150°C (fan 130°C) and line two baking trays with parchment.
2. Peel the parsnips and shave into long thin ribbons. Pat dry, then toss with the oil and salt.
3. Lay the ribbons out in a single layer without overlapping. Bake 20–35 minutes, turning once, until golden and crisp; remove pieces as they brown.
4. Cool on a rack — they crisp further as they cool. Store airtight.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A blue whale’s call can be louder than a passing ship, yet it sings below the floor of our hearing.

Parsnip & potato mash with nutmeg

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A soft, sweet-savoury mash that lets parsnip share the bowl with potato — fluffier and sweeter than plain mash, finished with butter and a grating of nutmeg. A gentle, comforting way to bring parsnip to the everyday table. Food-first.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Parsnip (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>) — Parsnips, peeled and chopped (core large ones)
500 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and chopped
40 g	Butter — For mashing in
60 g	Warm milk — To loosen, as needed
0.3 g	Nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) — Freshly grated nutmeg (a small pinch)
4 g	Sea salt & white pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Put the parsnips and potatoes in a pan of cold salted water. Bring to the boil and simmer 15–20 minutes until both are very tender.
2. Drain thoroughly and let them steam-dry in the colander for a minute or two so the mash is not watery.
3. Return to the warm pan, add the butter and mash until smooth. Beat in warm milk a little at a time to the texture you like.
4. Season with salt, white pepper and a small grating of nutmeg. Serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Nutmeg was once worth its weight in gold, driving centuries of colonial conflict over the Banda Islands. In folk medicine it was carried against plague and used to flavour and preserve, and a whole nutmeg on a silver grater was a prized possession.

Roasted winter roots with rosemary & sage

Food / culinary • Makes 1100 g

A generous traybake of parsnip, carrot and beetroot roasted with garlic, rosemary and sage until sweet, sticky and caramelised. A colourful, fibre-rich plate of seasonal roots that makes parsnip the star of a winter table. Food-first.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Parsnip (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>) — Parsnips, peeled and cut into wedges
300 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrots, scrubbed and cut into batons
300 g	Beetroot (<i>Beta vulgaris</i>) — Beetroot, peeled and cut into wedges
15 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, whole unpeeled cloves (~5)
3 g	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) — Fresh rosemary, chopped (~1 tbsp)
2 g	Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>) — Fresh sage leaves, torn
40 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil (~3 tbsp)
5 g	Sea salt & black pepper — To taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (fan 180°C). Keep the beetroot slightly separate so it does not stain the other roots too much.
2. Toss all the roots with the olive oil, salt and pepper and spread in a single layer over one or two large trays. Tuck in the whole garlic cloves.
3. Roast 30 minutes, turning once. Scatter over the rosemary and sage and roast a further 15–20 minutes until everything is tender, sweet and caramelised at the edges.
4. Squeeze the soft garlic from its skins over the roots, toss, check seasoning and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bananas are gently radioactive, and so, in the very smallest measure, are we.

Amazonian Guarana Citrus Energiser

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 ml

A bright, homemade natural energy drink built on a small measure of guarana powder, lifted with fresh citrus and a touch of honey for a clean, sustained lift.

INGREDIENTS

0.25 tsp	Guarana powder (<i>Paullinia cupana</i>) — About 1 g; do not overdo
300 ml	Cold water or sparkling water
2 tbsp	Fresh lime or orange juice — <i>Freshly squeezed</i>
1 tsp	Honey — Optional, to taste

METHOD

1. Whisk the small measure of guarana powder into a little of the water to form a smooth slurry (it does not fully dissolve).
2. Top up with the rest of the cold or sparkling water.
3. Stir in the fresh citrus juice and optional honey.
4. Taste and adjust sweetness, then serve over ice earlier in the day.
5. Sip slowly and do not make a second serving the same day.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long used by the Sateré-Mawé and other Amazonian peoples, who roast and grate the seeds into a stimulating drink; central to Indigenous myth and now the flavour and stimulant base of Brazil's popular guarana soft drinks and energy products.

Rose Geranium Scented Sugar

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 g

A fragrant pantry treasure: sugar perfumed with rose geranium leaves, ready to lift sponge cakes, whipped cream, shortbread, and berries with a whisper of rose.

INGREDIENTS

leaves	Rose geranium leaves (<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i>) — 8-10 — Fresh, clean, unblemished, patted dry
500 g	Caster sugar

METHOD

1. Wipe the leaves clean and ensure they are completely dry.
2. In a clean jar, layer the sugar with the geranium leaves, tucking a leaf every few spoonfuls.
3. Seal the jar and leave in a cool cupboard for 1-2 weeks, shaking occasionally, to let the scent infuse.
4. Remove the leaves (or sieve them out) before using, and store the scented sugar sealed.
5. Use in place of plain sugar in cakes, creams, and over fruit.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Introduced to Europe from the Cape in the 17th century, the ‘rose geranium’ became a Victorian conservatory favourite and a source of a rose-oil substitute; leaves were laid in cake tins and linen for scent.

Korean Marinated Perilla Leaves (Kkaennip-jangajji)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 jar

A classic Korean banchan: whole perilla leaves stacked and steeped in a savoury soy marinade with garlic, chilli and a little sweetness. After a day the leaves turn silky and deeply savoury — you drape one over hot rice and the whole mouthful lights up. A brilliant way to preserve a big harvest of green perilla (kkaennip).

INGREDIENTS

30 leaves	Fresh green perilla leaves (<i>Perilla frutescens</i>), leaf
4 tbsp	Soy sauce
2 clove	Garlic, minced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 tbsp	Gochugaru + a little sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)

METHOD

1. Rinse the perilla leaves gently and pat dry.
2. Mix the soy sauce, minced garlic, gochugaru and sesame oil into a marinade, thinning with a splash of water if needed.
3. Layer the perilla leaves in a shallow container, spooning a little marinade between every 2-3 leaves.
4. Pour any remaining marinade over the top so the leaves are lightly coated.
5. Cover and refrigerate at least 24 hours before eating, to let the marinade soak through.
6. Serve draped over hot steamed rice, a few leaves at a time.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The last spoonful belongs to whoever set the table.

Perilla Seed Oil Omega-3 Dressing (Deulgireum)

Food / culinary • Makes 150 ml

Perilla seed oil (Korean deulgireum) is one of the richest plant sources of omega-3 (ALA) — nutty, grassy and golden. It is a finishing oil, never for frying: whisked into a quick dressing with rice vinegar and a touch of soy or honey, it turns steamed greens, seaweed or a simple salad into something nourishing and delicious.

INGREDIENTS

100 ml	Perilla seed oil (deulgireum) (<i>Perilla frutescens</i>)
30 ml	Rice vinegar
15 ml	Soy sauce or honey

METHOD

1. Whisk the perilla seed oil with the rice vinegar in a small bowl or jar.
2. Add the soy sauce or honey and whisk until combined and slightly emulsified.
3. Taste and adjust the balance of vinegar to soy/honey as preferred.
4. Drizzle over steamed or blanched greens, seaweed, tofu, grains or salads just before serving; do not cook with it.
5. Store refrigerated, tightly sealed, and use within a couple of months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Recorded in Chinese medicine for well over a thousand years as zǐsū (紫苏), where leaf (zǐsū yè), seed (zǐsū zǐ) and stem (zǐsū gěng) are treated as distinct remedies.

Shiso Salt & Furikake Seasoning

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g

Dried perilla leaves crushed with toasted sesame, a little seaweed and salt into a fragrant, purple-flecked sprinkle. It captures the herb’s aroma for the whole year — scatter it over rice, eggs, avocado, popcorn or roasted vegetables. The Japanese seasoning “yukari” is the red-shiso version of this idea.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Dried perilla leaves (<i>Perilla frutescens</i>), leaf
40 g	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 sheet	Nori seaweed, crumbled
1 tsp	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Crush or crumble the dried perilla leaves into small flakes, using a mortar or your fingers.
2. Combine with the toasted sesame seeds, crumbled nori and salt.
3. Mix well.
4. Store in an airtight jar.
5. Sprinkle over rice, eggs, salads, avocado or roasted vegetables just before eating.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Classically given for early wind-cold colds, cough, a stagnant queasy stomach, to “calm a restless fetus,” and — famously — as the go-to antidote for fish- and crab-related upset, which is why it still garnishes raw seafood today.

Guacamole (Traditional Mexican Avocado Mash)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 bowl

The classic Mexican avocado dish — ripe avocado mashed with lime, onion, chilli, coriander and salt. A fresh, everyday way to enjoy avocado’s creamy, nourishing flesh.

INGREDIENTS

300 g Avocado (*Persea americana*), fruit — about 2 ripe avocados

METHOD

1. Halve, stone and scoop the ripe avocado flesh into a bowl.
2. Mash with a fork, leaving some texture rather than a smooth puree.
3. Stir in lime juice, finely chopped onion, chilli and coriander to taste, and season with salt.
4. Taste and adjust the lime juice and salt.
5. Serve immediately with tortilla chips, tacos or vegetables.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Its name descends from the Nahuatl āhuacatl, by way of Spanish aguacate; the old Anglicised form “alligator pear” refers to the rough, green, leathery skin of some cultivars.

Cooked young bistort shoots

Food / culinary • Makes ~120 g

A simple wild-green side of young amphibious-bistort shoots, blanched to soften their astringency and reduce oxalates, then lightly buttered. A modest spring forage, best eaten occasionally and in small amounts.

INGREDIENTS

120 g	amphibious bistort (<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>) — Young amphibious-bistort shoots and leaves from clean water
1 tsp	butter or olive oil
1 pinch	salt — to taste
1 litre	water for blanching

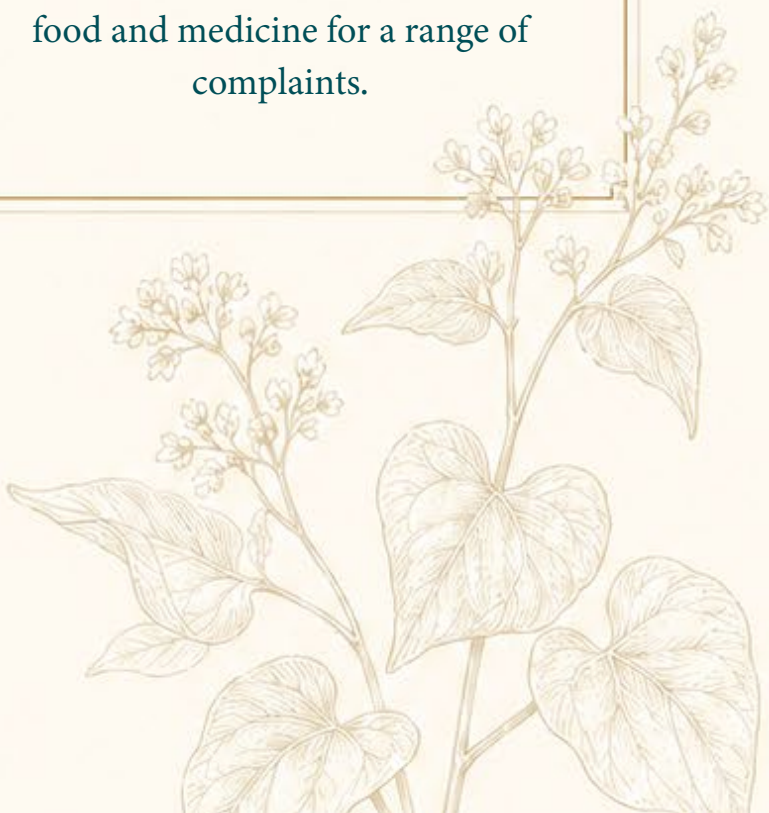
METHOD

1. Wash the young shoots thoroughly in several changes of clean water.
2. Bring the water to a boil and blanch the shoots for about 2 minutes, then drain and discard the water (this reduces oxalates and astringency).
3. Warm the butter or oil in a pan and toss the drained greens for a minute.
4. Season lightly with salt and serve at once as a small side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known as amphibious bistort or water knotweed. Several Native American peoples (Meskwaki, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Lakota) used the leaves, stems and roots as food and medicine for a range of complaints.



Benitade water-pepper sprout garnish for sashimi

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

The classic Japanese use of water pepper: a pinch of tiny crimson ‘benitade’ seedling sprouts scattered over sliced raw fish, their clean peppery heat cutting the richness. A whisper of the plant, used as seasoning rather than as a vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

1 pinch	water pepper (<i>Persicaria hydropiper</i>) — Benitade (water-pepper) seedling sprouts
100 g	fresh sashimi-grade fish, sliced — for serving
1 tbsp	rice vinegar (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — optional, for tade-zu
1 tbsp	soy sauce — for serving

METHOD

1. Rinse the benitade sprouts gently and pat dry.
2. Arrange the sliced fish on a chilled plate.
3. Scatter a small pinch of sprouts over the fish as a peppery garnish.
4. For tade-zu, lightly crush a few extra sprouts into the rice vinegar and serve as a dipping sauce alongside the soy sauce.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Wombats leave neat, cube-shaped droppings, the only creature on Earth that does.

Lady's thumb wild greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 g

A simple potherb of young lady's-thumb leaves and shoots, briefly cooked and lightly dressed. Mild and slightly astringent, it is one of the friendlier smartweeds for the pot - a modest, wholesome spring and summer green.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	lady's thumb (<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>) — Young lady's-thumb leaves and shoot tips, well washed
1 tbsp	olive oil or butter
1 clove	garlic, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 pinch	salt and pepper — to taste
1 litre	water for blanching

METHOD

1. Wash the young greens well and pick over for any tough stems.
2. Blanch in boiling water for 1-2 minutes, then drain.
3. Warm the oil or butter in a pan and soften the garlic without browning.
4. Add the drained greens and toss for a minute until glossy and tender.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known as lady's thumb or redshank, from the dark leaf blotch and reddened stems; a familiar weed with a long history as a minor wild potherb and folk remedy for skin sores and inflammation across Europe and North America.

Gremolata (Parsley, Lemon & Garlic Finishing Herb)

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

A bright Italian finishing condiment of finely chopped parsley, lemon zest and garlic — traditionally scattered over osso buco, but wonderful on roast vegetables, fish, beans or soups. A fast way to add a fresh hit of parsley to a cooked dish.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>), leaf — flat-leaf parsley, very finely chopped (about 1 small bunch)
6 g	lemon zest (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — finely grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
6 g	garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — garlic, very finely minced (1–2 cloves)

METHOD

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the parsley, then chop the leaves very finely.
2. Finely grate the zest of an unwaxed lemon and very finely mince the garlic.
3. Mix the three together on the board or in a small bowl. Scatter over the finished dish just before serving.



Tahini and Walnut Stuffed Dates

Food / culinary

A simple, naturally sweet treat that turns whole Medjool dates into a nourishing bite, balancing their caramel sweetness with rich sesame and toasted walnut.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 12 whole | Medjool dates (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>) — Soft, plump dates work best |
| 3 tbsp | Tahini (sesame paste) (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) |
| 12 pieces | Walnut halves (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — Lightly toasted |
| 1 pinch | Flaky sea salt — To finish |

METHOD

1. Make a lengthwise slit in each date and remove the pit.
2. Spoon a little tahini into the cavity of each date.
3. Press a toasted walnut half into the tahini.
4. Arrange on a plate and finish with a light pinch of flaky sea salt.
5. Serve at room temperature or lightly chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A staple and sacred fruit of desert civilisations, the ‘tree of life’ referenced in the Qur’an, the Bible and Mesopotamian records; central to Ramadan fast-breaking and long associated with fertility, hospitality and sustenance on caravan routes.

Goldenberry & Ginger Chutney

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

A vibrant, sweet-sharp chutney that pairs beautifully with aged cheeses, grilled chicken, or oily fish. The tartness of goldenberry balances warm ginger and a hint of chilli.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Cape gooseberries (ripe, husks removed) (<i>Physalis peruviana</i>)
150 g	Brown sugar
20 g	Fresh ginger, finely grated (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
100 ml	Apple cider vinegar (<i>Malus domestica</i>)
1 g	Dried red chilli flakes (optional) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — Adjust to taste; omit for mild version
3 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Remove husks from goldenberries; halve. Place all ingredients in a heavy-based pan over medium heat.
2. Stir until sugar dissolves, then bring to a steady simmer. Cook uncovered 25–35 minutes, stirring regularly, until the chutney has thickened and the liquid has reduced to a sticky, jammy consistency.
3. Taste and adjust salt, sugar or vinegar as needed. Pot into hot, sterilised jars and seal immediately. Rest 2 weeks before eating.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Traditional Andean medicine used the leaves and fruits: leaf juice administered orally for intestinal parasites; calyx decoctions for diabetes management; and the ripe fruit for general nourishment and kidney complaints.

Goldenberry & Mango Breakfast Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes 400 ml

A sunshine-coloured smoothie rich in vitamin C, fibre and carotenoids. This is one of the easiest ways to eat goldenberries — blended with mango and banana they lose their tartness and gain a gorgeous creamy tropical depth. A proper whole-food breakfast.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Cape gooseberries (ripe, husks removed) (<i>Physalis peruviana</i>) — All must be ripe and orange
100 g	Ripe mango, fresh or frozen (<i>Mangifera indica</i>)
1 piece	Small ripe banana (about 80 g) (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>)
200 g	Dairy or plant-based milk (oat, almond or whole milk)
20 g	Rolled oats (optional, for body and extra fibre) (<i>Avena sativa</i>) — Soak 10 minutes first for smoother texture

METHOD

1. Remove husks from goldenberries. Place all ingredients in a high-speed blender.
2. Blend on high for 60–90 seconds until completely smooth and creamy.
3. Taste — if it is too tart, add half a banana more or a drizzle of honey. Pour and drink immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The plant spread to the Cape Colony of southern Africa in the early 19th century (giving rise to the common name “Cape gooseberry”), where it was grown by British settlers.

Fresh Tomatillo & Avocado Salsa

Food / culinary • Makes 400 ml

A no-cook, bright green salsa — raw tomatillos blended with creamy avocado, lime, coriander and a little chilli. Silky, tangy and fresh, it sits somewhere between a salsa and a pourable guacamole.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Tomatillos, husked & washed (raw) (<i>Physalis philadelphica</i>), fruit
1	Ripe avocado (<i>Persea americana</i>)
1	Lime (juice) + coriander + chilli + salt (<i>Citrus aurantiifolia</i>)

METHOD

1. Husk and wash the tomatillos.
2. Halve and pit the avocado, scooping out the flesh.
3. Put the tomatillos, avocado, lime juice, coriander, chilli and salt into a blender.
4. Blend until smooth, adjusting salt and lime to taste.
5. Press cling film onto the surface and refrigerate until serving; drizzle over tacos or grilled food, or use as a dip.



