
Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata

Region of Origin: Europe
Habitat: Biennial shrub
Current Range: Throughout most of the northern hemisphere
Life Span: Year round



Garlic mustard is a wild, highly invasive green that is wonderful to cook with – and as the name says, it has a garlicky mustard flavor!

Used for perhaps 6,000 years, garlic mustard is one of the oldest European cooking spices. It was introduced to North America in the mid-1800's, and due to a predator-free environment, it has become highly invasive. Moist forests and floodplains mark its preferred habitat where it is often the dominant plant and can form large homogeneous stands. It produces a variety of chemicals that suppress the growth of other plants and fend off herbivores, so be cautious not to consume excessively large quantities (think grazing cow quantities). In human sized portions, garlic mustard is highly nutritious and offers anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial benefits.

Recently, garlic mustard has received ample attention as a foraged food, and recipes abound. The tiny sprouts that burst up in early spring are mild and can be featured in salads and other dishes. The leaf rosettes are tender most of the spring, but will toughen and bitter as the season passes. You can also enjoy the flower stalks, adorned with the delicate clusters of white flowers. The thin triangle shaped leaves are tender, and for those of you who like a garlicky mustard bite, try them! Even the seeds can be dried and stored. Just pop them in a jar, and use for salad dressings or hot mustard anytime. Lastly, grate the roots into a horseradish-like accent – be sure to add a splash of vinegar!

Writer and forager Karen Monger, of The 3 Foragers, shares this note: “We like to pair the pungency of this wild edible with earthy flavors like mushrooms, plus rich textures like cheese in recipes, while still adding a good quantity of garlic mustard. This recipe is mostly about making a filling. You can fill wontons or pasta dough for ravioli, or even use it to stuff some puff pastry triangles or bread. We used some wild hen-of-the-woods maitake mushrooms, because that is what we had in the freezer, but grocery store mushrooms will work fine.”

A special thank you to author and ecologist Corinne Duncan and Karen Monger of The 3 Foragers for their content contributions to the Garlic Mustard Introduction.



Garlic Mustard Falafels

Recipe by [The 3 Foragers](#)

Writer and forager Karen Monger shares this note: "Here we add them to a baked falafel, along with some ramps greens. I bake my own pitas, but store bought ones work just as well. We stuff our pitas with feta, shredded lettuce, salted cucumbers, red cabbage, pickles, olives, falafels, shredded carrots, and tzatziki sauce. These falafels are baked instead of fried. I also start by soaking raw, dried chickpeas overnight, and don't even cook them before blending them in the food processor."

1 cup	Garlic Mustard Greens, chopped and packed	2 Tbsp	Cumin, ground
		1 Tbsp	Coriander, ground
1 ea	Small Onion, chopped	2 Tbsp	Flour
1 Tbsp	Fresh Cilantro, chopped	2 tsp	Baking Powder
2 cans	Chickpeas (or 3 cups raw, soaked)	2 tsp	Salt
1 Tbsp	Lemon Juice	1 tsp	Pepper
2 Tbsp	Olive Oil	1 cup	Breadcrumbs

- Heat the oven to 375°.
- Place the greens and chickpeas in a food processor, and blend until chunky.
- Add the lemon juice, olive oil, spices, flour, baking powder, salt and pepper, and process until a thick, slightly chunky paste forms. You may need to add more olive oil, if you want the mixture to be scoopable.
- Scoop the mixture into patties, about 2 Tablespoons for each patty.
- Coat the falafels in the breadcrumbs and place on a baking sheet.
- Spray the falafels with a light coat of olive oil cooking spray.
- Bake for 20 minutes, flip over and bake 10 minutes longer.
- Serve with pitas and fillings.
- Makes about 35 falafel patties.



Photo courtesy of [The 3 Foragers](#)