



## Pudina (Mint)

### the most widely used spice

Once a month or so, I go to the nearby nurseries to see new plant arrivals. And invariably, I purchase a few plants. The last time, a nursery owner showed me Pudina plants. I brought one and now it is happily thriving in a little flower pot in my balcony. Pudina, or mint, is the most widely used spice. We use Pudina every day, in different forms, for various purposes

### What is Pudina

Pudina (Mentha or Mint) is a genus of about 40 species and hundreds of varieties of flowering plants in the family Lamiaceae (Mint Family). In most parts of India, it is known as Pudina.

### Cultivation

Pudina are aromatic, perennial herbs. They grow best in wet environment and moist soil. Most prefer partial shade. Pudina plants spread very fast. They have a tendency to spread unchecked and are often invasive. Therefore, they should be planted in separate pots. Most mints can be easily propagated by planting cuttings from the runners of healthy mints. They have wide spreading underground rhizomes, and erect, branched stems. The leaves are arranged in opposite pairs with a serrated margin. The colours of the leaves range from different shades of green to purple, blue and pale yellow. The flowers appear in clusters on an erect spike, white to purple, in colour. The fruit is a small dry capsule containing one to four seeds.



Till 1964, there was no production of Mentha Oil or Menthol in India. The cultivation of the species Mentha Arvensis (which yields higher percentage of oil) in India is a dramatic success story. The cultivation of Mentha Arvensis started in Japan around 1870. In 1964, Col. Mr. R.N. Chopra and Dr. I.N. Chopra of the Regional Research Laboratory in Jammu Tawi brought Mentha Arvensis to India. Commercial cultivation started in India through the efforts of Hindustan Richardson Ltd. (VICKs). Today, India is the largest grower of Pudina and producer of Menthol and Mint products in the world accounting for 85% of the global production. 80% of the crop in India is grown in Uttar Pradesh. The remaining 20% in Punjab and Haryana. The original Mentha Arvensis has since been developed into an indigenous variety named Mentha Shivalik, MSI.





## How to use Pudina leaves

Pudina leaves can be harvested any time.

But the leaves have to be cut off before flowering to obtain the maximum oil. Fresh Pudina leaves should be used immediately, or can be stored for two to three days in plastic bags inside a refrigerator.

Pudina can be frozen in ice cube trays.

Pudina leaves can also be dried and stored in an airtight container and kept in a cool, dark, dry area.

## Pudina Ark or Mint Oil

Pudina Ark or Menthol oil is obtained from the leaves usually by steam distillation.

Menthol crystals and flakes are obtained from Menthol Oil by freezing (chilling).

The liquid left after extraction of the crystals is called de-mentholised or Peppermint oil.

## Culinary Uses

Pudina leaves have a pleasant, aromatic, sweet flavor with a cool, refreshing, aftertaste. In India, Pudina is widely used to make the traditional Dhania – Pudina chutney.

It is also used to decorate other food preparations.

Pudina leaves are also widely used in teas, beverages, jellies, syrups, candies and ice creams.

Pudina is also used for flavouring meat, fish, sauces, soups, stews, vinegar, tea, tobacco and cordials.

Pudina is a necessary ingredient of Touareg tea, a popular tea in northern African and Arab countries.

Pudina is also used to flavor alcoholic drinks like the Mint Julep and Mojito.

Crème de menthe is a mint-flavored liqueur used in drinks, such as the Grasshopper.



## Medicinal and cosmetic

Pudina and its Ark were originally used to treat stomach disorders and chest pains.

Even today, Dabar markets Pudinhara for stomach disorders, such as, indigestion, gas, acidity, etc.

Menthol is the main ingredient of cough drops and ointments like Vicks Vaporub.

Mint oil and menthol are also used in certain sugar candies like 'Polo', the mint with a hole.

The dementholised oil is used for flavouring breath fresheners, mouth washes, tooth paste, chewing gum, and pharmaceutical preparations.

Menthol is widely used in aromatherapy.

## Insecticides

A mixture of Menthol and camphor is used to give relief in insect bites.

Mint leaves are often used by campers to repel mosquitoes.

Mint oil is also used as an environment-friendly insecticide to kill pests like wasps, hornets, ants and cockroaches.



## Recommendation

Pudina is a nice green herb.

It is simple to grow.

Plant it in a wide shallow pot.

Place it where there is bright light, and preferably sunlight, at least a few hours every day.

It grows fast.

You can nip off a few leaves and chew them as natural mouth freshener or use them in other ways.

## Nutritional Values of Mint (Pudina)

| Parameters    | Value per 100g |
|---------------|----------------|
| Moisture      | 84.900 gm      |
| Protein       | 4.800 gm       |
| Fat           | 0.600 gm       |
| Minerals      | 1.900 gm       |
| Fibre         | 2.000 gm       |
| Carbohydrates | 5.800 gm       |
| Energy        | 48.000 K cal   |
| Calcium       | 200.000 mg     |
| Phosphorus    | 62.000 mg      |
| Iron          | 15.600 mg      |

## Vitamins

|                   |             |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Carotene          | 1620.000 µg |
| Thiamine          | 0.050 mg    |
| Riboflavin        | 0.260 mg    |
| Niacin            | 1.000 mg    |
| Folic Acid(Free)  | 9.700 µg    |
| Folic Acid(Total) | 114.000 µg  |
| Vitamin C         | 27.000 mg   |

## Minerals & Trace Elements

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Magnesium        | 60.000 mg |
| Copper           | 0.180 mg  |
| Manganese        | 0.570 mg  |
| Zinc             | 0.440 mg  |
| Chromium         | 0.008 mg  |
| S                | 84.000 mg |
| Cl               | 34.000 mg |
| Oxalic Acid      | 33.000 mg |
| PhytinPhosphorus | 4.000 mg  |



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