Roasted Tomatillo Salsa Verde

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

The soul of Mexican cooking. Charring husked tomatillos under the grill turns their sharp citrus tang smoky and mellow; blended with garlic, chilli, onion and coriander they become a vivid green salsa for tacos, eggs, grilled meat and chips. Tomatillos’ natural pectin gives the sauce a lovely body without any thickener.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Tomatillos, husked & washed (<i>Physalis philadelphica</i>), fruit
2 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1	Green chilli (jalapeño/serrano), to taste (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)
1 handful	Fresh coriander + ½ onion + salt (<i>Allium cepa</i>)

METHOD

1. Husk and rinse the tomatillos; place on a tray with the whole garlic cloves and chilli.
2. Char under a hot grill (or in a dry skillet), turning occasionally, until blistered and softened, about 8-10 minutes.
3. Transfer everything with any juices to a blender with the roughly chopped onion, coriander and salt.
4. Blend to a coarse or smooth sauce, to taste.
5. Adjust salt and chilli; serve warm or at room temperature with tacos, eggs or grilled meats.



Tomatillo Green Enchilada Sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 700 ml

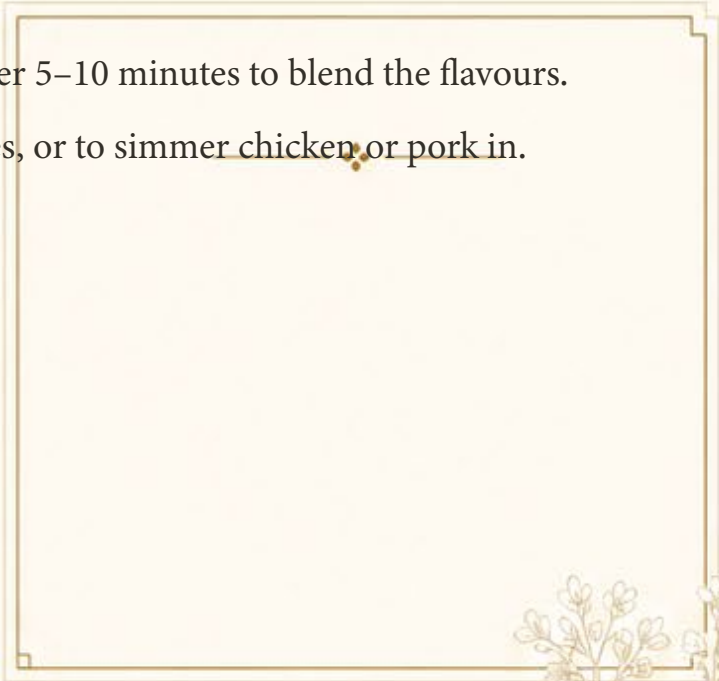
A pourable, savoury green sauce for smothering enchiladas, chilaquiles or roast chicken. Tomatillos are simmered with onion, garlic and green chilli, then blended smooth and loosened with a little stock.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Tomatillos, husked & washed (<i>Physalis philadelphica</i>), fruit
1	Onion + 2 garlic + green chilli (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
150 ml	Stock (to loosen) + salt

METHOD

1. Husk and wash the tomatillos.
2. Simmer the tomatillos with the chopped onion, garlic and green chilli in a little water until soft, about 10–15 minutes (or roast them until blistered and soft).
3. Blend the cooked tomatillos, onion, garlic and chilli until smooth.
4. Return the purée to the pan, loosen with the stock, and simmer 5–10 minutes to blend the flavours.
5. Season with salt and use to pour over enchiladas or chilaquiles, or to simmer chicken or pork in.



Kutki Digestive Bitter

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 ml

A tiny dose of this famously bitter Himalayan rhizome, taken before meals, is the Ayurvedic way to kindle digestion and support the liver.

INGREDIENTS

0.5 g	Kutki rhizome powder (<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>) — About 1/4 tsp; do not exceed 3 g/day
100 ml	Warm water
0.5 tsp	Honey — Optional, to make the bitterness tolerable

METHOD

1. Measure the kutki powder into a small cup.
2. Add the warm water and stir well.
3. Stir in a little honey if needed to take the edge off the bitterness.
4. Drink 15-30 minutes before a meal.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A classic Ayurvedic bitter tonic ('kutki'/'katuka') used for liver and digestive disorders, fevers, jaundice and skin conditions; a protected wild species now increasingly cultivated.

Simple steamed clearweed greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

A humble woodland potherb. Clearweed is watery and mild, so it is best treated gently and lifted with good fat, salt and acid rather than cooked hard. Gather only tender young shoots from clean shade.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Clearweed (<i>Pilea pumila</i>) — Young clearweed shoots and leaves, washed
1 tbsp	Olive oil or butter
1 clove	Garlic clove, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young clearweed thoroughly and discard any tough or flowering stems.
2. Steam or briefly boil the greens for 2-3 minutes until just wilted and tender, then drain well and press out excess water.
3. Warm the oil or butter in a pan and soften the sliced garlic for a minute without browning.
4. Toss in the drained greens, season with salt and finish with a squeeze of lemon to brighten the mild flavour.
5. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The Cherokee are recorded rubbing the stems between the toes to relieve itching, and the Iroquois expressed stem juice inhaled for sinus trouble. Widely known to foragers as an edible but bland green.

Butterwort Thickened Milk (Taetmjolk)

Herbal butter • Makes ~500 ml

A living piece of Nordic food heritage: fresh butterwort leaves gently curdle warm milk into a tangy, yoghurt-like ferment.

INGREDIENTS

4 leaves	Fresh common butterwort leaves (<i>Pinguicula vulgaris</i>) — Clean, undamaged rosette leaves
500 ml	Fresh whole milk, warmed to lukewarm — Body temperature, not hot

METHOD

1. Rinse the butterwort leaves gently and place them in a clean bowl.
2. Pour the lukewarm milk over the leaves.
3. Cover loosely and leave at warm room temperature for 1-2 days until thickened and tangy.
4. Remove the leaves; the milk should now be set like a soft yoghurt.
5. Chill before eating; reserve a spoonful to start the next batch.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Known across northern Europe as ‘tettegras’ (rennet grass); its leaves were laid in a strainer and warm milk poured over to make the traditional thickened soured milk ‘taetmjolk’; also used in folk veterinary care and on sore skin.

Toasted Pinyon Nuts

Food / culinary • Makes ~100 g

Simply toasted pinyon nuts, warm and buttery with a resinous sweetness. Scatter them over salads and roasted vegetables, fold into rice, or eat by the handful.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Shelled pinyon nuts (<i>Pinus cembroides</i>)
1 pinch	Sea salt — Optional, to taste

METHOD

1. Warm a dry heavy frying pan over medium-low heat.
2. Add the shelled pinyon nuts in a single layer.
3. Toast, stirring often, for 3-5 minutes until golden and fragrant; watch closely as they burn quickly.
4. Tip onto a plate, sprinkle with a pinch of salt if you like, and cool before use.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pinyon nuts have been a staple food of Indigenous peoples of Mexico and the American South-west for millennia, gathered in autumn and roasted, ground into meal or eaten out of hand.

Classic Basil and Pine Nut Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes ~170 g

A fragrant green pesto built on toasted stone-pine nuts, the traditional pinoli of Mediterranean kitchens. Their sweet, buttery richness carries the basil and cheese into a silky sauce for pasta, bread or vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Pine nuts (<i>Pinus pinea</i>) — Lightly toasted until golden
60 g	Fresh basil leaves (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>)
50 g	Parmesan cheese, grated
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
120 ml	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Toast the pine nuts gently in a dry pan over low heat until just golden, then let cool.
2. Blend or pound the pine nuts, basil, garlic and a pinch of salt to a coarse paste.
3. Work in the grated Parmesan.
4. Stream in the olive oil, mixing to a loose, glossy sauce; adjust salt to taste.



Wilted Young Plantain Greens (Wild Pot-Herb)

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

Young ribwort plantain leaves are an old wild food - a mild, slightly mushroomy pot-herb. Gathered very young before the leaves toughen, they are wilted like spinach as a simple foraged green.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>), leaf — young, tender fresh plantain leaves
15 g	Olive oil or butter — olive oil or butter for wilting
1 g	Salt & pepper — salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Pick only the youngest, most tender plantain leaves from clean ground; wash well and remove tough central ribs.
2. Warm the oil or butter in a pan over medium heat.
3. Add the leaves and wilt gently for a few minutes, stirring, until softened like spinach.
4. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm as a side green.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A shrimp carries its heart inside its head.

Sautéed Sea Plantain Greens

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

Young sea-plantain leaves, lightly cooked like samphire — a naturally salty coastal vegetable.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Sea plantain (<i>Plantago maritima</i>), leaf — young leaves
15 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — + garlic & seasoning to taste

METHOD

1. Wash young leaves well — forage only from clean, unpolluted shores.
2. Blanch briefly, then sauté in olive oil with garlic; season lightly (the leaves are already salty).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A traditional foraged shore vegetable of northern coasts. Like the common plantains, it was used as a folk remedy for minor wounds, bites and skin or mucous-membrane irritation.

Quick sautéed purslane with garlic, olive oil & lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The simplest way to enjoy purslane as a hot vegetable: a fast garlicky sauté finished with lemon. Brief cooking wilts the succulent leaves, softens the tang and lowers oxalate, while a little olive oil helps carry its fat-soluble vitamins. Purslane is the lone star here.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Purslane (<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Olive oil
10 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

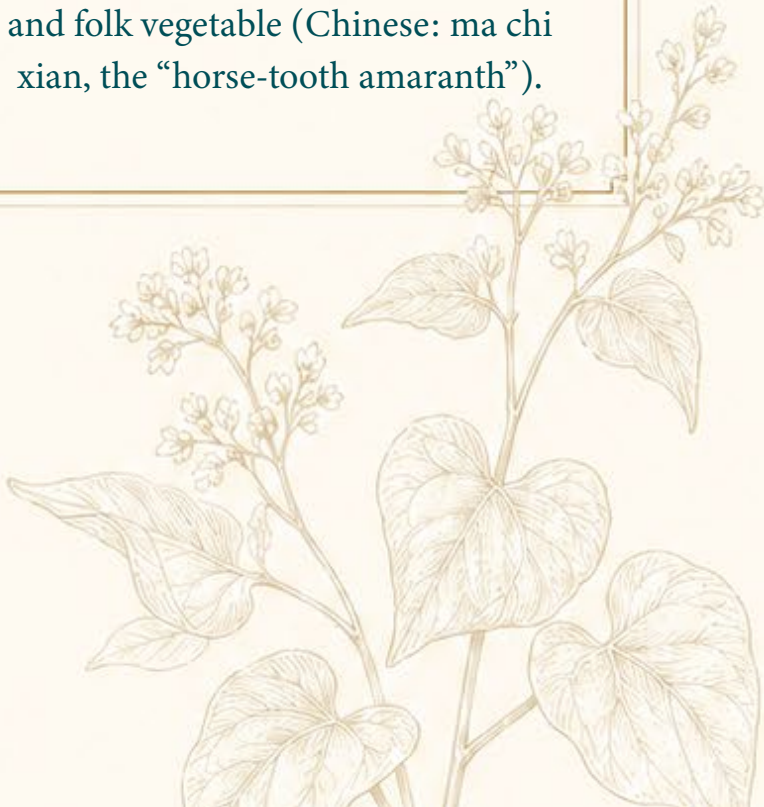
METHOD

1. Wash the purslane well and pick over the leaves and tender stems.
2. Warm the olive oil with the sliced garlic in a pan until fragrant, without letting it brown.
3. Add the purslane and a pinch of salt; toss over medium-high heat for 3–5 minutes until just wilted but still bright.
4. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice.
5. Serve hot as a side, over toast, or stirred through grains.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It is recorded as a pot-herb and salad green in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, in Persian and Arab cooking, and throughout India and China, where it is also a long-standing food and folk vegetable (Chinese: ma chi xian, the “horse-tooth amaranth”).



Homemade Almond Milk

Food / culinary • Makes ~750 ml

A silky, lightly sweet plant milk made from nothing but soaked sweet almonds and water, far fresher than any carton and free of additives.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Raw sweet almonds (<i>Prunus amygdalus</i>) — Soaked overnight
750 ml	Filtered water — For blending
1 piece	Pitted date or maple syrup — Optional sweetener
0.5 tsp	Vanilla extract (<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>) — Optional
1 pinch	Salt

METHOD

1. Soak the almonds in plenty of water overnight, then drain and rinse.
2. Blend the almonds with the filtered water on high for 1-2 minutes until smooth and milky.
3. Add the optional date, vanilla and a pinch of salt and blend again.
4. Strain through a nut-milk bag or fine cloth into a jug, squeezing out the liquid.
5. Bottle, chill, and shake before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Vanilla comes from an orchid that, away from its home, will bloom for one morning and must be wed by hand.



Apricot Fruit Leather (Lavashak-style)

Food / culinary • Makes 8 sheets (approx. 20×20 cm each)

Lavashak is a beloved Persian fruit leather made by drying tart fruit purée into thin sheets — a traditional Central Asian and Middle Eastern way of preserving seasonal stone fruits. Apricot lavashak is tangy, intensely flavoured and naturally concentrated in β -carotene. It is eaten as a snack, crumbled into rice dishes, or dissolved in warm water as a tart drink.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Apricot (<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>)
15 g	Lemon juice (fresh) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
20 g	Sugar or honey (optional, to taste)

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to its lowest setting (50–60 °C, fan if available). Line baking trays with non-stick baking parchment or silicone mats.
2. Blend the stoned apricots to a completely smooth purée using a blender or food processor. Add lemon juice and sugar/honey if using. Blend again briefly to combine.
3. Spread the purée in a thin, even layer (about 3–4 mm thick) on the prepared trays. Smooth with an offset spatula or the back of a spoon. Avoid too thin (will crack) or too thick (will not dry through).
4. Dry in the oven with the door slightly ajar (prop with a wooden spoon) for 6–10 hours, rotating trays every 2 hours. The leather is ready when it is no longer tacky to the touch, peels cleanly from the parchment, and has a uniform, slightly matte surface. It should be pliable, not brittle.
5. Allow to cool completely on the tray. Cut into strips or squares with scissors or a pizza wheel. Layer between fresh sheets of parchment and store in an airtight tin.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Otters keep a favourite stone in a pocket of skin and carry it from meal to meal all their lives.

Moroccan-Style Lamb Tagine with Dried Apricots & Almonds

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Dried apricots are a cornerstone of North African and Middle Eastern meat cookery, providing natural sweetness, acidity and a concentrated hit of β -carotene and fibre to slow-cooked dishes. This tagine follows a centuries-old tradition of combining stone fruits with lamb, warm spices and nuts. Serve with couscous or flatbread.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Bone-in lamb shoulder, cut into 5 cm pieces
150 g	Apricot (<i>Prunus armeniaca</i>)
1 count	Large onion, finely sliced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
2 count	Garlic cloves, crushed (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
5 g	Ground cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>)
3 g	Ground ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
2 g	Ground cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>)
400 g	Canned whole plum tomatoes (or 3 fresh) (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
300 g	Lamb or vegetable stock
50 g	Blanched almonds, toasted (<i>Prunus dulcis</i>)
15 g	Honey

METHOD

- Season the lamb pieces with salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a heavy tagine or casserole over medium-high heat and brown the lamb in batches until golden on all sides. Remove and set aside.
- In the same pan, soften the onion over medium heat for 8–10 minutes until translucent and lightly golden. Add the garlic, cinnamon, ginger and cumin; cook, stirring, for 1 minute.
- Return the lamb to the pan. Add the tomatoes (crush them in your hand) and the stock. Stir to combine and bring to a gentle simmer.
- Cover tightly and cook over low heat (or in an oven at 160 °C) for 1 hour 15 minutes.
- Add the dried apricot halves and honey. Stir gently. Continue cooking, covered, for a further 30 minutes until the lamb is very tender and the apricots are plump and soft.
- Adjust seasoning. Scatter the toasted almonds over the top. Serve immediately with couscous or flatbread, garnished with fresh coriander if desired.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The quietest room ever built is so silent that a person can hear their own blood moving.

Cherry & Yoghurt Frozen Bark

Food / culinary • Makes 6 portions (approx. 200 g total)

A simple, no-cook frozen treat — full-fat natural yoghurt spread thin and topped with pitted cherry halves, then frozen to a snappy bark. An excellent way to eat cherries at their antioxidant peak alongside live-culture yoghurt, which contributes protein, calcium, and probiotic bacteria. A nourishing dessert or snack that María’s food-first platform would be proud of.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Ripe sweet cherries (<i>Prunus avium</i>), pitted and halved — Dark-fruited cultivars give the richest colour; frozen work well too if fresh unavailable
400 g	Full-fat natural Greek yoghurt — Full-fat gives the best texture when frozen; plant-based thick yoghurt works too
30 g	Raw honey or maple syrup — Optional but improves texture and flavour; adjust to taste
1 tsp	Pure vanilla extract (<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>) — Optional; enhances cherry flavour

METHOD

1. Line a baking tray (approx. 30 x 20 cm) with baking parchment.
2. Mix the yoghurt with honey (or maple syrup) and vanilla. Spread in an even layer about 1 cm thick on the prepared tray.
3. Press the pitted, halved cherries cut-side down evenly over the yoghurt surface.
4. Freeze flat for at least 3 hours or overnight until completely solid. Break into irregular pieces and serve immediately, or store in a freezer bag for up to 2 months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Sweet cherry has been eaten across Europe since at least Neolithic times; stones are found at archaeological sites in Britain, the Netherlands, and central Europe.

Cherry Clafoutis (Clafoutis aux cerises)

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

The definitive summer dessert of the Limousin region of France — a baked egg custard studded with cherries. Authentically, the Limousin version is baked with the stones in, which impart an almond-like flavour from the prunasin in the kernel, but for home cooking and for children the cherries should be pitted first. This recipe uses pitted cherries. The clafoutis is best eaten warm on the day of baking; it is a true seasonal celebration of ripe cherry flavour.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Sweet cherries (<i>Prunus avium</i>), pitted — Dark sweet cherries give the richest flavour and colour; Bing, Stella, or similar
3 large	Free-range eggs
300 g	Whole milk
100 g	Plain flour (all-purpose) (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>) — Sifted; or use a gluten-free plain flour blend
80 g	Caster sugar (superfine sugar)
1 tsp	Pure vanilla extract (<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>) — Or the seeds of half a vanilla pod
20 g	Unsalted butter (for the dish, plus a little extra) — Softened, for greasing

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C / 160 °C fan / gas mark 4. Butter a 28–30 cm oval or round gratin dish generously.
2. Whisk together eggs, sugar, vanilla, and a pinch of salt until smooth and pale. Sift in the flour and whisk until the batter is lump-free. Gradually whisk in the milk to make a thin pouring batter.
3. Arrange the pitted cherries in a single layer in the prepared dish. Pour the batter evenly over the cherries.
4. Bake for 35–40 minutes until puffed, golden, and just set in the centre (a skewer should come out with only a trace of custard). It will sink a little as it cools — this is correct.
5. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm with crème fraîche or a spoonful of plain yoghurt.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The Greek physician Dioscorides (1st century CE) described the plant and its astringent fruit stalks in *De Materia Medica*.

