

# GARLIC



**GARLIC**, botanically known as *Allium sativum*, is a bulbous perennial native to Siberia, the eastern part of Russia. As early as 3000 B.C. Chinese scholars were praising its virtues. Garlic is related to the onion and belongs to the same family as lilies and daffodils, which have been bred for their flowers rather than for an edible bulb. In the spring, the plant begins to send up leaves. When the leaves reach 2-3 feet tall the plant sends up a seed pod, called the garlic scape. The skin of the garlic bulb encloses up to 20 edible bulblets called cloves. With about 300 varieties worldwide, garlic bulbs range in color from white to dark wine. Elephant garlic, which has large cloves but a mild flavor, is not actually a true garlic but a closer relative to the leek. Today, Americans alone consume more than 250 million pounds of garlic annually.



## STORAGE

- ◆ Store garlic unpeeled in an open container **away from other foods**.
- ◆ Garlic should be kept in a **cool, dry place**.
- ◆ Do not refrigerate or freeze unpeeled garlic.
- ◆ As garlic ages, it will begin to produce green sprouts in the center of each clove. These edible infant green sprouts can be bitter, so cut them out of the cloves before using.
- ◆ Properly stored garlic can **keep up to three months**.
- ◆ Freeze peeled garlic in an airtight plastic bag or in a glass container filled with oil.

## PREPARATION

- ◆ To peel a clove, place it on a cutting board on its side, and gently press down quickly with the flat side of a butcher knife. The skin should then easily peel off.
- ◆ Garlic can be used **raw** or **cooked**. The smaller garlic is cut, the stronger the flavor and one raw garlic clove, finely minced or pressed, releases more flavor than a dozen cooked whole cloves!
- ◆ Use cooked in **sautés, soups, stir-fries, sauces, pastas, and casseroles**.
- ◆ Use raw in **dressings, spreads, dips**, sauces such as **pesto**, and salads such as **tabouli**.
- ◆ Rub raw garlic cloves on raw fish or chicken before cooking.
- ◆ Use **roasted garlic** (see recipe on back) on toast, in soups, sauces, dips, mashed potatoes or on its own.

### **Nutritional Information**

Garlic contains alliin and allicin, two sulfur compounds with mild antibiotic activity. These compounds have been shown to reduce the growth of certain bacteria in the body and may aid in reducing cholesterol and risk of cancer.

# Garlic Recipes

## Garlic Soup

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1 1/2 heads of garlic, peeled to individual cloves
- 1 bunch of celery, diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 6-7 cups of soup stock
- 2 tablespoons pepper
- 1 Tablespoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin



In a soup pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add scallions and sauté until tender. Add garlic cloves and diced celery. Then add potatoes, 5 cups of broth and spices, simmer 30 minutes. Remove soup from heat and put in a blender. Process in batches to desired consistency. For a smoother soup add extra broth. This soup will freeze well.

Recipe contributed by Kirsten Sauer, Just Food volunteer, 2001.

## Mom's Garlic Mashed Potatoes

- 6 potatoes, washed, peeled and quartered
- 8 garlic cloves
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- Salt and pepper



In a large pot, over medium flame heat potatoes covered with water until water boils. Then reduce heat to a simmer and cook until potatoes are fork-tender (about 15 minutes). While potatoes are cooking, peel garlic, mince it and place it in a blender or chop fine. In a small saucepan, heat butter and milk until butter is melted. Add this mixture to the blender and blend with the garlic until smooth (or simply add the minced garlic to the butter and milk.) When the potatoes are cooked, drain off the water and add half of the milk mixture. Using an electric mixer or hand masher mix it all together. Add salt and pepper to taste. Continue to add milk mixture until the potatoes are the flavor and texture that you want. Do not over- whip potatoes as they will become like glue!

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## Roasted Garlic

Note: Also great mixed into mashed potatoes.

- 5 large heads of garlic
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut the top 1/4 inch off the heads of the garlic to expose the cloves. Place garlic cut side up in small baking dish. Add oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper; rub to coat. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Bake until garlic skins are golden brown and cloves are tender, about 55 minutes. Cool. Squeeze garlic cloves from skins.



Recipe adapted from Bon Appétit October 1999 posted on [www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)