



Using Dandelions: 31+ Recipes & Remedies *Part 1*

Dandelions are pretty much the unofficial mascots for foraging and herbal medicine. They can be found on every continent (except Antarctica) and have tremendous value as food and medicine. Dandelions are survivors, and they pass on a little of that to us when we consume them.

Nutritional Value

Every part of the plant is edible, raw or cooked. And not only are dandelions plentiful, they're very nearly a perfect food. Dandelions are rich in potassium; magnesium; manganese; phosphorus; sodium; copper; choline; calcium; iron; lecithin; biotin; inositol; chlorophyll; fiber; and vitamins A, B1, B2, B5, B6, B9, B12, C, D, and E.

That's quite a mouthful. Literally.

They have more vitamin A than any other green plant—six times more than carrots—and a single cup of fresh greens will meet your daily requirement of beta-carotene, iron, calcium, and potassium!

That tap root really reaches down to bring up the good stuff. You can see why they are called the king of weeds.

Furthermore, when eaten as a whole (roots to flowers/seeds), the dandelion forms a complete protein, with all 9 essential amino acids. That's a pretty good trick for a plant.

Dandelion also seems to help with the absorption and balance of minerals.

Overcoming the Bitter Taste

However dandelions are bitter. Very bitter. To get past the bitterness to access those amazing nutrients you should select the best ones. Harvest from a plant in a shady, well-watered location. Harvest younger greens, earlier in the year. Leaves toward the center of the rosette also tend to be less bitter.

Next, choose the right preparation. You can moderate their taste by chopping them up and mixing them with other greens. They also pair well with savory dishes.

Of all the cooking methods, boiling does the best job of reducing bitterness. Drop the leaves into boiling water for 5 to 10 minutes. Use plenty of water so the bitterness has someplace to go.

Eating the Roots: Stir-fried, Pickled, and as a Coffee Substitute

The root can be eaten raw, but tastes better when cooked. Try them sliced and stir-fried with other veggies. Cooking breaks down the root's inulin into fructose, bringing out a much sweeter taste. They're also a fine addition to soups and stews, and are reportedly quite tasty when pickled.

Dandelion Coffee Recipe

The root is typically harvested from late fall to early spring. Second-year roots are preferred, and if it's too old and woody to eat, you can still use it to make a caffeine-free coffee substitute.

Slice up the root and slow-roast it in your oven until it turns dark brown and becomes brittle. This should take about 30 minutes at 350°F (175°C). Let it cool, and then grind it up to use like coffee grounds. You can turn it into a dandelion mocha. Use 1 tbsp. each of dandelion coffee grounds and cacao nibs. Simmer in 3 cups of water for 30 minutes. Then strain and add ½ cup milk (or milk substitute), ½ tsp. cinnamon, ½ tsp. vanilla extract, 1 tbsp. honey (or other sweetener), and a dash of ground nutmeg or cloves.

To be continued...

Soil Lovers say: Dandelions Are Well Worth Keeping In Your Garden

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