Cherry Ratafia (Cherry-Infused Brandy)

Food / culinary • Makes 750 ml

Ratafia is a traditional European fruit liqueur, made by macerating fresh fruit in spirit. Cherry ratafia captures the full aromatics of ripe sweet cherries into a brandy base — drunk as a small digestif, used to flavour desserts, or spooned over ice cream. This is not a medicine; it is a traditional European food preserve in the liqueur tradition. Moderate, occasional consumption only.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Ripe sweet cherries (<i>Prunus avium</i>) — Dark-fruited cultivars (Bing, Stella) give the richest colour and flavour; stalks removed, left whole and unpitted for this recipe — strain out pits when bottling
500 g	Brandy (or eau-de-vie de cerises), 40–50% ABV — Use a decent drinkable brandy; the spirit is the extractant and preservative
150 g	White sugar — Adjust to taste after macerating; add more if desired sweeter
1 strip	Lemon peel (pith-free) (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Optional; adds fresh citrus brightness

METHOD

1. Wash and dry the cherries; remove stalks. Using a skewer or cherry pitter, prick or lightly score each cherry (do not fully pit them — the whole cherry including its intact stone macerates in the spirit; the stone is strained out at bottling).
2. Place the cherries in a large sterilised glass jar. Add the sugar and lemon peel. Pour over the brandy. Seal tightly.
3. Store in a cool, dark place for a minimum of 6 weeks, ideally 3 months, shaking every few days in the first two weeks to dissolve the sugar. The liquid will turn a deep ruby-red.
4. Strain through muslin into a sterilised dark glass bottle, discarding the spent cherries and pits. Taste and adjust sweetness by stirring in a little more sugar dissolved in a small amount of the strained ratafia if needed. Seal and store.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Pliny the Elder recorded that the general Lucullus brought cultivated cherry to Italy from Giresun (ancient Cerasus) on the Black Sea around 74 BCE — the species epithet ‘cerasus’ in older nomenclature commemorates this.

Powidl — Central European Plum Butter

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g (approximately 2 × 250 ml jars)

Powidl is a traditional Austrian and Central European plum preserve made by slow-cooking stoned plums for hours without added pectin or added water until the fruit caramelises into a thick, dark, intensely flavoured spread. Unlike jam, Powidl uses little or no sugar — relying entirely on the concentrated natural sweetness of the fruit. It is used as a filling for Germknödel (steamed yeast dumplings) and Palatschinken (thin crêpes), spread on bread, or stirred into porridge.

INGREDIENTS

2000 g	European plum (<i>Prunus domestica</i>), fruit — Dark purple damson-type or zwetschge/Stansley cultivars preferred for high flavour and natural sugar. Washed, halved and stoned — all stones discarded.
1 whole	Cinnamon stick (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — Optional — traditional Austrian addition
50 g	Sugar (optional) — Optional — Powidl is often made without any added sugar, relying on the natural sweetness of the fruit; add if plums are very sharp (Damson)

METHOD

1. Wash, halve and stone all plums, discarding the stones. Place in a large, heavy-based saucepan or casserole with the cinnamon stick (if using). No water is added.
2. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. The plums will release their juice. Stir well and reduce heat to low. Cook uncovered for 2–3 hours, stirring every 15–20 minutes, until the mixture has collapsed to a thick purée.
3. Remove the cinnamon stick. If using sugar, stir it in now. Continue cooking on very low heat for another 30–60 minutes, stirring frequently, until the Powidl is very thick, dark and glossy and a wooden spoon drawn across the base of the pan leaves a clear trail.
4. Ladle hot into hot sterilised jars. Seal immediately. Leave to cool. The preserve thickens further as it cools.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The human nose can recall some fifty thousand scents, most of them without our ever knowing their names.

Homemade Almond Milk

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

A fresh plant milk made by soaking, blending and straining sweet almonds. Almond milk is an old preparation — a staple of medieval European and Middle Eastern kitchens, valued in fasting periods and as a gentle, nourishing drink.

INGREDIENTS

150 g Almond (*Prunus dulcis*), seed

METHOD

1. Soak 150 g raw sweet almonds in cold water overnight (8–12 hours); drain and rinse.
2. Blend the soaked almonds with 1 litre of fresh water (the base/solvent) on high until smooth, about 1–2 minutes.
3. Strain through a nut-milk bag or fine cloth, squeezing out the liquid. Reserve the pulp for baking.
4. Optional: sweeten with a date or a little honey, and add a pinch of salt or vanilla. Bottle and refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cranes dance to court one another,
and once paired, many of them go on
dancing together for life.



Roasted Winged Bean Tubers

Food / culinary • Makes ~400 g

Nutty, protein-rich winged bean tubers roasted until tender, eaten much like a small roast potato.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Winged bean tubers (<i>Psophocarpus tetragonolobus</i>) — Scrubbed, halved if large
1 tbsp	Cooking oil
1 tsp	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200C (400F).
2. Scrub tubers clean and halve if large.
3. Toss with oil and salt.
4. Roast for 30-40 minutes, turning once, until fork-tender and lightly golden.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In New Guinea the winged bean is called ‘the supermarket on a stalk’ — pods, leaves, flowers, seeds and tubers can all be eaten.



Pomegranate and Yoghurt Breakfast Bowl

Food / culinary

A jewel-bright, antioxidant-rich breakfast bowl showcasing fresh pomegranate arils.

INGREDIENTS

1 handful	Fresh pomegranate arils (<i>Punica granatum</i>) — Seeds from about half a fruit
1 cup	Plain yoghurt — Or plant-based alternative
1 tsp	Honey
1 tbsp	Toasted nuts or seeds — For crunch
2 leaves	Mint leaves (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Optional, torn

METHOD

1. Score and open the pomegranate and release the arils, discarding the bitter pith.
2. Spoon the yoghurt into a bowl.
3. Scatter over the pomegranate arils and toasted nuts or seeds.
4. Drizzle with honey, add a few torn mint leaves and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

One of humanity’s oldest cultivated fruits, laden with symbolism of fertility, abundance and the afterlife across Persian, Greek, Hebrew, Egyptian and later cultures.

Leached Red Oak Acorn Flour

Food / culinary

Red oak acorns are high in bitter tannins and require thorough leaching before they are palatable and safe to eat; once leached, the meal can be dried and ground into flour.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 cup | <i>Quercus rubra</i> acorns, shelled and leached |
| 8 cup | water — for leaching, changed repeatedly |

METHOD

1. Shell acorns and remove the inner skin.
2. Coarsely chop or grind, then soak in cold water, changing the water 4-8 times over 1-3 days (or simmer through several changes of boiling water) until no longer bitter.
3. Squeeze out excess water and spread the meal out to dry fully.
4. Grind the dried meal into flour and sift; blend with wheat or corn flour for baking or porridge.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Acorns of the red oak group, including *Q. rubra*, were a significant staple food for many Native American nations across eastern North America, requiring extensive leaching to remove bitter tannins before use as flour or mush.

Butter-braised radishes with their greens

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A whole-plant, zero-waste side: radishes braised in butter until sweet and tender, then their peppery green tops wilted in at the end. Cooking turns the hot raw root mellow and almost turnip-sweet.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>), root — Radishes with their leafy tops, halved
60 g	Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>), leaf — Radish greens (the tops), washed and chopped
25 g	Butter
5 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, to finish
2 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Halve the radishes; wash and roughly chop the green tops.
2. Melt the butter in a pan, add the radishes cut-side down with a splash of water, cover and braise 6-8 minutes until just tender.
3. Uncover and let the water cook off so the radishes glaze; season with salt.
4. Add the chopped greens and toss until just wilted, about 1 minute.
5. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice. Serve warm as a side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Radish (mūla in Sanskrit, and prized in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome) is among the oldest of cultivated vegetables; Greek and Roman writers describe many kinds, and Egyptian sources record radish among foods grown along the Nile.

Daikon & carrot namasu (紅白なます)

Food / culinary • Makes 400 g

The red-and-white Japanese New Year salad: fine ribbons of daikon radish and carrot lightly salted and dressed with sweet rice vinegar. Refreshing, palate-cleansing and traditionally eaten as an auspicious dish (kōhaku, red-white).

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>), root — Daikon radish, fine matchsticks
80 g	Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>) — Carrot, fine matchsticks
45 g	Rice vinegar (<i>Oryza sativa</i>)
20 g	Sugar
5 g	Fine sea salt — For salting the vegetables
1 g	Yuzu zest (<i>Citrus junos</i>) — Optional, for fragrance

METHOD

1. Cut the daikon and carrot into fine matchsticks.
2. Toss with the salt and leave to rest 10–15 minutes, then squeeze out the released liquid firmly.
3. Warm the rice vinegar and sugar with a pinch of salt in a small pan, stirring until dissolved, then cool.
4. Dress the squeezed vegetables with the cooled vinegar mixture; add yuzu zest if using.
5. Rest at least 1 hour before serving cold.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The northern lights are the sun’s own wind made visible where it meets the top of the world.

French breakfast radishes with butter & sea salt

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

The classic French apéritif: whole crisp radishes eaten with cold cultured butter and flaky sea salt on good bread. Three ingredients, one of the simplest and best ways to enjoy a radish.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>), root — Fresh radishes, trimmed
40 g	Cultured butter — Cold, good-quality
2 g	Flaky sea salt — To finish
80 g	Crusty bread / baguette — To serve

METHOD

1. Trim the radishes, leaving a little green stalk as a handle, and keep them crisp in iced water until serving.
2. Spread cold butter generously onto slices of bread.
3. Top with a whole or halved radish.
4. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Ants have kept herds and farmed fungus for far longer than humans have farmed anything at all.



Kkakdugi — Korean cubed radish kimchi (깍두기)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

Korea’s crunchy cubed-radish kimchi: chunks of Korean mu (radish) salted, then coated in a fiery paste of gochugaru, garlic, ginger and salted shrimp and left to ferment to a tangy, juicy crunch. A living fermented food eaten with almost every Korean meal.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Radish (<i>Raphanus sativus</i>), root — Korean mu (radish/daikon), in ~2 cm cubes
18 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, grated (~6 cloves)
8 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>) — Fresh ginger, grated
30 g	Gochugaru (Korean chilli flakes) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>)
30 g	Fish sauce
15 g	Salted shrimp (saeujeot) — Finely chopped
20 g	Coarse sea salt — For salting the radish
8 g	Sugar

METHOD

1. Cut the radish into ~2 cm cubes; toss with the salt and sugar and rest 30 minutes, then drain, reserving a little brine.
2. Mix the gochugaru, grated garlic and ginger, fish sauce and salted shrimp into a paste.
3. Coat the drained radish thoroughly in the paste; pack tightly into a clean jar, pressing out air and leaving headroom.
4. Leave at cool room temperature 1-2 days until lightly sour and bubbly, then refrigerate.
5. Eat as a side dish (banchan).



Cumberland Sauce (Redcurrant & Port)

Food / culinary • Makes 300 ml

The classic British cold sauce for game, cold cuts, and pâté — made with red currant jelly, port, orange and lemon zest, and a touch of mustard. Deeply traditional; food historians trace it to at least the 18th century. Mrs Beeton, Escoffier, and Elizabeth David all include versions.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Red currant jelly (homemade) (<i>Ribes rubrum</i>)
100 g	Ruby port
80 g	Orange (zest and juice) (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>)
30 g	Lemon (zest and juice, half fruit) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
5 g	Dijon mustard

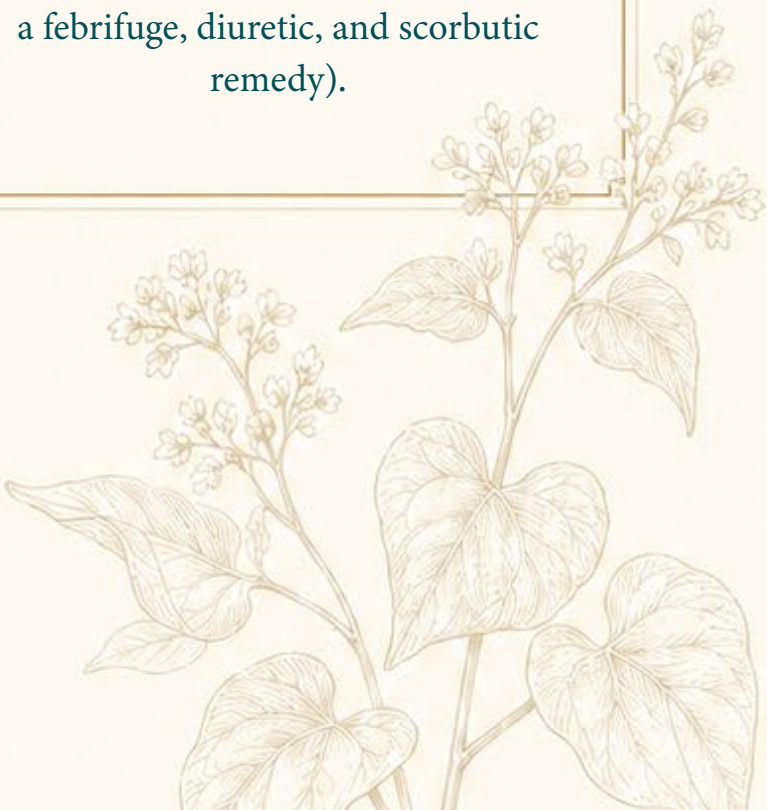
METHOD

1. Use a vegetable peeler to remove the zest from 1 orange and half a lemon in large strips, avoiding the white pith. Cut zest into very fine julienne strips. Blanch in boiling water for 1 minute; drain and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan over low heat, melt 200 g red currant jelly (homemade or good-quality shop-bought). Add 100 ml ruby port and the blanched zest strips.
3. Add the juice of the orange and half lemon, 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard, a pinch of ground ginger, and a pinch of cayenne or black pepper.
4. Stir over gentle heat until fully combined and the jelly is melted and sauce is smooth. Do not boil — gentle warming only.
5. Taste; adjust sweetness, sharpness, or spice. Pour into a sterilised jar. Cool, then refrigerate. Serve cold.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Red currants have been cultivated in monastery gardens since at least the 11th–12th centuries in northern Europe, initially prized for medicinal properties (particularly as a febrifuge, diuretic, and scorbutic remedy).



Red Currant Antioxidant Smoothie Bowl

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

A food-first approach to getting the most out of red currant’s vitamin C and anthocyanin content: frozen berries blended into a thick, vibrant base served immediately, topped with seeds, oats, and fresh fruit. The frozen format preserves colour and nutrition better than cooking.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Red currant (<i>Ribes rubrum</i>)
100 g	Frozen banana (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>)
80 g	Full-fat plain yoghurt
15 g	Rolled oats (topping) (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
10 g	Pumpkin seeds (topping) (<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>)
5 g	Raw honey (optional drizzle)

METHOD

1. Place 150 g frozen red currants, 1 frozen banana (broken into chunks), and 80 ml full-fat plain yoghurt in a high-speed blender. Blend until smooth and very thick — add 1–2 tablespoons of water only if the blender struggles. The consistency should be spoonable, not drinkable.
2. Pour into a bowl. Work quickly — frozen smoothie bowls thin rapidly.
3. Arrange toppings in stripes across the surface: a tablespoon each of rolled oats, pumpkin seeds, and fresh (or frozen thawed) red currants. Add a drizzle of raw honey if desired.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cultivation expanded in the 15th–16th centuries across northern Europe as a food and preserve crop. The berries were harvested traditionally around St John’s Day (24 June) in Germany and Austria, marking the summer solstice season.

Red Currant Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 150 ml

A vibrant, tart-sweet dressing that brings summer brightness to salads, grain bowls, and grilled vegetables. Red currant’s natural acidity does the work of vinegar here; paired with extra-virgin olive oil and a touch of honey, it needs nothing more.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Red currant (<i>Ribes rubrum</i>)
80 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
7 g	Raw honey or maple syrup
5 g	Dijon mustard

METHOD

1. Press 100 g fresh red currants through a fine sieve to yield approximately 60 ml of clear juice. Alternatively use 60 ml of prepared red currant cordial (unsweetened or lightly sweetened).
2. In a jar, combine the currant juice, 80 ml extra-virgin olive oil, 1 teaspoon raw honey or maple syrup, half a teaspoon Dijon mustard, a pinch of sea salt, and freshly ground black pepper.
3. Seal the jar and shake vigorously until emulsified. Taste and adjust seasoning.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Scandinavia the *rips* (Norwegian/Danish) or *röda vinbär* (Swedish) is deeply embedded in the summer food culture and associated with long-light summer evenings.

Gooseberry Fool

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

A quintessentially English summer dessert: tart stewed gooseberries folded through lightly sweetened whipped cream. Quick to make, beautiful to serve, and a perfect showcase for the sharp, floral flavour of fresh gooseberries. Use green cooking berries for a vibrant pale-green colour and more pronounced tartness, or ripe yellow/red varieties for a sweeter result. Serving suggestion: pour into tall glasses with a shortbread biscuit on the side.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Gooseberries (topped and tailed) (<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>), fruit
80 g	Caster sugar (or to taste)
300 g	Double cream (whipping cream)
30 g	Water

METHOD

1. Place the gooseberries in a saucepan with the water and 60 g of the sugar. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for 8–10 minutes until the berries have completely burst and collapsed into a rough compote. Taste and add remaining sugar if needed — keep it on the tart side as the cream adds richness and sweetness.
2. Transfer the compote to a bowl and allow to cool completely (at least 30 minutes at room temperature, then chill in the refrigerator for 20 minutes). The compote must be cold before folding with the cream or it will melt it.
3. Whip the double cream to soft, billowy peaks — do not over-whip to stiff peaks or the texture will be grainy.
4. Fold the cold gooseberry compote through the cream with a large spoon or spatula. You can fold fully for a uniform pale green, or fold loosely for a rippled effect. Taste and adjust sweetness.
5. Spoon into glasses or bowls. Chill for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve with shortbread biscuits or sponge fingers.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Gooseberry cultivation in England traces at least to the 16th century — William Turner described it in his Herball (1551) and Gerard and Culpeper both note it in later herbals.

Grilled Mackerel with Gooseberry Sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A classic British and French pairing with centuries of history: the sharp acidity of gooseberry sauce cuts through the richness of oily mackerel, creating a beautifully balanced plate. Jane Grigson and earlier food writers document this combination as a traditional summer dish; it is both nutritionally intelligent (the omega-3 fats of mackerel with the vitamin C of gooseberry) and delicious. Serving suggestion: serve with new potatoes and steamed green beans for a complete summer meal.

