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# Cilantro

## Food $ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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Cilantro, also called Chinese parsley and fresh coriander, is an herb used predominantly in Mexican, Asian and Caribbean cooking. Cilantro, with its bright green leaves that resemble flat-leaf parsley, is currently sold in most supermarkets and has become a popular seasoning. Available year-round, cilantro is also easily grown at home in the garden. The seed that cilantro produces is the spice, coriander. Sprinkle whole or chopped leaves over a variety of dishes for a flavorful garnish.

**Utah Local Fresh Season:** Available in local grocery stores year-round.

**Availability:** Cilantro is available year-round in local grocery stores. This herb is typically sold in bunches.

**Eating:** Cilantro can be eaten fresh, cooked or dried. All parts of the plant are edible. Preparation method depends on the recipe.

**Selecting:** Select cilantro bunches that are brightly colored with fresh, fragrant leaves. To make sure you're not buying a bunch of parsley, give it a quick sniff to check for its distinctive aroma. Avoid bunches with wilted, yellowed or blackened leaves.

**Cleaning**: Plunge into a bowl full of cold water. Swirl around and let cilantro sit for a while. Dirt and other debris will settle and leaves will float to the top. Repeat procedure if cilantro is extra dirty.

**Storing**: Like most fresh herbs, cilantro is very perishable. Fresh cilantro loves cool temperatures and should be stored in the refrigerator. If you are storing the herbs in the refrigerator for several days, cover loosely with plastic bag with 2 to 3 layers of paper towels. For longer storage, place the cilantro bunch in a container of water like a bouquet of flowers. Cover the top loosely with a plastic bag. Refrigerate up to 1 week, changing the water in the container every 2 days.

**Preparing:** Wash cilantro just before using and blot dry with paper towels. When chopping cilantro, make sure the leaves are well dried to prevent them from sticking to the knife or scissor blades. To chop, use a chef's knife on a cutting board. You can also place leaves in a glass measuring cup or small bowl and cut into small pieces with kitchen scissors.

**Nutrition Highlights:** Cilantro contains antioxidants and aids in digestion. It can also be used for medicinal purposes.

**Growing:** Cilantro can be grown in pots inside the home all year. Keep soil moist but well-drained.

**Preserving**: Cilantro tastes best when used fresh and added near the end of the cooking time. It loses flavor when dried or exposed to heat. For information on freezing fresh herbs visit: http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/

**References**:
1. http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php?mode=display&rec_id=51
2. http://www.cuisinecuisine.com/CookingTipsandTricks.htm#Cleaning Cilantro
3. http://simplyrecipes.com/recipes/how_to_store_parsley_cilantro_and_other_fresh_herbs/
4. http://www.kraftfoods.com/kf/CookingSchool/FoodBasics/SeasonalProduce/Cilantro.aspx

**Fresh Salsa**
2 chopped tomatoes
1/2 chopped onion
3 finely chopped, jalapeno chilies (seeded if desired)
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 juiced lime

In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients. Serve or store salsa in refrigerator for up to 3 days in a covered plastic or glass container.
*Source: recipefinder.nal.usda.gov*

**Cilantro-Lime Vinaigrette**
1 cup packed cilantro
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup lime juice
¼ cup orange juice
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
Pinch of minced garlic

Puree cilantro, olive oil, lime juice, orange juice, salt, pepper and garlic in a blender or food processor until smooth.
*Source: kitchendaily.com*

**Cilantro-Lime Rice**
3 cups cooked brown rice
1 tsp lime zest, minced
1-2 Tbsp fresh lime juice
2-3 Tbsp cilantro, finely minced

Cook rice as directed. Toss lime zest, lime juice, and cilantro with the cooked rice. Serve warm or cold.
*Source: food.com*

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