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Keine Stimmen

Edible Flowers



Flowers aren't just for the garden or for a vase on the table—you can actually eat some of them. It sounds strange, but did you know you've probably been eating them all along?

There are actually many more than you might think. If you look closely, you'll find that there are tons of edible flowers.

Discover the world of edible flowers!

Important to know!

Before you think about taking a bite out of the roses on your mom's table, it's good to know which flowers you can eat—and, more importantly, which ones you can't!

It's not a good idea to take a bite out of flowers from a florist, as they may be toxic due to pesticides used by the grower.

Not all flowers are edible! Some flowers can be poisonous (such as foxglove, monkshood, datura, etc.).

Don't take any risks and don't eat flowers unless you're absolutely certain they're edible.

You should also be aware that not all parts of a plant are edible; for example, the flowers of Lonicera are edible, but the berries are poisonous. Also keep in mind that if you're naturally prone to allergies (hay fever, asthma, etc.), you're more likely to have a reaction to eating flowers, so be careful.

For your peace of mind:
It may seem now as if eating flowers is one big risk, but most flowers aren't unhealthy (even though some varieties don't taste good).

So be sure to follow the rules.
Tip: You can eat the flowers of all culinary herbs (basil, sage, celery, fennel, etc.). The flavor is almost the same as the leaves, but slightly milder, slightly sweeter, or even stronger.

Tip: Just like with berries or mushrooms, it's best not to experiment on your own. Stick to varieties that are proven to be edible to avoid symptoms such as stomach pain, nausea, and diarrhea (and sometimes worse).

The rules:

First things first:

- So, only eat flowers that you're certain are edible and not poisonous
- Do not eat flowers from bouquets, etc. (these are often sprayed with pesticides)
- Also, do not eat flowers from the roadside. (These are often contaminated with exhaust fumes.)
- Also, do not eat flowers growing along the edges of parks (where dogs urinate).
- Eat mainly unsprayed flowers from your own garden, or from the gardens of friends or family (or possibly from a park where picking is allowed—though this is certainly not permitted or "appropriate" everywhere—and where there is no risk of harmful or dirty substances). But you can also ask a flower grower or produce vendor about edible flowers.

Once you've found some flowers:

- Pick the flowers in the morning before your meal; after the dew has dried but before the sun shines on them.
- Then store them in a paper bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator
- Refresh the flowers before the meal by soaking them in ice water for half an hour
- Clean the flowers: remove (depending on the type!) the crown, the flower base, the white part of the petals, the center, the pistil, and the sepals (the petals beneath the actual petals).
- Then dry them very carefully on a piece of paper towel, gently pat them dry, and let them air-dry for a bit.

If you don't plan to eat the flower right away on the day you pick it, let the flowers dry completely. To do this, place them on paper towels in a warm, well-ventilated spot for a few days. Be careful not to place them in direct sunlight, as this will cause the flowers to discolor. Let the flowers dry until you could "pulverize" them (though, of course, you shouldn't actually do that). You can then preserve the fully dried flowers in oil or vinegar (delicious and beautiful, too), or use them to make a wonderfully fragrant sugar.

Edible Flowers and the Seasons

Here are a few edible flowers (Dutch names and Latin names) and the seasons when you can find them.

In the spring:
Chives (Allium schoenoprasum)
Common broom (Cytisus scoparius)
Japanese quince (Chaenomelis japonica)
Honeysuckle (Lonicera sp.)
Borage (Borago officinalis)
Quince blossom (Cydonia oblongo)
Sweet violet (Viola odorata)
Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyne and laevigata)
Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)
Cuckoo flower (Cardamine pratense)
Cowslip (Primula veris)
Tulip (Tulipa)
Heartsease (Viola tricolor Hortensis)
Elderberry (Sambucus nigra)

In summer:
Carnation (Dianthus sp.)
Begonia (Begonia semperflorens)

Bergamot (Monarda didyma)
Wild chicory (Cichorium intybus)
Zucchini (Cucumis sativus)
Daylily (Hemerocalles sp. and cultivars)
Sweet William (Dianthus barbatus)
Geranium (Pelargonium)
Marigold (Calendula)
Hosta (Hosta)
Chamomile (Matricaria cecutita)
Common Poppy (Papaver rhoeas)
Lavender (Lavendula angustifolia)
Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria)
Nasturtium (Tropaeolum)
Peony (Paeonia officinalis)
Rose (Rosa)
Valerian (Valeriana officinales)
Phlox (Phlox paniculata)
Impatiens (Impatiens walleriana)
White lily (Lilium candidum)
Soapwort (Saponaria officinalis)

In the fall:
Chrysanthemum (Chrysanthemum)
Dahlia (Dahlia)
Musk Mallow (Malva moschata)
Pumpkin (Curcubita)
Geranium (Pelargonium)
Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)
Silver Thistle (Carlina acaulis)
Sunflower (Helianthus annuus)

A Bit of History

Edible flowers have long been used in cooking, as garnishes, or as part of a flower salad.

The Chinese were among the first to experiment with using flowers as food. As early as 3,000 B.C., they already had many recipes featuring flowers. In our part of the world, it was the Greeks who first began using flowers in cooking, and the Romans soon followed with their own culture of edible flowers. When the Roman Empire fell, edible flowers fell somewhat out of favor in the kitchen.

In the Middle Ages, the Crusaders brought flower-based dishes back to Europe, making it fashionable again to eat flowers. During this period, only the wealthy could afford to feast on flowers.

Flower Recipe

Ingredients:

- Slices of bread (or crackers)
- A tub of fresh cream cheese (e.g., Philadelphia)
- Herbs (e.g., chives, parsley, chervil)
- Fresh, edible flowers. Tropaeolum flowers are particularly well-suited (due to their tangy flavor), as are mustard flowers, arugula flowers, radish flowers, borage (deliciously fresh), etc.

Directions:

Toast some slices of bread (or use crackers). Finely chop the herbs, but set aside a few (small) leaves. Take 1 tablespoon of these fresh, finely chopped herbs and mix them into the cream cheese. Spread this mixture on the toasted slices of bread or crackers.

Place a few small leaves of the herbs you used on each slice of bread or cracker, along with a clean, edible flower.

Enjoy your meal!

Sources

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- Diana's Beautiful Vegetable Garden
- Edible Flowers

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