INGREDIENTS

2 whole	Fresh mackerel (butterflied/filleted, about 250 g each), scored with a knife
300 g	Gooseberries (green/slightly underripe, topped and tailed) (<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>), fruit
30 g	Butter (unsalted)
20 g	Caster sugar (or to taste)
45 g	Water
5 g	Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)
15 ml	Olive oil for brushing (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Make the gooseberry sauce: place the gooseberries in a small saucepan with the water and sugar. Cook over medium heat for 8–10 minutes, stirring, until the berries burst and collapse into a rough sauce. Stir in the butter. Taste and adjust sugar — the sauce should be tart-sweet. Keep warm.
2. Preheat your grill/broiler to high, or prepare a hot barbecue. Score the mackerel skin with a sharp knife at 2 cm intervals. Brush all over with olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Grill the mackerel skin-side up for 3–4 minutes until the skin is blistered and crisp, then flip and grill the flesh side for 2–3 minutes until just cooked through (the flesh should flake easily with a fork).
4. Serve immediately with the warm gooseberry sauce spooned alongside. Accompany with new potatoes and steamed green beans or peas.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In the 18th and 19th centuries, gooseberry clubs and competitive shows flourished in the industrial towns of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, driven primarily by cotton mill workers and handloom weavers.

Rosemary-Infused Olive Oil

Food / culinary • Makes 250 ml

A classic Mediterranean kitchen staple: fresh rosemary steeped in good olive oil to carry its warm, resinous aroma into dressings, roast vegetables, bread and marinades. A simple single-herb culinary infusion.

INGREDIENTS

- 15 g Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), leaf — About 3–4 fresh sprigs (or 2 tbsp dried). Wash and dry fresh sprigs thoroughly before use.
- 230 g Extra-virgin olive oil (*Olea europaea*) — Extra-virgin olive oil — the carrier base (no formulation role).

METHOD

1. Wash the rosemary and dry it completely (any water encourages spoilage). For longer keeping, use fully dried rosemary.
2. Warm the olive oil gently to about 40 °C (do not fry the herb), add the rosemary, and let it infuse off the heat.
3. Pour into a clean jar or bottle with the rosemary submerged, cap, and refrigerate.
4. Strain out the herb after a few days for the clearest oil, or leave it in if using quickly. Label with the date.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

“ It was burned as a fumigant in sickrooms and hospitals to purify the air, hung in homes and strewn for protection, and its name is popularly glossed as “dew of the sea” (Latin *ros marinus*) for its love of coastal air.

Blackberry & apple crumble

Food / culinary • Makes 6 servings

The definitive British autumn pudding: sharp-sweet bramley apples and deep-flavoured blackberries baked under a golden oat-and-butter crumble topping. The combination of apple pectin and blackberry colour creates a jewel-toned filling. A nourishing food-first dessert rich in dietary fibre, vitamin C, and anthocyanins — best served warm with plain yoghurt, custard, or cream.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Blackberry (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)
500 g	Bramley or cooking apples, peeled & sliced (<i>Malus domestica</i>)
50 g	Golden caster sugar (for fruit)
10 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)
120 g	Plain flour (<i>Triticum aestivum</i>)
60 g	Rolled oats (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
80 g	Cold unsalted butter, cubed
60 g	Demerara or golden caster sugar (for crumble)

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 190°C (375°F / gas 5). Peel, core, and slice the apples into 1 cm wedges. Toss with the sugar and lemon juice and lay in a 24 cm baking dish.
2. Scatter the blackberries over the apples. The fruit layer should be about 4–5 cm deep.
3. Make the crumble: rub the cold butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the rolled oats, sugar, and a pinch of salt.
4. Spoon the crumble evenly over the fruit without pressing down. Bake for 35–40 minutes until the topping is golden and the filling bubbles at the edges.
5. Rest for 10 minutes before serving. Serve with plain yoghurt, cream, or custard.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Blackberries have been gathered since at least the Neolithic: seeds were found in the stomach of a Neolithic man discovered in the Walton-on-Thames region of England.

Blackberry overnight oats

Food / culinary • Makes 1 serving

A nutritious food-first breakfast: rolled oats soaked overnight with milk or plant milk, layered with fresh or frozen blackberries and a drizzle of honey. The anthocyanin-rich berries colour the oats a beautiful deep purple. Provides dietary fibre (oat beta-glucan + blackberry fibre 5.3 g/100 g), vitamin C, vitamin K, manganese, and folate — a simple way to eat well every morning.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Blackberry (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)
50 g	Rolled oats (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
150 g	Milk (dairy or plant milk)
10 g	Chia seeds (optional) (<i>Salvia hispanica</i>)
15 g	Honey or maple syrup

METHOD

1. In a jar or bowl, combine the rolled oats, milk (dairy or plant), chia seeds (if using), and half the blackberries. Stir well, then crush the blackberries lightly with a fork to release their juice and colour the oats purple.
2. Seal the jar and refrigerate overnight (at least 6 hours, up to 3 days).
3. In the morning, stir well (add a splash more milk if too thick). Top with the remaining fresh blackberries, a drizzle of honey or maple syrup, and any optional toppings (nuts, seeds, yoghurt).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The ancient Greeks and Romans used them medicinally (Dioscorides described the root bark for gum ailments); Hippocrates reportedly prescribed blackberry preparations.

Blackberry vinegar

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

A Victorian-era British kitchen staple: blackberries macerated in cider vinegar, then strained and simmered with sugar into a syrupy, jewel-coloured condiment. Use in salad dressings, splash over roast pork or duck, stir into sparkling water for a shrub, or drizzle over cheese boards and charcuterie. One of the most versatile blackberry preserves and an excellent no-waste use for a large harvest.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Blackberry (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)
500 g	Cider vinegar (5% acidity) (<i>Malus domestica</i>)
300 g	Granulated sugar

METHOD

1. Layer the blackberries in a clean glass bowl or jar. Pour the cider vinegar over them. Cover and leave to macerate at room temperature for 3–5 days, stirring once daily.
2. Strain through a fine sieve or jelly bag, pressing the pulp to extract maximum colour and flavour. Discard the pulp (or compost it).
3. Measure the strained liquid. Combine with sugar (in a ratio of approximately 300 g sugar per 500 ml liquid) in a saucepan. Heat gently until sugar dissolves, then simmer for 5–10 minutes until slightly syrupy. Do not boil hard.
4. Pour into hot sterilised bottles. Seal while hot. Store in a cool, dark cupboard.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

With the seahorse it is the father who carries the young and gives them, at last, to the sea.

Raspberry Vinegar (Traditional Fruit Vinegar)

Food / culinary • Makes 500 ml

A classic old-fashioned fruit vinegar: ripe raspberries steeped in vinegar and sweetened to make a fragrant, ruby cordial-vinegar. Traditionally diluted with water as a cooling summer drink, drizzled over salads, or stirred into dressings.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Raspberry (<i>Rubus idaeus</i>), fruit — fresh ripe raspberries
500 g	White wine vinegar (or cider vinegar) — solvent/ base — carries no herbal role
350 g	Sugar (approx., to taste) — sweetener — carries no herbal role

METHOD

1. Put the raspberries in a clean non-reactive bowl and pour over the vinegar. Cover and leave in a cool place for 3–5 days, stirring or crushing gently once a day.
2. Strain through a jelly bag or muslin, pressing lightly; do not force, to keep it clear.
3. Measure the liquid into a pan, add the sugar (about 350 g per 500 ml liquid, to taste) and heat gently, stirring, until dissolved.
4. Bring just to a simmer for a few minutes, skim, then cool and bottle in sterilised glass. Label and date.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A single drop of pond water holds a whole unseen city, busier than any of ours.

Classic Sorrel Cream Sauce for Salmon

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

This velvety sorrel sauce — *sauce à l'oseille* in French — is one of the great pairings in European cuisine. The natural affinity between the lemon-sharp sorrel and the richness of salmon was exploited in the *cuisine minceur* style popularised by Michel Guérard and the Troisgros brothers in the 1970s, but the combination is rooted in much older French traditions. The sauce is made in minutes and transforms a simple pan-fried piece of salmon or trout into an elegant plate.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Fresh sorrel leaves, stems removed (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), leaf
200 g	Double cream (200 ml; density ~1.0 g/ml)
60 g	Shallots (2 medium), finely minced (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
80 g	Dry white wine (80 ml; density ~1.0 g/ml) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
15 g	White wine vinegar (1 tbsp; density ~1.0 g/ml) (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)
10 g	Cold unsalted butter (1 small knob)
3 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Finely mince 2 shallots. In a small saucepan, combine shallots with 80 ml dry white wine and 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar. Reduce over medium-high heat until almost dry (about 3–4 minutes).
2. Add 200 ml double cream and bring to a gentle boil. Simmer for 2–3 minutes until slightly thickened.
3. Add 80 g fresh sorrel leaves (washed, stems removed) all at once. They will turn from bright green to a muted olive immediately. Stir for 30 seconds.
4. Remove from heat and blend the sauce briefly with an immersion blender for a smoother texture (optional — a more rustic texture is equally traditional).
5. Season with fine sea salt and a grind of black pepper. Add a small knob of cold butter (10 g) off the heat and swirl to emulsify. Serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In medieval Europe, sorrel featured in the earliest green sauces (verjuice-based preparations of the 13th century), serving as the acidulant before lemon and vinegar were ubiquitous.

Sorrel & Fresh Herb Vinaigrette

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

This bright, raw herb dressing uses fresh sorrel leaves blended with parsley and dill to create a vivid green vinaigrette that needs no added lemon juice — sorrel provides all the acidity naturally. Excellent on grain bowls, poached or fried eggs, roasted root vegetables, cold fish, or a simple green salad. The recipe is a Urður formulation based on the traditional European use of sorrel as a natural acidulant.

INGREDIENTS

60 g	Fresh sorrel leaves, stems removed (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), leaf
20 g	Flat-leaf parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>), leaves
10 g	Fresh dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>) fronds, leaf
5 g	Garlic (1 small clove), raw (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
30 g	Shallot (1 small), roughly chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
80 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (80 ml; density ~0.91 g/ml) (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
30 g	Water (2 tablespoons)
8 g	Dijon mustard (1 teaspoon)
3 g	Fine sea salt

METHOD

1. Wash and dry 60 g fresh sorrel leaves, 20 g flat-leaf parsley, and 10 g dill fronds. Remove any thick stems.
2. Place all herbs in a blender or food processor with 1 small shallot (roughly chopped), 1 small garlic clove, and 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard.
3. Add 80 ml extra-virgin olive oil and 2 tablespoons water. Blend until smooth, scraping down the sides as needed.
4. Season with fine sea salt and black pepper to taste. Taste: if you want more acidity, add 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar; sorrel usually provides sufficient tartness on its own.
5. Transfer to a jar. Refrigerate immediately. Stir or shake before use. The vibrant green colour is best on day one.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It was cultivated in monastic gardens across France, Germany, and Britain. In French cuisine it attained a high-prestige status by the 17th century, appearing in elite cookbooks alongside truffles.

Sautéed Young Dock Leaves with Garlic & Lemon

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A simple spring pot-herb from one of the commonest wild greens. Young curly dock leaves have a bright, lemony tartness (from their oxalic acid) that mellows with cooking. Blanching first, then a quick sauté with garlic and olive oil, turns them into a nourishing side much like spinach or chard — eaten in moderation as part of a real-food, seasonal table.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Young curly dock leaves (<i>Rumex crispus</i>), leaf — Tender spring leaves, washed
2 cloves	Garlic cloves, sliced (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
1 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 tsp	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — To finish
1 pinch	Salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the dock leaves well.
2. Blanch in boiling water 1-2 minutes to soften and mellow their tartness; drain well.
3. Warm the olive oil in a pan and add the sliced garlic; cook briefly until fragrant.
4. Add the blanched leaves and sauté 2-3 minutes until tender.
5. Off the heat, finish with the lemon juice and a pinch of salt.
6. Serve warm as a green side.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long woven into European country life: the cool leaves are the traditional field antidote pressed onto nettle stings (“nettle in, dock out”), and the yellow root gave a folk dye for wool.

Buttered spring dock greens

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

In the far north, the first young dock leaves are a welcome fresh green after winter. Cooking mellows their sharp, lemony bite and reduces the oxalic acid, so change the water once and keep portions sensible.

INGREDIENTS

300 g	Northern dock (<i>Rumex longifolius</i>) — Young northern dock leaves, thick stalks removed
1 tbsp	Butter
1 litre	Water — for blanching
1 pinch	Salt — to taste
1 pinch	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — to taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young dock leaves well and strip out any thick stalks.
2. Bring the salted water to the boil, add the leaves and blanch for about 2 minutes; drain and discard the water to reduce oxalic acid.
3. For a milder result, repeat briefly in fresh boiling water, then drain and press out excess liquid.
4. Melt the butter in a pan, add the drained greens and turn through the butter over gentle heat for a minute.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Migrating birds can sleep upon the wing, resting one half of the brain at a time.



Spring Butcher’s Broom Shoots with Garlic and Egg

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 g

A rustic Mediterranean spring dish that treats the tender young shoots much like wild asparagus, quickly sauteed and finished with beaten egg.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Young butcher’s broom shoots (<i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>) — Tender spring tips only, hard bases trimmed.
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Thinly sliced.
2 whole	Eggs — Lightly beaten.
1 pinch	Salt — To taste.

METHOD

1. Rinse the young shoots and trim away any hard, woody bases.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
3. Add the shoots and saute over medium heat for 5-7 minutes until just tender.
4. Season with salt, pour in the beaten eggs and stir gently until softly set.
5. Serve immediately with good bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bundles of the prickly stems were once tied to protect hanging meat and to sweep chimneys, giving the plant its English name; it was also a Christmas green when holly was scarce.

Kombu Dashi (Japanese Kelp Stock)

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 ml

*Kombu dashi is the foundational stock of Japanese cuisine, prepared by cold or warm infusion of dried *Saccharina japonica* (kombu) in water. It is the primary traditional method of consuming kombu and has been used in Japan for over a thousand years. The stock is rich in glutamic acid (the natural amino acid behind umami taste), minerals, and a modest amount of fucoidan and alginate released into the water. This method is safer than eating large quantities of raw dried kombu because cold/warm infusion and especially boiling releases iodine and other minerals into the water at lower concentrations than direct consumption of the dried seaweed.*

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 10 g | Dried kombu (<i>Saccharina japonica</i>) — Dried kombu blade (<i>Saccharina japonica</i>); do not rinse before use — the white surface powder (mannitol) contributes to flavour. Score lightly with scissors for stronger flavour. Use less (5 g) for cold-brew method. |
| 1000 ml | Cold water — Cold filtered water preferred. Use 800 ml for a more concentrated stock. |

METHOD

1. Wipe the surface of the dried kombu gently with a barely damp cloth if needed to remove surface dust, but leave the white mannitol bloom intact — it contributes to the umami flavour.
2. Score the kombu piece 2–3 times with scissors to allow more flavour and minerals to release into the water.
3. COLD-BREW METHOD (preferred for clarity and lower iodine extraction): Place kombu in 1000 ml cold water. Cover and refrigerate for 4–8 hours (or overnight). Remove the kombu. The resulting clear dashi is ready to use. NOTE: cold brew retains more iodine than hot brew — use smaller pieces (5 g) if iodine intake is a concern.
4. HOT-BREW METHOD (reduces iodine and arsenic substantially): Place kombu in 1000 ml cold water in a saucepan. Bring slowly to approximately 60°C over 10–15 minutes (do not boil — boiling releases bitter compounds and sliminess). Remove kombu just before the water reaches a full boil. The kombu can be



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Use of *Saccharina japonica* (as *Laminaria japonica* / Kun Bu) is recorded in Chinese materia medica texts as far back as the Han Dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE) in “Ming Yi Bie Lu” (Supplementary Records of Famous Physicians).

reserved for other uses (braised dishes, pickles).

5. If maximum iodine reduction is required (e.g. for persons with thyroid concerns): boil the kombu in water for 10 minutes (this reduces iodine by approximately 94% and arsenic by approximately 75% per PMC11431140); discard kombu, use the strained liquid. Note: boiling produces a somewhat more bitter, slightly slimy dashi compared with the hot-brew method.
6. Cool and strain the finished dashi. Use immediately or refrigerate for up to 3–5 days, or freeze for up to 1 month.

Sage Brown Butter (Burro e Salvia)

Food / culinary • Makes 1 batch

A classic northern-Italian way with sage: leaves crisped in foaming butter until nutty, then poured over pasta, gnocchi, ravioli or roasted vegetables. A traditional culinary preparation.

INGREDIENTS

3 g	Sage (<i>Salvia officinalis</i>), leaf — about 8–10 fresh sage leaves
60 g	Unsalted butter — unsalted butter (non-herb base)

METHOD

1. Melt 60 g unsalted butter in a wide pan over medium heat until it foams.
2. Add 8–10 fresh sage leaves and cook, swirling, until the leaves are crisp and the butter turns golden and smells nutty (about 1–2 minutes). Do not let it burn.
3. Season lightly with salt.
4. Pour at once over cooked pasta, gnocchi, ravioli, fish or roasted squash, and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It was traditionally taken as a gargle for sore throats and mouth ulcers, as a tea to curb excessive sweating and night sweats, and to aid digestion, and folk practice used it to help dry up milk at weaning and to darken greying hair.

Simmered Hijiki with Carrots and Sesame (Hijiki no Nimono)

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

Hijiki no Nimono is a classic Japanese side dish (okazu) with a long culinary history, traditionally served as part of a balanced meal. The preparation method — soaking, boiling, and simmering — is documented to significantly reduce total arsenic content compared to raw dried hijiki. This recipe is for culinary use only, not as a therapeutic remedy.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Dried hijiki (<i>Sargassum fusiforme</i>) — Dried hijiki — rinse thoroughly, then soak in cold water 30 minutes and discard soaking water before use. This step reduces total arsenic content significantly.
1 medium	Carrot, julienned (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
1 tbsp	Soy sauce
1 tbsp	Mirin (or rice wine + pinch sugar)
1 tsp	Sesame oil (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
1 tbsp	Toasted sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>)
200 ml	Dashi stock (kombu or bonito) or water — Use dashi or plain water; discard cooking liquid after simmering.

METHOD

1. **IMPORTANT ARSENIC REDUCTION STEP:** Place dried hijiki in a bowl and rinse under cold running water. Cover with fresh cold water and soak for 30 minutes. Discard all soaking water (this removes a significant proportion of arsenic). Rinse once more under cold water. Studies show soaking and boiling can reduce total arsenic content by up to 90% (Yokoi & Konomi, 2012).
2. Bring a pot of water to the boil. Add the soaked hijiki and boil for 5 minutes. Drain and discard the cooking water. This further reduces arsenic content.
3. In a medium saucepan, combine the prepared hijiki, julienned carrot, dashi (or water), soy sauce, and mirin. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium-low heat.
4. Simmer uncovered for 10–15 minutes until the liquid is almost fully absorbed and the hijiki has softened and is well seasoned. Stir occasionally.
5. Remove from heat. Drizzle with sesame oil and sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. Serve at room temperature as a small side dish. Refrigerate leftovers and use within 3 days.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Some tortoises alive today were hatched before anyone now living was born.

