

◆ THE ART OF ◆

Cooking — with — Lavender





Washington Lavender Farm, Sequim, Washington

◆ THE ART OF ◆

Cooking
with
Lavender

80 RECIPES & 70 PHOTOS

Nancy Baggett

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The Lavender Connection, Sequim, Washington

A vibrant, close-up photograph of a lavender field, with rows of purple flowers stretching into the distance under bright, natural light. The flowers are in full bloom, showing their characteristic whorled structure.

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Roasted Baby Potatoes with Lavender and Rosemary

Almost everybody likes potatoes—and now that the tiny, very sweet Yukon Gold potatoes are on the scene, roasted herbed potatoes are better, easier, and quicker to fix than ever. Here, lavender and rosemary team up with delectable, highly aromatic results. Serve with meats, poultry, or seafood, or as part of a vegetarian menu. Another option: Bite-size roasted potatoes are also well received as an appetizer (shown on page 45), especially if the Creamy Ranch Dip (page 41) is on hand to dunk them in!

Tips: You can substitute larger Yukon Gold potatoes if necessary; cut them into 1-inch cubes. Or substitute other golden potatoes if Yukon Golds can't be found. The same recipe can be used to ready cubed sweet potatoes; see the variation.

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into chunks
1½ to 2 teaspoons finely minced fresh lavender spikes (bloom heads) or coarsely ground dried culinary lavender buds, to taste
1½ to 2 teaspoons finely minced fresh rosemary leaves or finely chopped dried rosemary leaves
½ teaspoon fine-flake smoked sea salt or regular sea salt
¼ to ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
2 pounds scrubbed unpeeled baby (1-inch-diameter) Yukon Gold potatoes

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Combine the oil, butter, oil, lavender, rosemary, salt, and pepper in a 10- by 15-inch (or similar) low-rimmed baking pan. Place in the oven and heat until the butter melts. Remove from the oven and stir in the potatoes until coated all over. Spread them out over the pan.

Roast (middle rack), stirring occasionally, for 20 to 25 minutes, until the potatoes are lightly browned and tender when tested with a fork. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Reheat, covered, in a 325-degree oven for about 15 minutes. Makes 5 or 6 side-dish servings.

VARIATION ROASTED CUBED SWEET POTATOES:
Proceed exactly as directed except used 2 pounds peeled, cubed sweet potatoes and omit the rosemary from the recipe.

Lavender-Pomegranate-Berry Sorbet

Lavender has a great affinity for blackberries, blueberries, pomegranate, and honey, and here they all intermingle for a complex, intensely flavorful, and brightly colored sorbet. People always like it, and I'm thrilled to tell you that *Washington Post* food editor Joe Yonan said it was probably the best fruit sorbet he'd ever tasted. Wow! (The recipe appeared in the *Post*'s food section, along with my story on cooking with lavender.) The honey not only rounds out the flavor but helps keep the sorbet texture smooth.

2 cups fresh or thawed frozen blackberries,
coarsely chopped

1½ cups water

1¼ cups bottled pure pomegranate-
blueberry juice, plus more as needed

½ cup clover honey, plus more to taste

6 tablespoons granulated sugar

⅓ cup fresh lime juice

1 tablespoon chopped fresh culinary
lavender spikes (bloom heads) or
dried culinary lavender buds

Thoroughly stir together the blackberries, water, pomegranate-blueberry juice, honey, and sugar in a medium, nonreactive saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring. Adjust the heat so the mixture boils gently and cook until the berries are soft, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the lime juice and lavender and remove from the heat. Taste and thoroughly stir in a little more honey if more sweetness is desired.

Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour (fresh lavender will infuse much more quickly than dried buds). Taste and when the lavender flavor suits you, strain the mixture through a fine mesh sieve into a 4-cup measure. Press down with a spoon to extract as much liquid as possible. (For most intense lavender flavor, refrigerate, tasting occasionally, for up to 3 hours before straining.) If necessary, stir enough additional pomegranate-blueberry juice into the measure to yield a generous 3¾ cups. Refrigerate, covered, until very well chilled. Chill a storage container to hold the finished sorbet.

Process the mixture in an ice cream maker following the manufacturer's directions. Immediately put the sorbet in the chilled freezer container and freeze until firm again, at least 1 hour, before serving. Store in the freezer for up to 2 weeks. Makes a generous 1 quart.

