



# Garlic as a culinary ingredient

Cultivated for more than 5,000 years, garlic has long been revered as an essential culinary ingredient. Intensely and uniquely flavorful and aromatic, garlic is used in virtually every cuisine in the world. The taste of garlic has a hot pungency followed by a very subtle hint of sweetness.

Garlic mellows and sweetens considerably with cooking. For just a hint of garlic essence, use a mild variety of garlic in either whole cloves or thick slices and put them in early in the cooking process. For bold flavor and strong smell, crush the cloves and add them in just before the cooking is complete. The more juices and oils extracted during the food preparation process, the more garlic flavor will be incorporated into the food. If overcooked, garlic will become bitter and unpleasant tasting.

Garlic is very low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. It is an excellent source of manganese and a good source of vitamin B6, thiamin, and vitamin C. In addition, garlic contains the minerals phosphorus, selenium, calcium, and copper. It has about four calories per clove.

Try one of these easy methods to peel garlic:

**No. 1 – Smash method:** lay the flat side of a clove down on a cutting board with the curved side up. Lay the flat side of a chef's knife blade on top of the garlic clove close to the handle. Smack the heel of the free hand down on the blade against the garlic clove. Be careful not to cut your hand.

**No. 2 – Water method:** Soak cloves in very hot water until skins come off easily or soak them in cool water for one to two hours.

**No. 3 – Microwave method:** Put one clove in the

microwave for about five seconds. Once cooled, squeeze it out of its skin.

## Blue-green Garlic

When raw garlic is minced and comes into contact with an acid (lemon juice, vinegar), the acid begins to break down the garlic by reacting with its amino acids, and a blue-green color results. This color change is harmless – except to the appearance of the dish.

## Garlic-in-oil Mixtures

Garlic-in-oil provides an ideal environment for *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacterium that causes botulism, when it has been stored at room temperature. Leftover garlic-in-oil should be discarded after two hours at room temperature. Homemade garlic-in-oil must be kept refrigerated and used within three days.

## Garlic Equivalent

1 medium garlic clove = 1 teaspoon chopped garlic

## Garlic Breath

To help eliminate garlic breath, chew on a sprig of fresh parsley. It takes the edge off garlic breath, and it is good for you, too.

## Remove Garlic Smell

To remove garlic odor from the hands, rub your hands with a stainless steel utensil, such as a spoon, under running water. Another method that can be used is to pour salt or baking soda or squeeze toothpaste on hands; rub them together and rinse with water.