Savory & Garlic Infused Olive Oil

Food / culinary • Makes 250 ml

A quick warm-infused oil that carries summer savory's peppery aroma into everything you cook. Lovely drizzled over beans, soups, roast vegetables, eggs or warm bread. Because fresh herbs and garlic in oil can pose a botulism risk if stored at room temperature, this version is made in small batches and kept in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

8 g	Summer savory (<i>Satureja hortensis</i>), leaf — a small handful of fresh sprigs (or 2 tbsp dried)
227 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra virgin olive oil
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 2 cloves, lightly smashed

METHOD

1. Roughly bruise or chop the fresh savory sprigs.
2. Warm the olive oil gently in a small pan (it should feel warm, not hot) and add the savory and smashed garlic.
3. Heat gently for a few minutes to release the aromatics, without letting it fry or simmer hard.
4. Remove from the heat and let cool completely.
5. Strain into a clean bottle, or leave the herbs in for a stronger flavour.
6. Refrigerate and use within 1 week.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The genus name *Satureja* was linked in folklore to satyrs, and the herb gained an old (undocumented) reputation as an aphrodisiac — summer savory thought warming and stimulating, winter savory the opposite.

Savory Green Beans (Classic Bohnenkraut)

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Summer savory is the original “bean herb” — Bohnenkraut in German — cooked with beans to season them and, by tradition, to make them gentler on the stomach. This simple side simmers green beans with a sprig of savory, then finishes them with garlic and good olive oil. Real food first: a plate of beans, herbs and oil that nourishes and tastes of high summer.

INGREDIENTS

4 g	Summer savory (<i>Satureja hortensis</i>), leaf — 2–3 fresh sprigs, or 1 tsp dried; the defining bean herb
500 g	green beans, trimmed (<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>) — fresh or frozen
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 2 cloves, finely sliced
27 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra virgin olive oil
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — juice of, to finish
3 g	sea salt — to taste

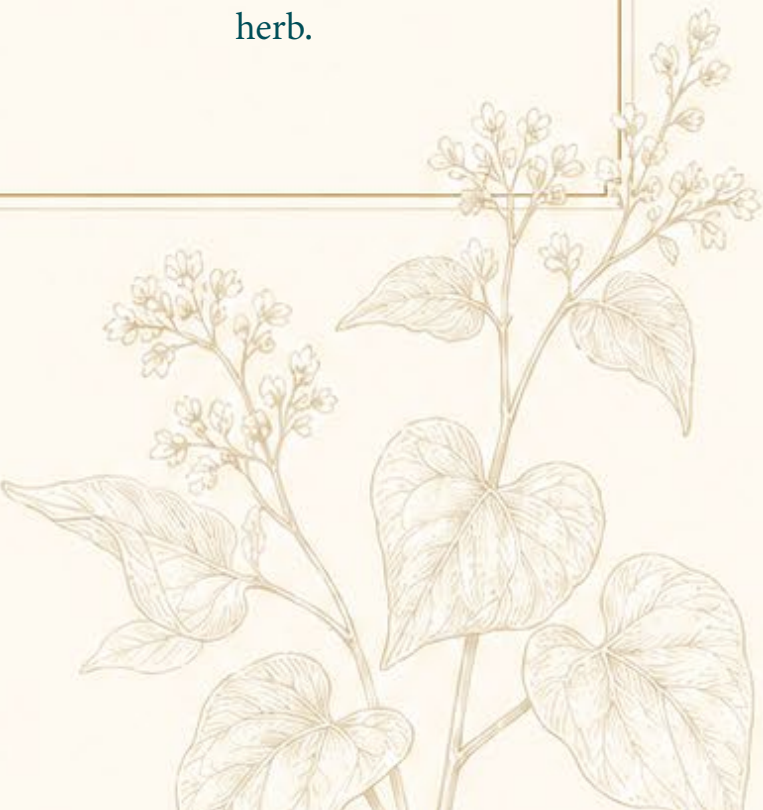
METHOD

1. Trim the green beans.
2. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, add the beans and a sprig of savory, and simmer 4-6 minutes until just tender.
3. Drain the beans, discarding the savory sprig.
4. Warm the olive oil in the pan, add the sliced garlic and cook briefly until fragrant.
5. Toss the beans back through the garlic oil.
6. Finish with lemon juice and salt; serve warm, or cold the next day.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long known as the “bean herb” for its pairing with pulses, it was also a household remedy rubbed on bee and wasp stings for quick relief, and grown as a strewing and companion herb.



Savory-Forward Dried Herb Blend (Provençal style)

Food / culinary • Makes 60 g

Summer savory is a backbone herb of *herbes de Provence* and of Bulgarian *chubritsa*. This keep-in-the-jar dry blend leans on savory’s warm pepperiness, rounded out with thyme, rosemary and oregano. Sprinkle it on roast vegetables, beans, eggs, bread dough or grilled food for instant depth — real flavour from whole dried herbs, no additives.

INGREDIENTS

24 g	Summer savory (<i>Satureja hortensis</i>), leaf — dried summer savory, crumbled — the lead herb
15 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — dried thyme
12 g	Oregano (wild marjoram) (<i>Origanum vulgare</i>) — dried oregano
9 g	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) — dried rosemary, lightly crushed

METHOD

1. Crumble the dried savory, thyme and oregano between your fingers to break up larger pieces.
2. Lightly crush the dried rosemary.
3. Combine all the herbs in a bowl and mix well.
4. Transfer to an airtight jar.
5. Use about 1 tsp per dish: rub over vegetables before roasting, stir into beans or tomato dishes, or knead into dough.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

“European country tradition valued it as a strewing herb and a dye plant (the flowering tops yield a reddish-brown wool dye), and it was carried as a protective and gladdening herb.

Winter Savory Herb Oil

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 ml

A simple infused oil for drizzling over roasted vegetables or grilled meats, capturing winter savory's peppery aroma.

INGREDIENTS

4 tbsp	<i>Satureja montana</i> (winter savory), fresh, chopped
200 ml	olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)

METHOD

1. Gently warm olive oil in a small saucepan over low heat, without boiling.
2. Add chopped winter savory and warm for 2-3 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and let cool completely.
4. Strain into a clean bottle and refrigerate.
5. Use within one week.



Silky Homemade Tahini

Food / culinary

Toasted sesame seeds blended into a smooth, pourable paste, the backbone of hummus, dressings and halva, with a rich nutty depth you simply cannot buy.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups	Hulled sesame seeds (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — White, hulled for a smoother paste
3 tbsp	Neutral oil — <i>Such as light</i> olive or grapeseed, to loosen
1 pinch	Salt — Optional

METHOD

1. Toast the sesame seeds in a dry pan over medium heat, stirring constantly, for 3-5 minutes until fragrant and just golden; do not let them brown.
2. Tip onto a plate and let cool for a few minutes.
3. Blend the seeds in a food processor for 1-2 minutes until crumbly.
4. With the motor running, drizzle in the oil until the paste turns smooth and pourable, scraping down as needed.
5. Season with a pinch of salt, blend once more, and store in a clean jar.



Bladder Champion Shoots with Eggs (Collejas)

Food / culinary • Makes ~150 g

A classic Spanish spring dish: tender young bladder champion shoots gently sauteed with garlic and folded through soft scrambled eggs. Simple, green and quietly delicious.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Bladder champion (<i>Silene vulgaris</i>) — Young bladder champion shoots and tender leaves, washed
4 whole	Eggs — Lightly beaten
1 clove	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Thinly sliced
2 tbsp	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Good quality
1 pinch	Salt — To taste
1 pinch	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — To taste

METHOD

1. Wash the young shoots well and, if you like, blanch briefly in boiling water for a minute, then drain.
2. Warm the olive oil in a pan over medium heat and soften the sliced garlic without browning.
3. Add the shoots and saute gently for a few minutes until tender and wilted.
4. Pour in the beaten eggs and stir softly over low heat until just set and creamy.
5. Season with salt and pepper and serve at once with bread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The letters we write were each shaped long ago from little pictures: an ox, a house, a wave of water.

Milk Thistle Spring Salad

Food / culinary • Makes 2 servings

A fresh foraged salad from the wild table: young milk thistle leaves, trimmed of their spines and eaten raw — somewhere between spinach and romaine, with a gentle bitterness balanced by crisp apple, toasted walnuts and a honey-lemon dressing. A leaf eaten the hour it is picked loses nothing to the road.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Milk thistle (<i>Silybum marianum</i>), leaf — young de-spined leaves, shredded
1 whole	Apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — crisp and sweet, thinly sliced
30 g	Walnut (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — lightly toasted
30 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra-virgin, for the dressing
15 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — for the dressing
1 tsp	Honey — for the dressing
1 pinch	Salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Wearing gloves, gather young first-year milk thistle leaves. The spines line only the leaf margins — hold each leaf by its middle and trim the spiny edges away with kitchen scissors.
2. Wash and dry the trimmed leaves, then slice them across into ribbons.
3. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan until fragrant; let cool and break up roughly.
4. Whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, honey and salt into a dressing.
5. Toss the leaf ribbons and apple slices with the dressing, scatter over the walnuts, and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The spines guard only the rim of the leaf — held by its middle, even a thistle offers itself gently.

Classic Prepared Yellow Mustard

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

The everyday table mustard of North American diners and British sandwiches. White mustard seeds (*Sinapis alba*) are the mildest of the three cultivated mustard species — their sinalbin glucosinolate releases a gentle, tangy heat rather than the sharp pungency of brown or black mustard. Mixed with apple cider vinegar, turmeric, and a touch of honey, this produces a vibrant, smooth yellow condiment that keeps for months in the refrigerator. ALLERGEN: mustard is a major allergen under EU Regulation 1169/2011 — always label clearly.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	White mustard (<i>Sinapis alba</i>), seed — Whole yellow mustard seeds; grind in a spice grinder or blender
120 g	Apple cider vinegar (<i>Malus domestica</i>) — Apple cider vinegar or white wine vinegar
30 g	Water — Cold still water
21 g	Honey or maple syrup — Runny honey or maple syrup for a vegan option
2 g	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — Ground turmeric — gives classic yellow colour
4 g	Sea salt — Fine sea salt to taste

METHOD

1. Grind the whole white mustard seeds in a spice grinder or high-powered blender to a coarse or fine powder, depending on the texture you prefer (coarser gives a grainy, old-style mustard; fine gives a smooth condiment).
2. Transfer the ground seed powder to a clean jar or blender. Add the apple cider vinegar, water, honey (or maple syrup), turmeric, and salt.
3. Blend or whisk vigorously until you have a smooth, emulsified paste. Adjust texture with a little extra water if too thick.
4. Taste and adjust: more vinegar for sharpness, more honey for sweetness, more salt as needed. The mustard will taste sharp at first and mellow after 24–48 hours in the refrigerator.
5. Transfer to a sealed glass jar and refrigerate for at least 24 hours before using to allow the flavours to meld and the heat to soften. Keeps refrigerated for up to 3 months.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In ancient Greece and Rome, ground mustard seed was mixed with must (unfermented grape juice) — hence the Latin name *mustum ardens* (“burning must”), the origin of the word “mustard”.

Marjoram tomato sauce with garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 750 g

A fragrant Mediterranean tomato sauce built on ripe tomatoes, garlic and olive oil, finished with sweet marjoram instead of the more usual basil or oregano. Marjoram brings a softer, sweeter, more floral aroma — lovely with pasta, beans or grilled vegetables. Food-first and richly flavoured.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, chopped (or peeled plum tomatoes)
3 g	Marjoram (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) — Dried marjoram (or 2 tbsp fresh), added near the end
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
80 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — Onion, finely chopped (optional)
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil gently and soften the onion (if using) and garlic over low heat until fragrant and pale gold, about 5 minutes — do not brown.
2. Add the chopped tomatoes and a pinch of salt; simmer uncovered, stirring now and then, until thick and glossy, 25–35 minutes.
3. Stir in the marjoram and simmer 2–3 minutes more. Taste and adjust salt, and a pinch of sugar if the tomatoes are sharp.
4. Use as is for a rustic sauce, or blend smooth.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Spanish contact brought it to Europe in the 16th century, where, as a member of the nightshade family, it was at first grown mainly as an ornamental curiosity — the “love apple” (pomo d’oro / pomme d’amour) — and widely mistrusted as poisonous.

Slow-roasted tomatoes with garlic, thyme & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

Halved ripe tomatoes roasted low and slow with olive oil, garlic and thyme until concentrated, jammy and sweet — a versatile food preparation that intensifies the tomato’s flavour and carotenoids.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, halved
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic cloves, lightly crushed (~4)
3 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>) — Fresh thyme sprigs
4 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>) — Freshly ground

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to about 120–140 °C (low and slow).
2. Halve the tomatoes and arrange cut-side up on a baking tray.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and scatter over the crushed garlic and thyme sprigs.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Roast for 2–3 hours until shrivelled, jammy and concentrated.
6. Cool slightly and serve warm or at room temperature, with the roasting oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Italy embraced it for cooking by the 17th–18th centuries, and it gradually spread into the everyday food cultures of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and beyond, becoming one of the world’s most important vegetable crops.

Sugo di pomodoro — classic fresh tomato sauce

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

A simple Italian-style fresh tomato sauce (sugo) built on ripe tomatoes, garlic, olive oil and basil — the food-first heart of the tomato. Long, gentle simmering deepens its natural sweetness and umami.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) — Ripe tomatoes, chopped (or peeled plum tomatoes)
30 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~2 tbsp); helps lycopene uptake
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, sliced (~3 cloves)
8 g	Basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) — Fresh basil leaves, torn (added at the end)
5 g	Fine sea salt — To taste
2 g	Sugar (optional pinch) — To balance acidity if needed

METHOD

1. Warm the olive oil in a pan over medium heat and gently sauté the sliced garlic until fragrant but not browned.
2. Add the chopped tomatoes and salt, bring to a gentle simmer.
3. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 30–45 minutes until thickened and concentrated, adding a pinch of sugar if needed to balance acidity.
4. Off the heat, stir through the torn basil leaves.
5. Toss through cooked pasta or spoon over gnocchi/polenta.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Music can raise a shiver on the skin,
the body moved by beauty as plainly
as by cold.

BABA GHANOUSH — SMOKY ROASTED AUBERGINE & TAHINI DIP (بابا غنوج)

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

A Levantine classic: aubergines charred until the skin blisters and the flesh turns silky and smoky, then whipped with tahini, garlic, lemon and olive oil. Food-first nourishment from the aubergine itself, with sesame for richness.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) — Aubergines (about 2 large), charred whole then flesh scooped out
60 g	Sesame (<i>Sesamum indicum</i>) — Tahini (sesame paste)
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, crushed
30 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice, freshly squeezed
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to finish
4 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley
4 g	Fine sea salt — to taste
20 g	Pomegranate seeds (optional, to garnish) (<i>Punica granatum</i>)

METHOD

1. Char the whole aubergines directly over a flame, on a grill, or under a hot broiler, turning until the skin is blackened and blistered all over and the flesh is soft and smoky.
2. Let cool slightly, then split and scoop out the flesh, discarding the charred skin; drain off excess liquid.
3. In a food processor or by hand, mash or blend the aubergine flesh with the tahini, crushed garlic, lemon juice and salt.
4. Stir in a little olive oil to finish, adjusting lemon and salt to taste.
5. Spread onto a plate, drizzle with more olive oil, scatter with parsley and pomegranate seeds if using, and serve with warm flatbread or raw vegetables.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried from its Asian homeland westward by Arab and Persian traders, the aubergine reached the medieval Mediterranean — the name passes through Arabic (*al-bādhinjān*) and Persian into Catalan *albergínia*, French *aubergine*, and Italian *melanzana*.

Baingan bharta — North Indian smoked mashed aubergine

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

A North Indian classic: a whole aubergine roasted over a flame until smoky and collapsing, then mashed into a spiced base of onion, tomato, garlic, ginger and warming spices. Deeply savoury, comforting and built around the vegetable itself.

INGREDIENTS

700 g	Aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) — Aubergine (1 large), flame-roasted, peeled and mashed
150 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
200 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
10 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>)
2 g	Cumin (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — Cumin seed
1 g	Turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) — Turmeric, ground
6 g	Coriander (<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>) — Fresh coriander (cilantro), to finish
8 g	Green chilli, chopped (to taste) (<i>Capsicum annuum</i>) — 1–2, optional
30 g	Ghee or oil — for cooking
5 g	Fine sea salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Roast the whole aubergine directly over a flame or under a hot broiler, turning until the skin is charred all over and the flesh has collapsed and softened.
2. Let cool slightly, then peel off the skin and mash the smoky flesh.
3. Heat the ghee or oil in a pan, add the cumin seed and let it sizzle, then add the onion and cook until soft and golden.
4. Add the garlic, ginger and green chilli, cook briefly, then stir in the tomato and turmeric and cook until the tomato breaks down into a thick masala.
5. Fold in the mashed aubergine and cook, stirring, for a few minutes until well combined and any excess liquid has reduced.
6. Season with salt, finish with fresh coriander, and serve hot with roti, naan or rice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Hindu tradition it is an emblem of purity, prosperity and fertility: brides and grooms are anointed with turmeric paste (the haldi ceremony), and it colours ceremonial threads, foods and offerings.

İmam bayıldı — Turkish braised stuffed aubergine in olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

A cornerstone of Turkish and Ottoman zeytinyağlı (olive-oil) cooking: whole aubergines slit and stuffed with a sweet braise of onion, garlic and tomato, then simmered gently in olive oil until meltingly soft. Named “the imam fainted” for its richness. A vegetable-forward whole-food dish.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) — Aubergines (4 small-medium), slit lengthwise
200 g	Onion (<i>Allium cepa</i>)
250 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
12 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
90 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
10 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Flat-leaf parsley
15 g	Lemon (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Lemon juice
6 g	Fine sea salt — to taste
3 g	Sugar (pinch, optional) — to balance the tomato
120 g	Water — for braising

METHOD

1. Slit each aubergine lengthways, not all the way through; salt the cut flesh and leave 20-30 minutes to draw out bitterness, then rinse and pat dry.
2. Fry the aubergines whole in half the olive oil over medium heat, turning, until the skins soften and colour lightly; remove and set aside.
3. In the same pan, soften the onion in the remaining oil, add the garlic, then stir in the chopped tomato, sugar and half the parsley; simmer 8-10 minutes to a thick filling and season with salt.
4. Open each aubergine along its slit and spoon in the tomato-onion filling, pressing gently.
5. Arrange the stuffed aubergines snugly in a pan or dish, drizzle with lemon juice, add the water, cover and braise gently (stovetop or 160°C oven) for 45-60 minutes until meltingly soft.
6. Cool to room temperature, scatter with the remaining parsley and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A mother and her unborn child trade living cells, so a part of each remains in the other for life.

Melanzane alla parmigiana — baked aubergine with tomato & basil

Food / culinary • Makes 1000 g

A southern Italian baked dish of layered aubergine, fresh tomato sauce, basil and cheese. Slices are salted, lightly fried or roasted, then layered and baked until bubbling — a comforting, vegetable-centred main.

