



# SPICE IT UP!

Discovery Series

## This month's spice: Tarragon

Tarragon is part of the sunflower family and grows wild all over Eurasia and North America. It is considered one of the cornerstones of French cuisine. There are many varieties of tarragon, but French tarragon is most often used in the kitchen. Tarragon leaves, which are used in cooking, are in season from spring through to late summer. Fresh tarragon has a strong and vibrant flavor, but can develop bitterness if cooked for too long. It is best used raw or stirred in at the end of cook time. Dried tarragon has a more concentrated flavor and is spicier. It can be used in various ways, such as making flavored oil or for enhancing soups, sauces and marinades.

**Flavor profile:** Tarragon has an anise, licorice taste and can be quite strong.

### Cuisines that tarragon is used in:

- Very popular in French cuisine for chicken, fish and egg dishes. Tarragon is the main flavoring component of a popular French sauce called Bearnaise.
- In Syria, Syrians eat fresh tarragon with white Syrian cheese. They also use it in Syrian dishes such as Shish Barak (dumpling) and Kibbeh Labaniyeh (spiced ground meat and bulgar wheat in a yogurt sauce).
- In Iran, tarragon is used as a side dish in Sabzi Khordan (fresh herbs), or in stews and Persian-style pickles, particularly Khidar Shoor (pickled cucumbers).
- Tarragon is one of the main ingredients in Chakapuli (stew), a Georgian national dish.
- In Slovenia, tarragon is used in a variation of the traditional nut roll sweet cake, called Potica.
- In Hungary, a popular chicken soup is flavoured with tarragon.
- Tarragon is used to flavor a popular carbonated soft drink in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and by extension, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The drink, named Tarkhun, is made out of sugar, carbonated water, and tarragon leaves which gives it a green color.

**Pairs well with:** chicken, fish, shellfish, butter, cream, lemon, grapefruit, eggs, mushrooms, mustard, tomatoes, vinegar, beets, carrots, potatoes.

### Cookbook recommendations available at Coaldale Library:

- Mastering the Art of French Cooking by Julie Child
- The Young Chef's French Cookbook

# Tarragon Chicken

Recipe from [kitchensanctuary.com](http://kitchensanctuary.com)



Serves 4

## Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 chicken breasts about 175g each
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 small onion peeled and finely diced
- 2 minced cloves garlic
- 1/2 cup white wine (or use chicken stock and a squeeze of lemon juice)
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1 tsp dried tarragon
- 3/4 cup heavy cream

## Instructions:

Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat.

Take the chicken breasts and sprinkle the salt and pepper over both sides. Add the chicken breasts to the pan, and cook for about 3 minutes one side, until sealed and golden. Turn the chicken over and move them to one side of the pan.

Add the onions and garlic, and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring the onions often, until the onions are soft.

Add in the white wine, and allow to simmer for 3-4 minutes, until the wine has nearly all evaporated.

Add the chicken stock and dried tarragon, then pour in the cream. Stir together and bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 6-8 minutes, until the sauce has thickened, and the chicken is completely cooked through. Serve the chicken and sauce sprinkled with a little more tarragon and black pepper.

# Tarragon Vinaigrette

Recipe from [healthyseasonalrecipes.com](http://healthyseasonalrecipes.com)



Makes 1 cup

## Ingredients:

- 1 shallot, peeled and roughly chopped (if you don't have shallot, use a knuckle sized amount of onion or a clove of garlic)
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup champagne vinegar or white wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dried tarragon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons agave or honey
- 2 teaspoons Dijon or brown deli mustard
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

## Instructions:

Combine shallot, oil, vinegar, agave (or honey), tarragon, mustard, salt and pepper in a blender, mini prep or jar with an immersion blender. Puree until smooth.

Serve immediately over salad of your choice, or store refrigerated in a jar up to 1 week.

# Spinach, Feta & Tarragon Frittata

Recipe by foodandwine.com



Serves 4

## Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 scallions including green tops, cut into thin slices
- 10 ounces spinach, stems removed, leaves washed and cut into thin strips
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried tarragon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh-ground black pepper
- 8 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 ounces feta, crumbled (about 1/3 cup)

## Instructions:

1. In a 12-inch ovenproof nonstick frying pan, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over moderate heat. Add the scallions and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the spinach, dried tarragon, if using, and 1/8 teaspoon each of the salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid evaporates, about 3 minutes. Remove the spinach mixture and let cool. Wipe out the pan.
2. In a large bowl, beat the eggs with the remaining 1/8 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Stir in the spinach mixture.
3. Heat the broiler. In the same frying pan, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon butter with the oil over moderate heat. Pour in the egg mixture and reduce the heat to low. Sprinkle the feta over the top and cook until the bottom is golden brown and the top is almost set, 6 to 7 minutes. Broil the frittata 6 inches from the heat, if possible, until the eggs are set, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Lift up the edge of the frittata with a spatula and slide the frittata onto a plate. Cut into wedges and serve.