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Our Friend – Garlic
By Helen Huber

My mother bought white bulbs she called garlic, although they were nothing like the ubiquitous powder that my friends shook over pizza and their mothers used with abandon for flavoring dinner.



It was the 1960s and my mom thought fresh garlic, properly prepared, gave a better flavor to the vast array of foods on dinner rotation and the multicultural foods she served at dinner parties. She would carefully remove the green center, warning it was bitter and potentially dangerous, although she couldn't say how. I now know that the center is called the germ, and as garlic ages, the germ turns green and becomes bitter. Buying or growing garlic that is more fresh is one solution or you can do as my mom did and cut out the green portion. Once removed, the garlic has a variety of flavors depending on whether the garlic is left whole, how it is cut, and if it is roasted.

This month's offerings expand what Mom began. If garlic is a familiar friend, add to your repertoire with these garlic strategies. And if you rely on the powder or garlic salt for your garlic flavor, you're in for a savory treat, worthy of any meal that calls for our friend garlic in cloves, sliced, chopped and roasted.

Size matters: For quick-cooking, chunky dishes like pasta sauces and sauteed vegetables, finely mince or thinly slice garlic for the best release of flavor. Use a low to medium-low heat for sauteing garlic which can go from golden to burnt rather quickly. The more garlic is crushed, the stronger the flavor it will have. For long-cooking braises and stews, roughly chop, thickly slice or leave peeled garlic cloves whole so it slowly melds with other ingredients. Leaving garlic whole and roasting it results in a sweet, deep flavor appropriate for many savory dishes.

Garlic Cloves



Garlic oil and confit:

Heat 1 cup olive or avocado oil with six peeled cloves of garlic in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat to low. Cook for five minutes until the garlic is golden. Turn off the heat and set aside. Remove the garlic from the oil.

The oil can be used:

- over eggs or potatoes prepared any way.
- as a dipping sauce for crusty bread
- drizzled over steamed or sauteed veggies
- used in a vinaigrette
- as the oil for stir fries

The garlic poached in oil is called confit (kän'fê/) and it can be mashed, pureed or blended into :

- Sauces, gravies and vinaigrettes
- Spread on toast and sandwiches
- Folded into pureed vegetables and mashed potatoes
- Blended into soups
- Spooned over roasted meats and fish

Chicken with 40 Cloves of Garlic

(based on a recipe from Ina Garten)

Serves 6-8



Ingredients:

- 3 whole heads garlic, about 40 cloves
- 2 (3 ½ pound) chickens, cut into eighths (or buy parts)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons cognac or sherry
- 1 ½ cups dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream

Preparation:

1. Separate the cloves of garlic and drop them into a pot of boiling water for 60 seconds. Drain and peel. Set aside for chicken goodness.
2. Dry the chicken with paper towels. Season it with salt and pepper on all sides.
3. Heat the butter and oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat. In batches, saute the chicken in the fat, skin side down first, until golden brown, about 5 minutes on each side. Turn with tongs or a spatula, don't pierce the skin, if possible. Turn heat down as needed to keep from burning. Transfer chicken to a plate and repeat until all chicken has been browned.

4. Add peeled garlic to the pan. Lower the heat and saute for 5-10 minutes turning until evenly golden brown.
5. Add 2 tablespoons of cognac or sherry and the wine, return to a boil and scrape the browned bits of flavor from the bottom of the pan.
6. Return the chicken pieces to the pan with any juices on the plate.
7. Add the thyme leaves.
8. Cover and simmer over the lowest heat for 30 minutes until the chicken is done.
9. Remove the chicken to a platter and cover with aluminum foil to keep warm. Pour sauce into a measuring cup.
10. In a small bowl, whisk $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the sauce from the pan with the flour. Add the mixture to the remaining sauce in the pan. Raise the heat adding the remaining tablespoon of cognac or sherry and the cream. And boil for 3 minutes, stirring as needed. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour the sauce and the garlic over the chicken and serve hot.

Garlic – Sliced or Chopped



How to safely slice or chop garlic:

1. Pull a single clove from the garlic bulb.
2. Lay a wide chef knife blade on top of the garlic.
3. Using the palm of your hand, push down on the blade to crack the skin.
4. Peel the skin from the clove.
5. Cut off the tiny root end.
6. Use a gentle rocking motion to slice the garlic into slices or chop, chop, chop until the garlic is minced or chopped to your liking.

OR – Drop cloves of garlic into boiling water for 60 seconds. Remove garlic and peel.

How to use chopped or sliced garlic:

- **Garlic Veggies**: Add 1 tablespoon of oil to a saute pan or skillet over low to medium heat. Add garlic (chopped or sliced) and stir for one minute, making sure the garlic sizzles when added and that it doesn't burn. Add chopped veggies and stir until the vegetables are tender crisp or to your taste.
- **Garlic Bean Dip**: In a food processor, add 1 can white beans, drained, 1 peeled clove of garlic, 1/4 cup packed fresh herbs such as basil, parsley, chives, (a small bit of rosemary), 1/4 cup garlic oil or olive oil, 1 tablespoon vinegar (champagne, white wine are nice) or lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste. Puree until smooth. Serve with carrot and celery sticks, sliced baguette or crackers.
- **Garlic Shrimp**: Stir shrimp or other proteins with garlic butter: Add 3 tablespoons butter to a skillet. Finely chop or thinly slice 3 peeled cloves of garlic. Add 1 pound of shrimp, or other thinly sliced protein. Cook until shrimp or protein is cooked. Spritz with lemon juice before serving.

Roasted Garlic

(I've saved the best for last!)



Roasted Garlic



Pureed roasted garlic

How to roast garlic:

1. Heat the oven to 400 degrees F.
Prepare three squares of parchment paper or foil large enough to wrap each head of garlic. If the garlic has extra layers of papery white skin, peel them away, but leave enough layers so the head of garlic stays together. Slice off 1/4-inch from the top of the cloves so that you can see inside the individual cloves of garlic.
2. Put each head of garlic, cut-side-up, on top of a sheet of parchment or foil. Drizzle with up to 1 tablespoon olive oil over the garlic heads. Feel free to throw in the individual cloves you have cut from the top and toss them into your parchment or foil packet.
3. Pull the sides of the parchment paper or foil up and around the garlic so that you make a little parcel. If using parchment, secure with kitchen twine.
4. Place packets of garlic onto a baking sheet. Bake until the cloves inside the packet are light brown and soft, 40 to 70 minutes. Check 1 package of garlic after 40-60 minutes. You want the garlic cloves to be soft, golden brown, and fragrant.
5. Open the packet and allow the garlic to cool. Use the end of a butter knife to pry each clove out.