INGREDIENTS

800 g	Aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) — Aubergines, sliced ~1 cm, salted and drained, then roasted or fried
500 g	Tomato (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>)
10 g	Basil (<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>) — Fresh basil
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
50 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil
200 g	Mozzarella, torn — omit for vegan
60 g	Parmesan, grated — omit for vegan
6 g	Fine sea salt — for degorging and seasoning

METHOD

1. Salt the sliced aubergine and leave to drain in a colander 30–60 minutes; pat dry.
2. Fry or roast the slices in olive oil until golden on both sides.
3. Make a simple tomato sauce: cook the tomatoes with garlic and a little olive oil until thickened; stir in torn basil.
4. Layer aubergine, tomato sauce, mozzarella and parmesan in a baking dish, repeating to fill it, finishing with cheese.
5. Bake at 190°C for 25–30 minutes until bubbling and golden.
6. Rest 10 minutes before serving so the layers set.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In India it is overshadowed in sanctity by its relative holy basil/ tulsi (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*), revered in Hindu households as sacred to Vishnu and Krishna.

Whole roasted aubergine with olive oil & sea salt

Food / culinary • Makes 600 g

The simplest way to enjoy aubergine: whole fruit roasted until the skin blisters and the inside turns soft and creamy, then dressed with good olive oil and salt. The base for dips, the smoky heart of countless dishes, or a side on its own.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Aubergine (<i>Solanum melongena</i>) — Aubergine, roasted whole at 220 °C until collapsing (~40 min)
20 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil, to dress
3 g	Fine sea salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C.
2. Prick the whole aubergine a few times and roast on a tray until the skin is blistered and blackened and the flesh has completely collapsed, about 40 minutes.
3. Let cool slightly, then split open and scoop out the soft flesh, discarding the skin.
4. Dress the warm flesh with olive oil, salt and a squeeze of lemon.
5. Eat warm as is, or use as the base for baba ghanoush, bharta, salads or stews.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The American name “eggplant” comes from early small white egg-shaped cultivars.

Classic buttery mashed potato

Food / culinary • Makes 900 g

The comforting heart of the potato as food: floury maincrop potatoes boiled until tender, then mashed smooth with butter and warm milk. A nourishing, gentle staple that carries any herb or sauce. Boil with the skins on (sound, non-green) for extra nutrition, then peel after if you prefer a silky mash.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury/maincrop potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper, russet), peeled and cut into even chunks
60 g	Butter
120 g	Whole milk — Whole milk, warmed (~120 ml)
4 g	Fine sea salt — Fine sea salt, to taste
1 g	Black pepper / nutmeg — Freshly ground black pepper / pinch of nutmeg (optional)

METHOD

1. Peel the potatoes (or boil with skins on, then peel after, for extra nutrition) and cut into even chunks.
2. Boil in salted water 15-20 minutes until tender; drain well and let steam dry briefly.
3. Mash until smooth, or pass through a ricer.
4. Beat in the butter and warm milk until fluffy.
5. Season with salt and pepper or a pinch of nutmeg. Serve hot.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Over-reliance on a few clones in Ireland led to catastrophe when late blight struck in the 1840s (the Great Famine), a lasting lesson in crop diversity. Today the potato is a global staple woven into food cultures everywhere.

Colcannon — Irish mashed potato with cabbage & leek

Food / culinary • Makes 4 servings

Comforting Irish colcannon: buttery mashed potato folded through with softened cabbage (or kale) and sweet leek or spring onion. A frugal, warming, food-first supper that turns humble cabbage into something everyone loves.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and chunked (use sound, non-green tubers)
300 g	Cabbage (<i>Brassica oleracea</i> var. <i>capitata</i>), leaf — Green cabbage (or kale), finely shredded
100 g	Leek (<i>Allium ampeloprasum</i> var. <i>porrum</i>) — Leek (or spring onions), finely sliced
60 g	Butter — Plus extra for the centre well
100 g	Milk — Warmed, to loosen the mash

METHOD

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water until tender, then drain well and mash.
2. Meanwhile, soften the cabbage and leek in a little of the butter with a splash of water until tender and bright, 6–8 minutes.
3. Warm the milk with the remaining butter and beat into the mash until smooth.
4. Fold the cabbage and leek through the mash, season well, and serve hot with a knob of butter melting in the centre.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Across European folk tradition leeks and other alliums were valued as warming, strengthening kitchen foods.

Crispy roast potatoes with rosemary, garlic & olive oil

Food / culinary • Makes 800 g

Floury potatoes parboiled, roughed up for a craggy surface, then roasted until golden and crisp in olive oil with whole garlic cloves and rosemary. A celebratory way with the potato — and the aromatic herbs lift it into a fragrant whole-food side.

INGREDIENTS

1000 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury/maincrop potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
60 g	Olive (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — Extra-virgin olive oil (~4 tbsp)
30 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, whole unpeeled cloves, lightly crushed (~1 small head)
6 g	Rosemary (<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>) — Fresh rosemary sprigs
6 g	Flaky sea salt — Flaky sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil and parboil the potato chunks for about 8–10 minutes until just tender at the edges.
2. Drain well, then return to the pot and shake vigorously with the lid on to rough up and fluff the surfaces.
3. Heat the olive oil in a large roasting tray in a hot oven (about 220°C) until shimmering.
4. Tip in the potatoes, turning to coat in the hot oil, and spread in a single layer.
5. Roast 40–50 minutes, turning once or twice, adding the crushed garlic cloves and rosemary sprigs for the last 15–20 minutes.
6. Season with flaky sea salt and serve hot, straight from the tray.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Redwoods grow so tall that their highest branches drink from the fog, lifted beyond the reach of their own roots.

Gratin dauphinois — French potato & cream bake

Food / culinary • Makes 1100 g

Thinly sliced potatoes layered with garlic-scented cream and a little nutmeg, then baked slowly until meltingly tender with a golden top. A rich, classic French way with the potato — pure comfort as food.

INGREDIENTS

900 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Floury potatoes, peeled and very thinly sliced
300 g	Double cream — Double/heavy cream (~300 ml)
150 g	Whole milk — Whole milk (~150 ml)
9 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — Garlic, halved (to rub dish) and minced (~3 cloves)
1 g	Nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) — Freshly grated nutmeg
5 g	Sea salt & black pepper — Sea salt & black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 150-160°C (300-325°F). Rub a baking dish with the halved garlic clove, then butter it.
2. Peel and slice the potatoes very thinly (2-3 mm); do not rinse them, so the starch stays to help thicken the cream.
3. Warm the cream and milk in a saucepan with the minced garlic, nutmeg, salt and pepper until just below a simmer.
4. Layer the potato slices in the dish and pour the warm cream mixture over to just cover, pressing down gently.
5. Bake uncovered for 1-1.5 hours until the potatoes are tender and the top is golden brown.
6. Rest 10 minutes before serving.



New potatoes with butter, parsley & mint

Food / culinary • Makes 550 g

Early new potatoes need almost nothing: scrubbed (skins left on, since they are thin and sound), boiled until just tender, then tossed warm with butter, parsley and a little mint. The freshest, simplest way to enjoy the season’s first potatoes as food.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — New potatoes, scrubbed (skins on), larger ones halved
40 g	Butter
8 g	Parsley (<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>) — Fresh parsley, chopped
4 g	Spearmint (<i>Mentha spicata</i>) — Fresh mint (spearmint), chopped
4 g	Sea salt — Sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Scrub the new potatoes, leaving the skins on; halve any larger ones.
2. Boil in salted water until just tender, about 12–15 minutes.
3. Drain well and return to the warm pan.
4. Add the butter, chopped parsley and mint, and toss gently until the butter melts and coats the potatoes.
5. Season with sea salt to taste and serve warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Carried across Europe and later worldwide, spearmint became the everyday “garden mint” of cottage gardens, the basis of English mint sauce served with lamb, and the mint of North-African and Middle-Eastern hospitality tea.

Scandinavian dilled new potatoes

Food / culinary • Makes 700 g

New-season potatoes boiled until just tender and tossed while hot with butter and a generous handful of fresh dill — the classic Midsummer side of Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Simple, seasonal and built around the vegetable itself.

INGREDIENTS

600 g	Potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) — Waxy new potatoes, scrubbed (not green or sprouted)
15 g	Dill (<i>Anethum graveolens</i>), leaf — Fresh dill, chopped
40 g	Butter
4 g	Fine sea salt
1 g	Black pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Boil the new potatoes in well-salted water until just tender, about 15–20 minutes depending on size.
2. Drain well and return to the warm pan. Add the butter and let it melt over the residual heat, turning the potatoes to coat.
3. Off the heat, stir through the chopped fresh dill and season with salt and pepper. Serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In European folk custom dill was hung in the home and tucked into clothing as a protective charm against the evil eye and witchcraft, and it featured in love charms and wedding garlands.

Mangrove Apple Sour Coconut Shake

Food / culinary • Makes ~600 ml

A creamy, tangy tropical drink that blends the sour pulp of the mangrove apple with coconut milk, as enjoyed in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 3 fruits | Ripe mangrove apple fruit (<i>Sonneratia caseolaris</i>)
— Sour, just-ripe fruit, pulp scooped out. |
| 500 ml | Water — For blending and straining. |
| 100 ml | Coconut milk (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>) — For creaminess. |
| 2 tbsp | Sugar — To balance the sourness. |

METHOD

1. Scoop the pulp from the mangrove apples into a blender.
2. Add the water and blend briefly to loosen the pulp from the seeds.
3. Strain through a sieve to remove all seeds and fibre.
4. Stir the strained juice together with the coconut milk and sugar until dissolved.
5. Chill well and serve over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The night-opening flowers famously attract fireflies, giving it the name firefly mangrove; the sour fruit has long been used across South and Southeast Asia as a tamarind-like souring agent, drink and chutney.

Garlic-Wilted Spinach (Florentine Style)

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

A classic quick side of spinach wilted in olive oil with garlic — the simple Mediterranean ‘alla fiorentina’ way with greens. Brief cooking softens the leaves, mellows the oxalate bite and makes the iron and carotenoids easier to enjoy.

INGREDIENTS

400 g	Spinach (<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>), leaf — fresh young spinach leaves, washed
15 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra-virgin olive oil
6 g	Garlic (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — 1–2 cloves, sliced
1 g	Salt — pinch, to taste

METHOD

1. Wash the spinach leaves well.
2. Heat the olive oil in a wide pan over medium heat and add the sliced garlic, cooking briefly until fragrant but not browned.
3. Add the spinach in batches, tossing until just wilted, about 1–2 minutes.
4. Season with a pinch of salt.
5. Serve warm immediately, with a squeeze of lemon if you like.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Strip away the empty space inside every atom, and all of humankind would fit within a single sugar cube.



Palak (Blanched Spinach Purée Base for Saag)

Food / culinary • Makes 300 g

The blanched spinach purée at the heart of South Asian palak/saag dishes. Briefly boiling the spinach and then finishing it with a dairy element (paneer, cream or yoghurt) is the traditional way that both tames the oxalate and turns a big pile of leaves into a smooth, mineral-rich base.

INGREDIENTS

500 g	Spinach (<i>Spinacia oleracea</i>), leaf — fresh spinach, washed, blanched 1–2 min then puréed
5 g	Salt — salt, to taste
30 g	Water — optional, for blending

METHOD

1. Wash the spinach thoroughly to remove grit.
2. Blanch in boiling salted water for 1–2 minutes until just wilted; drain and refresh briefly in cold water.
3. Purée the blanched spinach with a little water and salt until smooth.
4. Use immediately as the base for palak paneer or saag, warming it through with a spiced onion-tomato-garlic-ginger masala and folding in paneer, cream or yoghurt.
5. Serve hot with rice or flatbread.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

By the 16th century Catherine de' Medici is popularly credited with spreading its fashion in France — hence the culinary term “Florentine” for dishes served on spinach.

African Marigold Petal Garnish (Edible Flower)

Food / culinary • Makes 20 grams fresh petals

The ray florets (petals) of *Tagetes erecta* are a documented edible flower used as a culinary garnish in Mexico and internationally. They add vivid golden-orange colour and a mildly peppery, slightly citrusy flavour to salads, rice dishes, and festive foods. Petals are also the basis for the commercial lutein/xanthophyll natural food colourant (E161b). Use only petals from plants grown without pesticides. Source: Garcia-Mendoza et al. (2018) confirmed edible status and phenolic composition; Kew notes historic use as food colourant.

INGREDIENTS

20 grams *Tagetes erecta* petals (fresh), flower — Fresh ray florets (petals) only — pull gently from the flower head; discard the green base.

METHOD

1. Select fully open, unblemished *Tagetes erecta* flower heads from pesticide-free plants. Pick in the morning after dew has dried.
2. Gently pull the ray florets (petals) away from the green involucre (base cup). Discard the base and disc florets.
3. Rinse petals briefly under cold water and pat dry gently with a paper towel. Use immediately or refrigerate in a dry container for up to 2 days.
4. Scatter over salads, rice dishes, soups, or egg dishes immediately before serving. Do not cook — high heat destroys the vivid colour and subtle flavour.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Tagetes erecta holds one of the most culturally resonant places of any garden flower in Mesoamerican history. Its Nahuatl name, cempoalxóchitl (also cempasúchil), means “twenty flowers” — an allusion to the many petals in each large head.

Huacatay Leaf Paste

Food / culinary • Makes ~60 ml

The vivid green, anise-scented leaf paste that gives Peruvian ocopa sauce and grilled anticuchos their distinctive flavor.

INGREDIENTS

50 g	Fresh <i>Tagetes minuta</i> (huacatay) leaves
60 ml	Vegetable oil
1 clove	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>)
2 g	Salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Strip leaves from the stems and rinse well.
2. Blend leaves with oil, garlic, and salt into a smooth green paste.
3. Use immediately as a sauce base or store for later use.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

When a whale dies its body feeds the deep for decades; one life, ended, becomes a garden on the ocean floor.



Tamarind Digestive Water (Imli Pani)

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 ml

A cooling, tangy tamarind infusion sipped after meals across South Asia to ease digestion.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Tamarind pulp (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>) — deseeded, deshelled
500 ml	Water — warm, for soaking
15 g	Jaggery or honey — optional, to taste
2 g	Roasted cumin, ground (<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>) — optional

METHOD

1. Soak tamarind pulp in warm water for 20 minutes.
2. Mash well and strain through a sieve to remove fiber and seeds.
3. Stir in sweetener and roasted cumin to taste.
4. Serve chilled or warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A staple of Indian Ayurveda, African, and Southeast Asian folk medicine for millennia; the Arabic name ‘tamr hindi’ (Indian date) gave the tree its English name; pulp has long been used in chutneys, sherbets and as a metal polish.

Roasted Dandelion Root “Coffee”

Food / culinary • Makes 1 batch

A caffeine-free roasted-root brew with a deep, slightly bitter, coffee-like flavour — a long-standing folk use of dandelion root recorded by Grieve as “dandelion coffee”.

INGREDIENTS

6 g Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), root — roasted dandelion root, per ~2 cups

METHOD

1. Scrub fresh dandelion roots, chop into small even pieces and dry thoroughly, or start with dried root.
2. Roast the dried pieces in a dry pan over medium heat (or in an oven at ~150–180 °C), stirring, until dark brown and fragrant — 10–20 minutes. Do not let them burn.
3. Cool, then grind to a coarse powder.
4. Brew about 1–2 teaspoons of the roasted ground root per cup: simmer in water for 5–10 minutes (or steep in a press), then strain and serve.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

It was a staple of European and Middle Eastern folk practice as a spring bitter and “blood cleanser,” eaten as one of the first wild greens of the year to enliven the system after winter.

Bibhitaki Fruit Decoction

Food / culinary • Makes ~250 ml

A gently astringent Ayurvedic decoction of belleric myrobalan, traditionally taken to ease a lingering cough and support digestion.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon Dried bibhitaki fruit powder (*Terminalia bellirica*)
— Belleric myrobalan
- 250 ml Water
- 1 teaspoon Honey — Optional, stir in once cooled slightly

METHOD

1. Combine the bibhitaki powder and water in a small pan.
2. Bring to a boil, then simmer gently for 10 minutes until slightly reduced.
3. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes.
4. Strain, stir in honey if desired once slightly cooled, and sip warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A cornerstone of Ayurveda, one of the three fruits in Triphala (with amalaki and haritaki), valued for balancing the doshas, easing cough and supporting digestion and the voice.

Haritaki Warm-Water Digestive Tonic

Food / culinary • Makes ~200 ml

A simple, traditional Ayurvedic way to take haritaki: its astringent, gently laxative fruit powder stirred into warm water and sipped before bed to encourage smooth morning elimination.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 1 tsp | Haritaki (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>) fruit powder — Start with half a teaspoon |
| 200 ml | Warm water — Comfortably warm, not boiling |
| 1 tsp | Honey — Optional, stir in once cooled slightly |

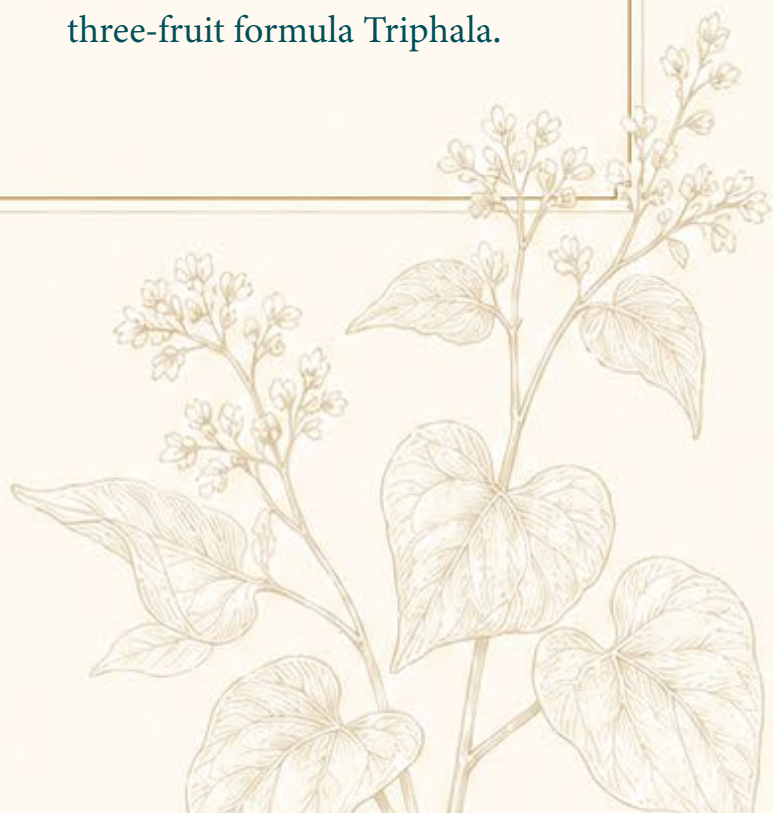
METHOD

1. Warm the water until comfortably hot but not boiling.
2. Stir in the haritaki powder until dispersed; it will be cloudy and astringent.
3. Let it cool slightly, then stir in the optional honey.
4. Sip slowly in the evening, about an hour after your last meal.
5. Start with a small dose and adjust over several days as tolerated.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Called haritaki, the ‘king of medicines’ in Ayurveda and revered in Tibetan medicine, often depicted in the hand of the Medicine Buddha; a principal ingredient of the classic three-fruit formula Triphala.



