

Garlic and Herb Cream Cheese

From *The Southern Harvest Cookbook* by Cathy Cleary 2018 Arcadia Publishing

At our bakery, we made a version of this super easy spread for our bagels. I never ate it on bagels. I stirred it into my tomato soup, spread it on my egg sandwiches, scooped it up with tortilla chips, added it to my breakfast bowl with roasted potatoes and grits or made a little plate of cucumber slices and veggie sticks for dipping. This spread is such a simple thing, yet it makes other things taste extraordinary.

8 ounces cream cheese
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 Tablespoon chopped parsley or basil leaves
2 teaspoons chopped rosemary leaves
1 teaspoon thyme leaves (½ teaspoon dried)
¼ teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon water

Pull cream cheese from the fridge 2–3 hours before mixing for easier incorporation. Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a stand mixer or mix by hand with a very sturdy spoon. Mix until water is fully incorporated into cream cheese and no more lumps of cheese remain. Serve as a vegetable dip; on pasta, crackers or toast; as a grilled cheese sandwich with spinach; on top of grits or baked potatoes; or stirred into soups.

Herbs to Taste

Feel free to change up the amount and type of herbs in this spread. If you like lots of herbs feel free to double or even triple amounts suggested. Try adding lavender, lemon balm or mint. Use what you have and what you like!

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Apple Chips – makes 2-3 cups

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5-6 medium apples

Optional Additions

Cinnamon

Sugar

Ginger

Nutmeg

Curry Powder

Chinese 5 Spice Powder

- ❖ Pre heat oven to 200 degrees.
- ❖ Peel apples and slice very thinly – about 1/16 inch thick.
- ❖ Spread apple slices on top of cooling racks and then put cooling racks on rimmed baking pans.
- ❖ Sprinkle apples with optional additions and put into the oven for two to three hours depending on the juiciness of your apples.
- ❖ To test for crunchiness take one apple slice out of the oven and allow to come to room temperature 2-3 minutes. Break in half or taste to see if they are crunchy.
- ❖ Apples will keep for up to a year in tightly sealed jars or bags.
- ❖ Serve with cheeses, dips, on top of salads, crumbled with popcorn and caramel, or just munch as a snack.

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Sun Gold Tomato Pesto – makes almost 1 cup

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Any variety of tomato or cherry tomato can be used to make pesto, and slightly over ripe ones are even better.

2 cups cherry tomatoes – or larger tomato cubed
1 cup Parmesan cheese – fresh is best
2 cloves garlic - crushed
1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon salt

Put tomatoes in a saucepot on the stove and cook on medium heat for 15-20 minutes. Stir often in the first few minutes of cooking until tomatoes release their juice. Once the juice releases, simmer, uncovered until most of the tomato liquid is gone. Puree all ingredients together in a food processor or with a mortar and pestle. Serve alongside Corn and Black Bean Cakes, Zucchini Fritters, toss with pasta, smear on chicken, roasted vegetables or use as a sandwich condiment.

Why Sun Gold?

Orange is my favorite color, so it makes sense that my favorite tomato would be bright orange. It's not just the color that makes this variety of cherry tomato the darling of home gardeners. Juicy sweet sungolds are some of the most prolific tomatoes I've ever grown and the flavor is closer to candy than vegetable. If you have a tiny patch of ground and any inclination to grow something delicious, I recommend getting a few seeds or a sungold plant at your local market. You may be making pesto for the whole month of August with one vibrant plant.

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Pickled Collards – makes 3 -4 pints Collards

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8 cups packed sliced collard greens (12 ounces)
2 cups thinly sliced onion (one large)
1 cup diced carrot or red pepper (optional)
3 cups water
1 ½ cups cider vinegar
1 Tablespoon mustard seeds
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
½ teaspoon caraway seeds (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Simmer stirring occasionally for 3-5 minutes. Pack in sterilized jars and water bath can for 15 minutes (see instructions below). Jars that have been canned will keep unopened for one year in a cool dark place. Alternatively skip the canning process and keep in the fridge for up to 6 months.

Canning Instructions

Bring a large pot of water to a boil with at least 6 inches of water in it. Sanitize 4 pint canning jars and lids in the boiling water. Remove jars from water, but keep it boiling. Fill jars with hot collard greens, make sure rims of jars are clean, and tighten lids on jars. Carefully place jars in the boiling water bath with at least one inch of water covering the tops of jars. Boil for 15 minutes. Remove jars from water and allow to cool. Test to make sure jars are sealed by gently pressing on the center of the lid – you should not be able to depress the lid. Collards should keep on the shelf un-opened for one to two years. Do not consume any canned goods that smell or appear to have mold or rot.

Pickle Juice Becomes Salad Dressing!

I never throw out pickle juice, and especially not collard pickle juice. It makes the very best salad dressing. The garlic and the parsley are nice, but simply blended with olive oil I love to drizzle this on vegetables asparagus to zucchini.

Blend together:

1 cup collard pickle juice
¾ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup parsley leaves
2 cloves garlic -crushed