

Thyme, Common Thyme, English Thyme

Family	Lamiaceae
Botanical	Thymus vulgaris
Parts Used	Leaves and flowering tops
USDA Hardiness	4A - 11
Light	Full Sun to partial shade
Soil	Well drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Soil pH requirements: 6.6 (neutral) to 8.5 (alkaline). Seeds should be scattered on the surface, the seeds are small and slow to germinate, and many varieties are sterile cultivars, so it is best to propagate by division or cuttings, or buy a plant at your local nursery.
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	It prefers full sun to part shade and loose, fast draining soil, preferably sandy. The roots should never be allowed to stay wet. Thyme is winter hardy, but a light mulch will protect it when the ground freezes. It does not need fertilizers. Thyme does best if it is pruned in the spring or summer after its first year.

Medicinal Uses	Antiseptic, carminative, diuretic, antispasmodic, parasiticide, antibacterial, antifungal, expectorant and digestive tonic
Benefits	For any cough with infected or tough phlegm. For asthma or whooping cough.
Preparation	Collect the flowering stems between early summer and late summer on a dry sunny day. Strip the leaves off the dried stems. ThymeTea: 1 tsp of crushed thyme mixed in with ½ cup of boiling water. Steep for a period of 10 minutes and then strained. The tea should be drunk between 3 and 4 times per day in order to treat coughs. If the tea needs to be sweetened, honey can be used.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

The dried or fresh leaves of the thyme plant along with the flowers can be used within stews, soups, sautéed or baked vegetables, custards, and casseroles. The herb gives the food a tangy and warm flavor, similar to camphor, and is able to retain its strong flavor even after cooking. It can also be used within marinades as well as stuffings.

Roasted Carrots with Thyme

Servings: 4

Total Time: 30 Minutes

Ingredients:

2 pounds fresh carrots, peeled

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons fresh chopped thyme (or 1/2 teaspoon dried)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Slice the carrots on the diagonal about 1-1/2" thick. Make sure all pieces are approximately the same size to ensure even cooking.

Combine the carrots, olive oil, salt, pepper and thyme in a large bowl and toss well. Transfer the carrots to the prepared baking sheet and roast, stirring once mid-way through, until nicely caramelized and tender, 20-25 minutes (cooking time will depend on thickness of carrots). Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.



Historical Facts

Thyme's reputation as a healer and protector goes back thousands of years. Thyme was used as early as 3000 BCE by Sumerians as an antiseptic. In the Roman era, it was widely held that eating thyme either before or during a meal would protect you from poison. This made the herb a particular favorite of the emperors. It was even said that a bath in warm water liberally dosed with thyme could stop the effects of poison after it was inadvertently consumed.

Thyme was also associated with courage, bravery and strength in ancient times. Roman soldiers exchanged sprigs of thyme as a sign of respect. Greeks and Romans burned bundles of thyme to purify their temples and homes, and to evoke a spirit of courage in those who inhaled it.

In the Middle Ages, thyme was a traditional gift offered to men going into battle. When worn into battle, thyme might serve double duty: used as an embalming herb since the time of the Egyptians, it was thought to be a powerful aid to those making their passage into the next life.

When the Black Death struck in the late 1340s, millions of people turned to thyme for relief and protection. Many of the day's medicinal concoctions—from posies worn about the neck to poultices applied directly to plague-blistered skin—included the herb as a major ingredient. Though there was little science to these remedies, one of the chemical compounds found in thyme is a powerful antiseptic. Known as thymol, it's still widely used today in mouthwash, hand sanitizer and acne medication.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

Thyme is packed with minerals and vitamins that are essential for optimum health. Its leaves are one of the richest sources of potassium, iron, calcium, manganese, magnesium, and selenium. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase. Iron is required for red blood cell formation.

The herb is also a rich source of many important vitamins such as B-complex vitamins, beta carotene, vitamin-A, vitamin-K, vitamin-E, vitamin-C, and folic acid.

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Thyme provides 0.35 mg of vitamin B-6 or pyridoxine; furnishing about 27% of daily recommended intake. Pyridoxine keeps up GABA (beneficial neurotransmitter in the brain) levels in the brain, which has a role as stress buster.

Vitamin-C helps the human body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful, pro-inflammatory free radicals.

Vitamin-A is a fat-soluble vitamin and antioxidant that is required maintaining healthy mucus membranes and skin and is also essential for vision. Consumption of natural foods rich in flavonoids like vitamin A and beta-carotene helps protect from lung and oral cavity cancers.