Cacao Nib & Sea-Salt Energy Bites

Food / culinary • Makes 12 count

No-bake bites of dates, nut butter and oats studded with crunchy cacao nibs and a little flaky salt — a wholesome way to enjoy cacao’s flavour and a gentle methylxanthine lift.

INGREDIENTS

30 g	Cacao (<i>Theobroma cacao</i>), seed — roasted cacao nibs
150 g	Dates (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>) — pitted soft dates
60 g	Nut butter — nut butter (e.g. almond)
60 g	Rolled oats (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
1 g	Sea salt — flaky sea salt, to taste

METHOD

1. Blitz the pitted dates and nut butter to a sticky paste.
2. Mix in the oats and cacao nibs until evenly combined.
3. Add a small pinch of flaky salt and mix again.
4. Roll into about 12 bite-sized balls.
5. Chill at least 30 minutes to firm up before eating.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cacao was sacred to the Olmec, Maya and Aztec peoples of Mesoamerica, who prepared a bitter, frothy, often spiced drink from ground beans and used the beans themselves as currency.

Daily High-Flavanol Cocoa

Tea / infusion • Makes 250 ml

A simple unsweetened cocoa made with high-flavanol cocoa powder, designed so a cup supplies a meaningful amount of cocoa flavanols. EFSA has accepted that about 200 mg cocoa flavanols a day help maintain normal endothelium-dependent vasodilation, which contributes to normal blood flow.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 5 g | Cacao (<i>Theobroma cacao</i>), seed — high-flavanol unsweetened cocoa powder (~one heaped tsp; use label to hit ~200 mg flavanols) |
| 250 g | Milk or water — warm milk or water |

METHOD

1. Warm about 250 ml milk or water until steaming.
2. Put the high-flavanol cocoa powder in a cup.
3. Add a little of the warm liquid and stir to a smooth paste, then whisk in the rest until frothy.
4. Drink unsweetened, or sweeten lightly to taste.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The Maya associated cacao with the gods and with life and fertility; the Aztec ruler Moctezuma was famed for his consumption of “xocolātl.” Linnaeus enshrined this reverence in the genus name *Theobroma* — Greek for “food of the gods.”

Dark Chocolate Bites Filled with Prunus dulcis, Ficus carica & Phoenix dactylifera

Food / culinary • Makes 10 pieces

A homemade version of an organic filled chocolate: a dark cacao shell around a soft filling of roasted almond butter, dried figs, date syrup and a whisper of carob — sweetened almost entirely with fruit.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Dark chocolate, 75–85% cocoa (<i>Theobroma cacao</i>) — preferably date- or coconut-sugar sweetened
75 g	Roasted almond butter (<i>Prunus dulcis</i>) — 100% almonds
30 g	Dried figs (<i>Ficus carica</i>) — soft
15 g	Date syrup (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>)
2 g	Carob powder (<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>)
⅓ tsp	Fine salt

METHOD

1. Chop the soft dried figs very finely (or blitz to a rough paste). Mix with the almond butter, date syrup, carob powder and salt until even and dough-like.
2. Chill the filling until it is firm enough to shape.
3. Shape into about 10 small balls (~12 g each) and flatten each slightly into a disc. Return to the fridge while you melt the chocolate.
4. Temper the chocolate: melt two-thirds over a water bath to 45–50 °C, take it off the heat, add the remaining third and stir until it falls to 31–32 °C — or simply melt it all gently and keep the finished bites in the fridge.
5. Dip each cold disc with a fork, let the excess drip off well, and set the bites on baking paper. Decorate with a little fig powder or salt flakes before the shell sets.
6. Let the bites set somewhere cool (18–20 °C if tempered, otherwise in the fridge).



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cacao's botanical name, *Theobroma*, is Greek for 'food of the gods' — Linnaeus decided no lesser name would do.

Amazonian Cupuaçu Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes ~260 ml

A creamy, tropical smoothie built on the tart-sweet, chocolate-and-pineapple perfume of cupuaçu pulp, a staple refreshment across the Brazilian Amazon.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Cupuassu (<i>Theobroma grandiflorum</i>) — Cupuaçu (<i>Theobroma grandiflorum</i>) pulp, fresh or thawed frozen
250 ml	Milk or plant milk — Dairy or a neutral plant milk
15 ml	Honey or sugar — To taste, balancing the tartness
4 piece	Ice — Optional, for a colder, thicker drink

METHOD

1. Scoop the cupuaçu pulp away from any seeds.
2. Add the pulp, milk, and sweetener to a blender.
3. Blend until smooth and creamy, adding ice if a colder, thicker texture is wanted.
4. Taste and adjust sweetness, then pour into a glass and serve at once.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A cherished fruit of Amazonian peoples long before it became known abroad, cupuaçu is used in juices, sweets, and traditional foods, and its aromatic pulp is considered a regional delicacy.

Dried Spanish Oregano Herb Blend

Food / culinary

The simplest and most traditional way to use *Thymus capitatus*: as a dried culinary herb, exactly as oregano is used across the Mediterranean.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp *Thymus capitatus* dried flowering tops — crumbled
- 0.25 cup olive oil (*Olea europaea*) — for infusing, optional

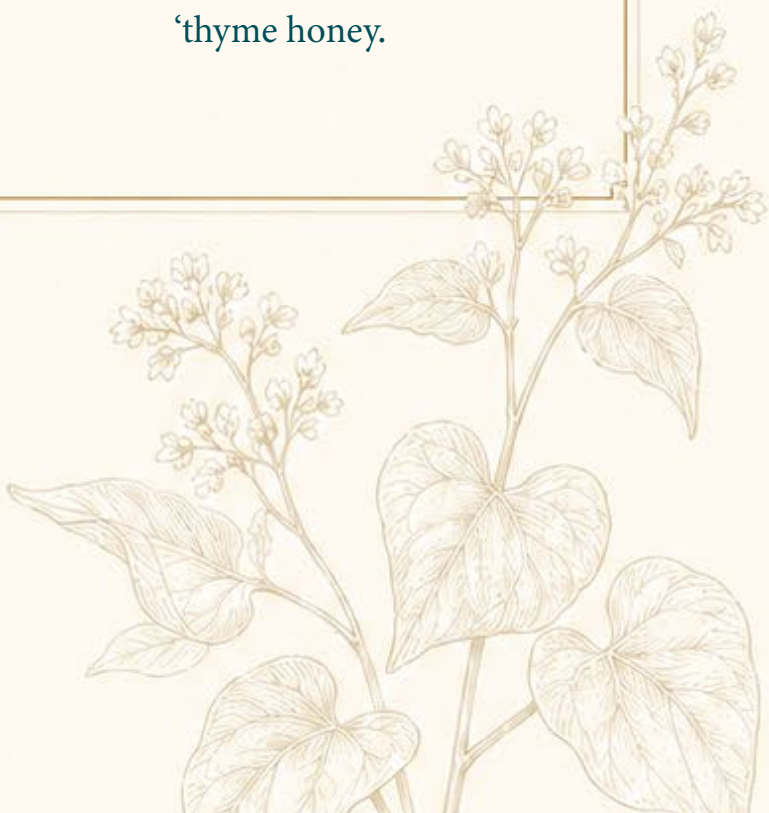
METHOD

1. Harvest and fully air-dry flowering tops of *Thymus capitatus*.
2. Crumble dried herb from the stems, discarding any woody stem pieces.
3. Store in an airtight jar, or gently warm in olive oil (do not fry) for 5 minutes to make an infused oil for immediate use.
4. Use as a seasoning over roasted vegetables, grilled meats, fish or legume stews.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Long used around the Mediterranean as a culinary herb interchangeable with oregano and thyme, and as the principal nectar source for prized Greek and Cretan ‘thyme honey.



Wild Thyme & Olive Oil Yogurt Dip

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

A simple, aromatic dip inspired by Alpine and Eastern European folk food traditions, where wild thyme (*materina dusica*) is stirred into fresh dairy. The herb lifts plain yogurt into a versatile spread suitable for flatbreads, raw vegetables, grilled meats, or roasted potatoes. Ready in 2 minutes; no cooking required.

INGREDIENTS

10 g	Fresh wild thyme leaves (<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>)
200 g	Full-fat plain yogurt (Greek-style)
10 g	Extra-virgin olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
2 g	Fine sea salt
0.5 g	Freshly ground black pepper (optional) (<i>Piper nigrum</i>)

METHOD

1. Strip the wild thyme leaves from their stems. Finely chop approximately 10 g (about 2 tablespoons packed) of fresh leaves.
2. In a bowl, combine the yogurt, chopped wild thyme, olive oil, salt, and pepper (if using).
3. Stir until well combined. Taste and adjust salt. Let stand for 5 minutes to allow the flavours to meld.
4. Transfer to a serving bowl, drizzle with a little extra olive oil, and garnish with a few fresh thyme flowers or leaves.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Cats knead with their paws as they did as kittens at their mother, contentment keeping the old gesture alive.

Wild Thyme Herb Salt

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g

A fragrant, all-purpose culinary herb salt made by blending dried wild thyme with coarse sea salt — a pantry staple across Scandinavian and central European farmhouse kitchens. Use to finish grilled vegetables, fish, eggs, bread dough, or roasted potatoes. The salt draws out and preserves the volatile oils of the thyme, intensifying the aroma over time.

INGREDIENTS

20 g	Dried wild thyme leaves (stripped from stems) (<i>Thymus serpyllum</i>)
100 g	Coarse sea salt or flaky salt

METHOD

1. Spread the dried wild thyme leaves on a clean surface and crumble them lightly between your fingers to release the volatile oils — do not powder them completely; some texture is desirable.
2. Combine 20 g of crumbled dried wild thyme with 100 g of coarse sea salt in a bowl. Mix thoroughly.
3. Spread the mixture on a baking sheet in a thin layer and leave at room temperature (or in an oven at 50°C with the door ajar) for 30–60 minutes to ensure the salt is completely dry.
4. Once dry and fragrant, transfer to clean, dry glass jars. Seal and label. Leave for at least 3–5 days before using to allow the flavours to fully meld.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The French name serpolette and preparations such as Chartreuse and Benedictine liqueurs draw on a centuries-old tradition of wild aromatics from mountain and heath.



Thyme & Lemon Herb Salt

Food / culinary • Makes 120 g

A fragrant finishing salt that captures thyme’s warm, savoury aroma with bright lemon zest — lovely on roast vegetables, potatoes, chicken, fish and eggs.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Thyme (<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>), leaf
100 g	Flaky sea salt
5 g	Lemon zest (dried) (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Strip the dried thyme leaves from any stems and crumble finely.
2. Mix the thyme, sea salt and dried lemon zest in a bowl; for a finer texture pulse briefly in a mortar or grinder.
3. Spread on a tray for an hour to ensure everything is fully dry, then transfer to an airtight jar and label.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A rainbow moves with you and belongs to you alone; no two people have stood in quite the same one.



Nasturtium, Walnut & Lemon Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes 200 g

A vibrant, peppery pesto using the full nasturtium plant — leaves, flowers and tender stems. Quicker to make than basil pesto and packed with vitamin C and lutein. Vivid yellow-green colour makes it visually striking on pasta, crostini or grilled vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

80 g	Nasturtium (<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>), leaf — young leaves, washed and roughly dried
40 g	Nasturtium (<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>), flower — petals and full flowers, a few reserved for garnish
60 g	Walnuts (<i>Juglans regia</i>) — lightly toasted
80 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra virgin, plus more for sealing
30 g	Parmesan cheese — finely grated
20 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — freshly squeezed
4 g	Salt — or to taste

METHOD

1. Toast the walnuts in a dry pan over medium heat for 3–4 minutes until fragrant; allow to cool completely.
2. Wash and dry the nasturtium leaves and flowers. Reserve a few whole flowers for garnish.
3. Place leaves, flowers, cooled walnuts, Parmesan and lemon juice in a food processor. Pulse 10–15 times until roughly combined.
4. With the motor running, drizzle in the olive oil until you reach your preferred consistency (thick for bruschetta, slightly looser for pasta).
5. Season with salt to taste. Transfer to a jar, pour a thin film of olive oil over the surface, seal and refrigerate.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The first photograph took a whole afternoon of light to form, a single image gathered over eight slow hours.



Soothing Slippery Elm Gruel

Food / culinary

The classic invalid's porridge: a warm, bland, comforting gruel that coats a sore throat or unsettled stomach.

INGREDIENTS

tsp	Slippery elm inner bark powder (<i>Ulmus rubra</i>) — 1-2 — Fine food-grade powder
1 cup	Warm water or milk
1 tsp	Honey — Optional, for taste
1 pinch	Cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum verum</i>) — Optional

METHOD

1. Whisk the slippery elm powder into a little cold water to make a smooth paste and prevent lumps.
2. Slowly stir in the hot water or milk while whisking.
3. Warm gently in a pan for a minute or two until it thickens to a thin porridge.
4. Sweeten with honey and a pinch of cinnamon if liked, and sip warm.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A cornerstone remedy of Native American and later Eclectic medicine, used as a soothing gruel for the sick and convalescent, for sore throats, digestive irritation and as a wound poultice.

Nettle Pesto

Food / culinary • Makes 1 jar

A vivid green pesto using blanched young nettle in place of (or alongside) basil — a delicious way to use a spring glut, rich in minerals and good on pasta, toast or roasted vegetables.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), leaf — young tops, blanched & squeezed
50 g	Pine nuts (or walnuts) — toasted
50 g	Parmesan cheese — finely grated
1 g	Garlic clove (<i>Allium sativum</i>) — peeled
100 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — extra virgin
5 g	Lemon juice & salt — to taste

METHOD

1. Blanch the washed young nettle tops in boiling water for 1 minute, then refresh in cold water and squeeze dry (this disarms the sting).
2. Blitz the nettle, pine nuts, parmesan and garlic in a processor.
3. Drizzle in the olive oil until you have a coarse paste.
4. Season with lemon juice and salt; store under a film of oil.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Bumblebees warm themselves by shivering before dawn, so as to be first out among the flowers.



Blueberry & Oat Breakfast Smoothie

Food / culinary • Makes 2 glasses (approx. 300 ml each)

A nourishing, filling breakfast smoothie built around frozen blueberries, rolled oats, banana and yoghurt. Quick to make, beautiful in colour, and a genuinely effective way to eat more whole-food antioxidants every morning. Frozen berries give a thicker, colder texture than fresh.

INGREDIENTS

200 g	Frozen blueberries (<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>), fruit
40 g	Rolled oats (gluten-free if required) (<i>Avena sativa</i>)
100 g	Ripe banana (about 1 medium) (<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>)
180 g	Full-fat plain yoghurt (or dairy-free yoghurt)
200 g	Whole milk or oat milk
15 g	Almond butter or tahini (optional)

METHOD

1. Measure all ingredients into a high-powered blender: frozen blueberries, oats, banana, yoghurt, milk and almond butter if using.
2. Blend on high speed for 45–60 seconds until completely smooth and a deep purple-blue colour with no oat pieces visible.
3. Taste and adjust: add a little honey or maple syrup if you want more sweetness, or a splash more milk if too thick.
4. Pour into two tall glasses and serve immediately.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Some flowers open only to the moon,
visited by moths that will never once
see them in the day.



Simple Fresh Cranberry Sauce

Food / culinary • Makes ~490 g

A glossy, tart-sweet cranberry sauce made in fifteen minutes, the jewel of the festive table and a bright partner to roasts, cheese, and morning toast.

INGREDIENTS

340 g	Fresh cranberries (<i>Vaccinium macrocarpon</i>) — Rinsed, any soft ones discarded
150 g	Sugar — Adjust to taste
120 ml	Water or orange juice
1 tsp	Orange zest (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>) — Optional

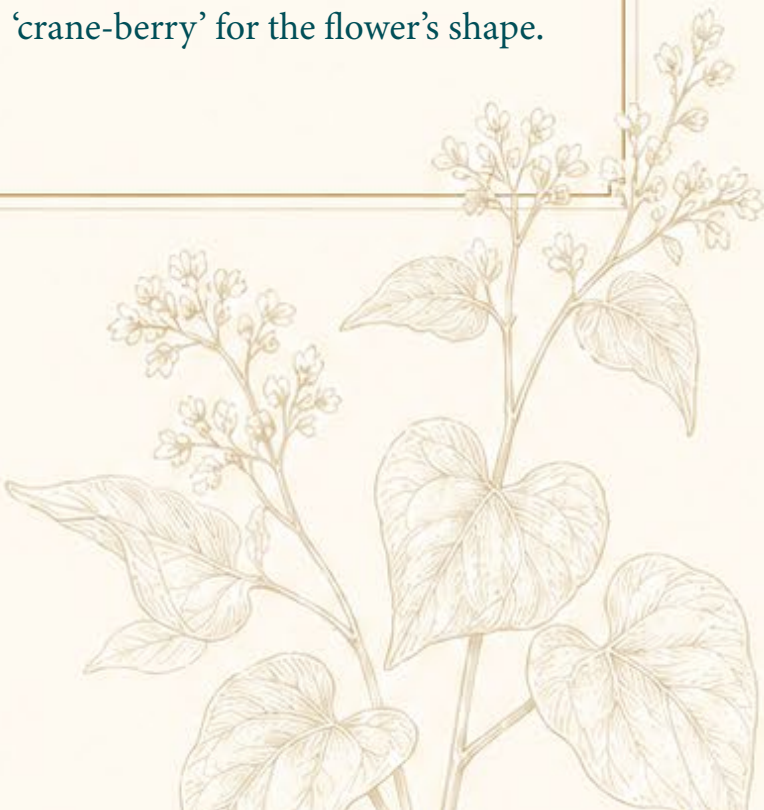
METHOD

1. Combine the water or orange juice and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a simmer, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
2. Add the cranberries and return to a gentle boil.
3. Simmer 8-10 minutes until the berries burst and the sauce thickens, stirring occasionally.
4. Stir in the orange zest if using, then remove from heat.
5. Cool to room temperature (it will thicken further as it cools) and refrigerate before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A traditional food and medicine of Northeastern Native American peoples, who ate the berries and used them in pemmican and as a dye and poultice. Its name derives from ‘crane-berry’ for the flower’s shape.



