

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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August's spice is za'atar!

Za'atar is a blend of spices that's often eaten in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and throughout the Arabic-speaking world and West Asia.



Historians suspect a precursor to za'atar was eaten in ancient Egypt. Pliny mentioned it during the first century AD in a formula for a special aromatic blended to anoint the brow of a Parthian king.

Its blend usually includes sumac and sesame — which some people can be allergic to, so beware! — and then salt, plus dried thyme, marjoram, oregano, hyssop, or other herbal element. Bon Appetit describes the equation this way:

**something woody + something floral + something tangy acidic +
something nutty and rich = a za'atar blend**

The blend in our kits this month includes sumac, thyme, salt, and sesame seeds.

You can sprinkle it straight on hummus or yogurt dip, shake some on your sandwich — just in time for National Sandwich Month! — or bring out the flavors even more by heating it in oil or butter to make the flavors "bloom."

Individual blends can cause controversy, and some cooks and restaurants keep theirs as closely guarded secrets. We've also included one recipe for you to make your own blend, if you feel like experimenting and want to compare and contrast!



Sources - za'atar

All the books listed here are available to check out from the Croton Free Library.

- Bon Appetit: [bonappetit.com/story/what-is-zaatar](https://www.bonappetit.com/story/what-is-zaatar)
- *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* by Andrew Dalby
- Penzeys.com

These recipes are from:

- *Plantlab* by Matthew Kenney
- *Shuk: From Market to Table, the Heart of Israeli Home Cooking* by Einat Admony and Janna Gur
- *The Weekday Vegetarians: 100 Recipes and a Real-Life Plan for Eating Less Meat* by Jenny Rosenstrach
- *Zaitoun: Recipes from the Palestinian Kitchen* by Yasmin Khan

What did you cook with your
za'atar?

Post it on social media with the hashtag
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a
photo & description to
gglazer@wlsmail.org!

Za'atar purchased from Penzey's Spices.