

# SPICE OF THE MONTH

AT THE CROTON FREE LIBRARY

## June's spice\* is lavender!

Cooking with lavender isn't some TikTok fad! This herb has been cultivated and consumed for millennia.

Although many parts of the plant can be eaten, including the leaves and stem, it's usually the flowers of a lavender plant that are used to flavor food. The stronger the scent, the stronger the taste will be.

Many varieties can be eaten as well, but not all; English lavender is the most common variety for cooking, and it's important to use culinary lavender and not the extra-fragrant varieties to make sure your food doesn't taste like soap or perfume.

Ortiz notes that lavender should be picked when the flowers have just begun to open, and before any part of the plant is sun-damaged or wilted. Fresh culinary lavender should be stored in an open container, uncovered, until you need it; if you dry it by hanging it upside down or using a low temperature in the oven, it can be stored for several months in a cool, dry spot.

It's used most often in delicate, sweet creations — but it can also be a strong taste to balance out savory dishes. You can make a tisane (an herbal infusion) with lavender to relax and calm down, or infuse simple syrup or honey with lavender to stir into tea or drizzle on ice cream. Like other flowers, it can be chopped finely and mixed into butter or sugar to infuse its flavor that way as well.

\*It feels odd to refer to this flowering plant as a spice, but you get the gist! Please note this is food-grade lavender and completely safe to eat.

## Sources - lavender

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

- Bon Appetit: [www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/how-to/article/cooking-with-lavender](http://www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/how-to/article/cooking-with-lavender)
- *The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices & Flavorings: A Cook's Compendium* by Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz
- HGTV: [www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/herbs/culinary-lavender](http://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/flowers-and-plants/herbs/culinary-lavender)

These recipes are from:

- *Honey* by Hattie Ellis
- *Ice Cream & Friends* from Food52
- *The Farmer's Market Cookbook* by Richard Ruben
- *The Herbal Kitchen* by Jerry Traunfeld
- *Great Cookies* by Carole Walter

What did you cook with your lavender?  
Post it on social media with the hashtag  
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a  
photo & description to [gglazer@wlsmail.org](mailto:gglazer@wlsmail.org)!

**Organic food-grade lavender from JMac Botanicals.**