
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 Hummus

Recipe by [The 3 Foragers](#)

Writer and forager Karen Monger shares this note: "The top 4 inches or so of the flower stalk is still tender, and we pick it along with the flower head and top triangular leaves along the stalk. The taste of the flower buds can be quite fiery, like raw horseradish and add a bite to whatever we eat them with. We usually eat them raw or lightly boiled since cooking them in a sauté pan seems to bring out the bitterness. In this hummus, we added them raw to give the hummus a green spiciness. We also added ramps greens (*Allium tricoccum*), but garlic can be substituted."

2 cups	Garlic Mustard Leaves, chopped	4 Tbsp	Lemon Juice
1 cup	Ramp Greens, chopped	2 Tbsp	Tahini
2 cups	Chick Peas, cooked	1½ Tsp	Salt
5 Tbsp	Olive Oil	2 Tbsp	Cumin

- Place the chopped garlic mustard leaves, ramps greens and chickpeas in a food processor.
- Process until chunky.
- Add the remaining ingredients, and process until smooth.
- We like our hummus very thick, but you could add more olive oil.
- Serve with pitas.
- Makes about 2 1/2 cups.



Photo courtesy of [The 3 Foragers](#)