Rårørda Lingon – Raw-Stirred Lingonberries

Food / culinary • Makes 500 g

Rårørda lingon (Swedish: “raw-stirred lingonberries”) is the essential Nordic preserve — lingonberries macerated in sugar without cooking, preserving their fresh brightness and retaining more vitamin C. It is the classic partner to Swedish meatballs, potato pancakes (*raggmunk*), and blood pudding, but equally good on porridge, rye crispbread, or vanilla ice cream. The berries’ natural benzoic acid makes this a remarkably stable no-cook preserve.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 500 g | Lingonberries (<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>), fruit — Fresh or frozen whole ripe lingonberries; sort and remove any soft or damaged berries |
| 250 g | White sugar — Caster or granulated sugar; use 50% weight of berries. Adjust to taste — some prefer less sweet. |

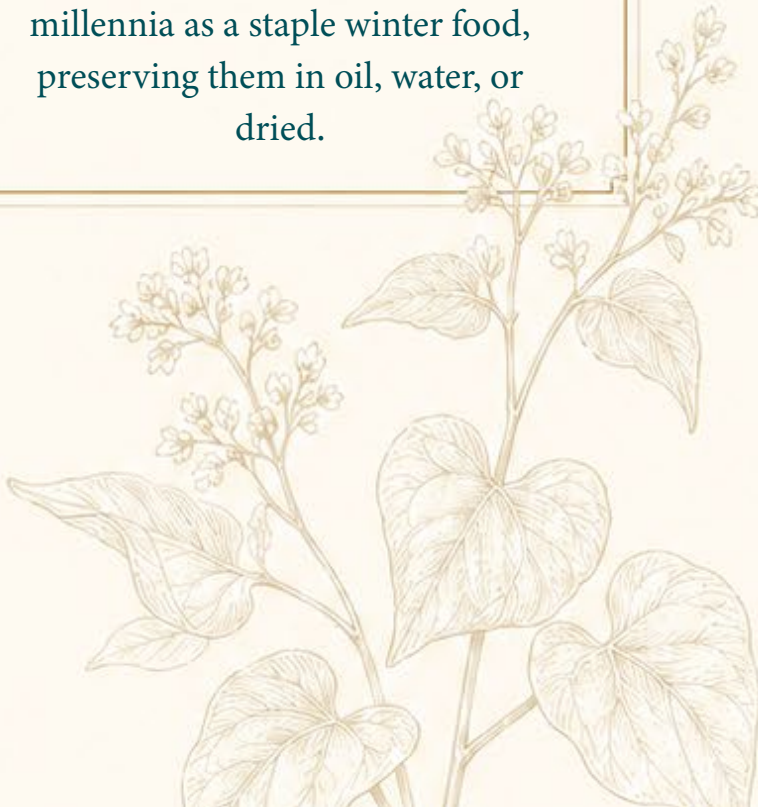
METHOD

- Sort through the lingonberries, removing any leaves, twigs, and soft or damaged berries. Rinse gently and drain well — the berries should be reasonably dry before you begin.
- Place the berries in a large clean bowl. Add the sugar and stir or gently toss to combine.
- Leave the mixture at room temperature, stirring or shaking every hour or so, until all the sugar has dissolved into the berry juices. This typically takes 2–4 hours, or overnight in the refrigerator if you prefer a slower maceration.
- Transfer to a sterilised glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. The mixture is ready to eat immediately. Refrigerate and use within 12 months for best quality.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Among the most historically important wild fruits of the Northern Hemisphere boreal zone. Indigenous peoples across North America and Eurasia harvested lingonberries for millennia as a staple winter food, preserving them in oil, water, or dried.



Real Vanilla Bean Custard

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 ml

A silky pouring custard scented with the seeds of a whole vanilla pod, the simplest way to taste true vanilla.

INGREDIENTS

1 whole	Vanilla pod (<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>) — Split lengthways, seeds scraped.
500 ml	Whole milk
4 whole	Egg yolks
60 g	Caster sugar
1 tsp	Cornflour — Optional, to stabilise.

METHOD

1. Warm the milk with the split vanilla pod and its seeds until steaming, then leave to infuse off the heat for 10 minutes.
2. Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour together until pale.
3. Pour the warm milk slowly onto the yolks, whisking, then return to the pan.
4. Stir constantly over low heat until the custard thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon; do not boil.
5. Strain, discard the pod, and serve warm or chilled.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Owls cannot move their eyes, so they turn their whole head to look, and see the world by turning toward it.

Khus (Vetiver Root) Cooling Water

Food / culinary • Makes ~15 g

A fragrant, earthy-sweet infusion of vetiver roots in water, the classic South Asian way to cool the body and perfume the palate through the heat of summer.

INGREDIENTS

15 g	Clean dried vetiver (khus) roots (<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>) — Rinsed well; food-grade.
1 litre	Water — Filtered or drinking water.
2 tablespoon	Sugar or honey — Optional, to taste.
1 tablespoon	Fresh lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — Optional, for brightness.

METHOD

1. Rinse the vetiver roots well under cool running water to remove any grit.
2. Place the roots in a jug and cover with the litre of water.
3. Cover and leave to infuse in the refrigerator for 6-8 hours or overnight, until the water is fragrant and faintly amber.
4. Strain, sweeten with sugar or honey and add lemon juice if liked, and serve chilled over ice.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In India the fragrant roots, called khus or khus-khus, have long been woven into cooling window screens (tatties) wetted in the hot season to perfume and cool the incoming breeze, and steeped to make a prized summer sherbet.

Home-Sprouted Mung Beans

Food / culinary • Makes ~500 ml

Crisp, nutrient-dense sprouts grown from whole mung beans at home in a few days.

INGREDIENTS

100 g	Dried mung beans (<i>Vigna radiata</i>)
500 ml	Water — for soaking and rinsing

METHOD

1. Rinse beans well and soak in water for 8-12 hours.
2. Drain and keep in a dark, well-ventilated jar or sprouting tray.
3. Rinse thoroughly 2 times a day for 2-3 days until sprouted.
4. Rinse a final time, then blanch or stir-fry briefly before eating.



Viola cornuta Fresh Flower Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes 20 flowers

The flowers of *Viola cornuta* are genuinely edible — mild in flavour (lightly grassy, faintly sweet), visually striking, and long used across Europe as a garnish for salads, desserts, and cold drinks. This is straightforward culinary use: no cooking, no preparation beyond gentle washing. Use only flowers grown without systemic pesticides.

INGREDIENTS

5 g *Viola cornuta* fresh flowers

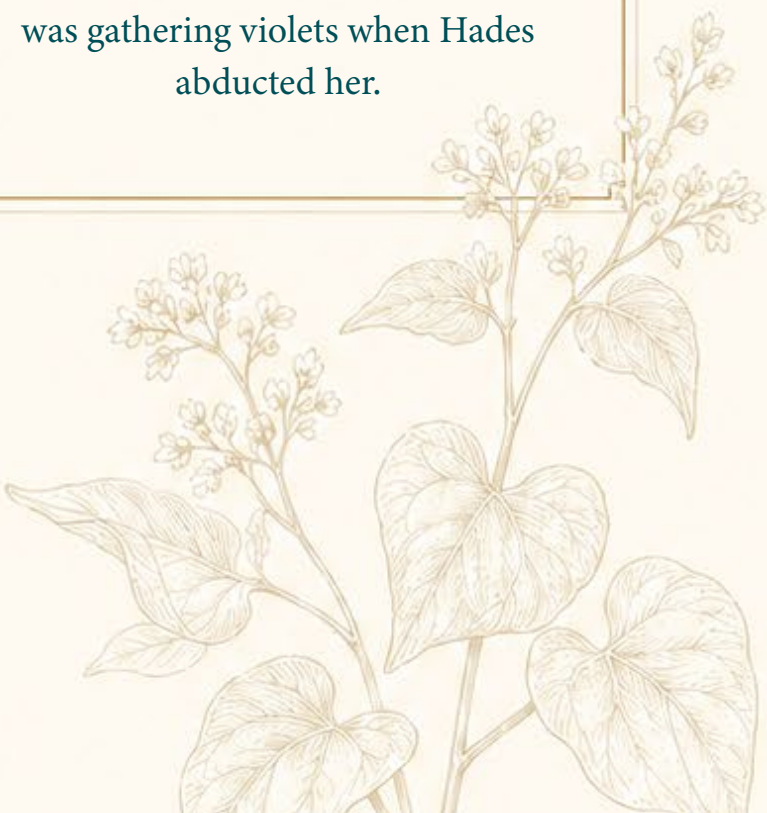
METHOD

1. Harvest 15–25 fresh viola blooms early in the morning after the dew has dried, choosing unblemished, fully open flowers from pesticide-free plants.
2. Gently place in a bowl of cool water and swirl to remove any debris or tiny insects. Lift out and lay on a sheet of clean kitchen paper to dry for a few minutes.
3. Use whole flowers — including the nectar spur — or gently separate the petals. Scatter over the finished dish immediately before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The genus *Viola* has been cultivated in European gardens since antiquity. In Ancient Greece, violets were sold in Athenian markets and feature in poetry and myth; Persephone was gathering violets when Hades abducted her.



Crystallised Pansy Flowers

Food / culinary • Makes 30 flowers

A traditional confectionery technique of coating fresh pansy petals or whole flowers with egg white and fine sugar to produce crisp, jewel-like decorations for cakes, petit fours, and desserts. Crystallised violets and pansies have a long tradition in European confectionery, and the method is documented in classic cookery literature. The preserved flowers retain their colour for months.

INGREDIENTS

30 grams Fresh pansy flowers (*Viola x wittrockiana*) —
Freshly picked, pesticide-free pansy flowers, fully opened

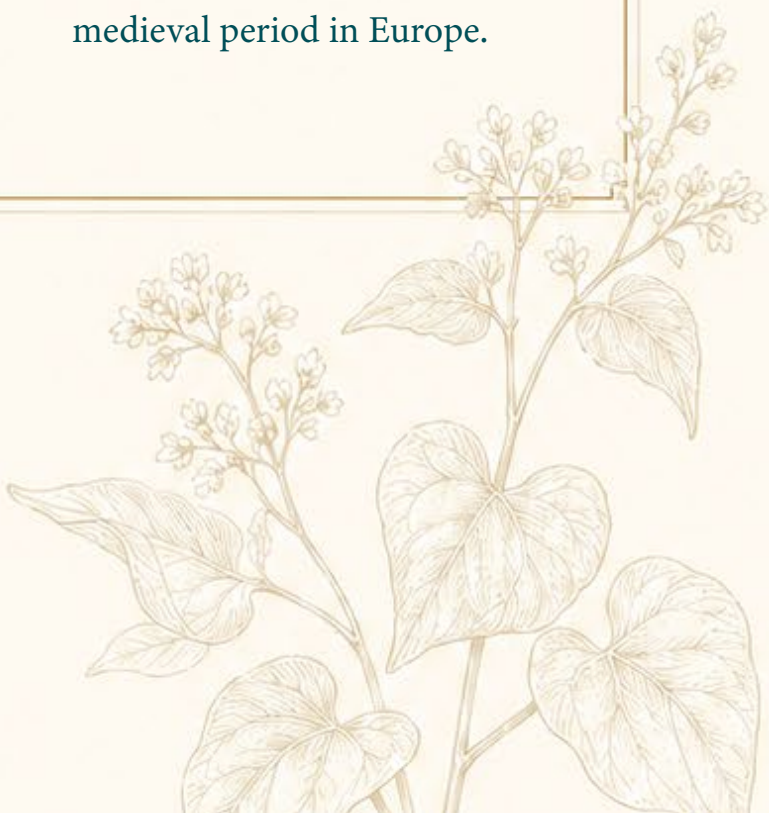
METHOD

1. Gather 30 g fresh, fully opened pansy flowers from pesticide-free plants. Inspect and gently remove any insects.
2. Beat one egg white (or use pasteurised egg white) lightly with a fork until just broken up but not foamy. Place fine caster sugar in a shallow bowl.
3. Using a small soft paintbrush, coat each flower evenly with egg white — front, back and between petals.
4. Holding the flower over the sugar bowl, spoon fine sugar over all surfaces until evenly coated. Shake off any excess.
5. Place coated flowers face-up on a parchment-lined tray and leave at room temperature in a dry, airy place for 24–48 hours until completely dry and crisp.
6. Store in an airtight tin in a single layer at room temperature. Use within 4–8 weeks for best quality.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The name ‘pansy’ derives from the French ‘pensée’ (thought, remembrance), and the flower has carried associations with memory, love, and reflection since the medieval period in Europe.



Fresh Pansy Flower Garnish

Food / culinary • Makes 20 flowers

Whole fresh pansy flowers used as an edible culinary garnish on salads, desserts, cocktails, and cheese boards. Pansies have been consumed as an edible flower in European and Asian culinary traditions and are now commercially grown as an edible crop. The mild, slightly grassy, faintly sweet flavour and striking colours make them one of the most popular edible flower garnishes in contemporary cuisine.

INGREDIENTS

20 grams Fresh pansy flowers (*Viola x wittrockiana*) —
Freshly harvested, pesticide-free, food-grade
flowers only

METHOD

1. Harvest pansy flowers in the early morning from pesticide-free plants. Choose fully opened, unblemished flowers with vivid colour.
2. Gently rinse under cool running water and shake dry, or pat with a paper towel. Inspect for insects.
3. Use whole flowers immediately as a garnish on salads, desserts, or drinks. Alternatively refrigerate on damp paper towel in a sealed container for up to 48 hours.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

In Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (c. 1595–1596), the juice of a pansy-like flower (‘love-in-idleness’) is the enchanting agent used by Oberon — clearly drawing on earlier associations of *Viola tricolor*, the heartsease, with love charms.

Shea Butter as a Traditional Cooking Fat

Food / culinary • Makes 100 g

Beyond cosmetics, food-grade shea butter is a traditional West African cooking fat and a natural cocoa-butter substitute. Used like any solid cooking fat, it adds a mild richness to stews, sauces and fried foods.

INGREDIENTS

100 g Shea tree (*Vitellaria paradoxa*), seed oil — Food-grade (edible) shea butter

METHOD

1. Confirm your shea butter is sold as food-grade / edible.
2. Melt the desired amount gently in a pan.
3. Use as a frying or cooking fat, stir into stews and sauces, or use as a cocoa-butter substitute in suitable recipes.
4. Store any unused food-grade butter separately from cosmetic butter.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

A honeycomb’s six-sided cells are nature’s thriftiest shape, the most held for the very least given.



Stuffed Fox-Grape Leaves (Dolma)

Food / culinary • Makes ~300 g

Young fox-grape leaves are tender and edible — blanched and rolled around a herbed rice filling in the eastern-Mediterranean dolma tradition.

INGREDIENTS

30 leaf	Young fox-grape leaves (<i>Vitis labrusca</i>) — tender spring leaves
300 g	Cooked rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — seasoned with herbs, onion, lemon
60 ml	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>)
60 ml	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>)

METHOD

1. Blanch the young grape leaves in boiling water for 1-2 minutes, then cool.
2. Place a spoon of seasoned rice near the stem end of each leaf and roll up, folding in the sides.
3. Pack the rolls snugly in a pot, drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice, and add water to just cover.
4. Weigh down with a plate, cover, and simmer gently 40-45 minutes until tender. Serve warm or cold.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Fox grapes were a staple wild food of Indigenous peoples of eastern North America long before European settlement.

Stuffed Vine Leaves (Dolma)

Food / culinary • Makes 30 pieces

The classic Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern dish of young grapevine leaves rolled around a herbed rice filling and gently simmered. A traditional culinary use of the tender spring leaf.

INGREDIENTS

150 g	Grape (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>), leaf — about 30–40 young vine leaves, fresh-blanchd or brined and rinsed
200 g	Short-grain / round rice (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) — rinsed (raw weight)
150 g	Onion, finely chopped (<i>Allium cepa</i>) — 1 large onion
60 g	Olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i>) — about 65 ml
30 g	Fresh herbs (dill, parsley, mint), chopped — mixed
40 g	Lemon juice (<i>Citrus limon</i>) — about 40 ml, plus wedges to serve
5 g	Salt and black pepper — to taste

METHOD

1. If using fresh leaves, blanch in boiling water 1–2 minutes until pliable; if using brined leaves, rinse well to remove excess salt. Snip off any tough stalks.
2. Soften the chopped onion in a little of the olive oil, stir in the rinsed rice, chopped herbs, salt and pepper, and cook 2–3 minutes.
3. Place a leaf vein-side up, put a teaspoon of filling near the stem end, fold in the sides and roll up snugly (do not over-fill — the rice expands).
4. Pack the rolls seam-side down in a heavy pan, drizzle with the remaining oil and the lemon juice, and add water to barely cover.
5. Weigh down with a plate, cover, and simmer gently 40–50 minutes until the rice is tender and the liquid absorbed. Cool before serving.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

The grapevine is among the most culturally laden of all plants.

Golden Ashwagandha Moon Milk

Food / culinary • Makes 1 cup

A warm, spiced bedtime milk built on the Ayurvedic tradition of taking ashwagandha root in warm milk (*ksheerapaka*) — soothing, comforting and lightly sweet, for winding down at the end of the day.

INGREDIENTS

1.5 g	Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), root — ashwagandha root powder (~1/2 tsp)
250 g	Milk — warm milk or plant milk (~1 cup, ~240 ml)
5 g	Honey — honey or maple syrup, to taste
0.3 g	Warming spices — pinch of ground cardamom, cinnamon and/or nutmeg

METHOD

1. Gently warm 1 cup of milk (dairy or plant) in a small saucepan — do not boil hard.
2. Whisk in ~1.5 g (about 1/2 teaspoon) ashwagandha root powder and a pinch of warming spices (cardamom, cinnamon and/or nutmeg). Simmer very gently for 3–5 minutes, whisking, so the powder disperses.
3. Take off the heat and let cool slightly, then stir in honey or maple syrup to taste.
4. Pour into a mug and sip warm about an hour before bed.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

We share the light of the same few stars with every human who has ever lived and looked up.

Prickly Ash Berry Tingle Seasoning

Food / culinary • Makes ~15 g

A fragrant, citrus-numbing seasoning made from dried prickly ash berries, used like a wild North American cousin of Sichuan pepper.

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|------|--|
| 10 g | Dried ripe prickly ash berry husks (<i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>) — Hard black seeds removed. |
| 5 g | Flaky sea salt — Optional, for a finishing salt blend. |

METHOD

1. Warm the dried berry husks briefly in a dry pan over low heat until fragrant, about 1 minute, without scorching.
2. Cool, then grind to a coarse powder in a spice mill or mortar.
3. Sieve to remove any grit and hard seed fragments.
4. Mix with the sea salt if making a finishing blend, and store airtight.



THE BEAUTY OF THINGS

Called prickly ash or the ‘toothache tree’ because chewing the bark or berries numbs an aching tooth; used by Indigenous North American peoples and Eclectic physicians for poor circulation, cramps and cold hands and feet.

Candied (Crystallised) Ginger

Food / culinary • Makes 250 g

Chewy, sugar-coated candied ginger — a delicious sweet and a handy travel-bag remedy: a piece chewed slowly helps settle a queasy stomach or travel sickness.

INGREDIENTS

250 g	Ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), rhizome — young fresh rhizome, peeled and thinly sliced
250 g	Sugar — granulated sugar (plus extra for coating)
250 g	Water

METHOD

1. Simmer the sliced ginger in plain water for about 30 minutes until tender; drain (save the spicy water for tea).
2. Return the ginger to the pan with the sugar and 250 ml fresh water; simmer, stirring, until the syrup is nearly gone and the ginger is translucent (~20–30 min).
3. Lift out the pieces and toss in extra sugar to coat.
4. Spread on a rack to dry for a few hours, then store airtight. (Bottle the leftover syrup for drinks.)



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at the tincture bottle."*

— María

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