

# Lovage

It is a perennial and one of the first things up in the spring. I have been using it in brothy soups with white beans and nettles over rice. Also in salad dressings! You can add it to a simple balsamic vinaigrette. It adds a very strong celery flavor to things. Bonus! You can also get a lot of miles from great puns like..."I lovage you!" every time you prepare a meal.

## **Lovage Pesto**

1 stalk green (baby garlic) garlic or 2 large cloves garlic  
½ cup almonds  
3 cups loosely packed fresh lovage  
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided  
¼ cup fresh basil  
¼ cup grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese  
½ teaspoon lemon zest  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground pepper

Combine garlic and almonds in a food processor. Pulse until coarsely chopped, scraping down the sides once. Add lovage, 1/2 cup oil, basil and cheese. Process until coarsely chopped. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, salt, pepper and the remaining 1/2 cup oil. Process, scraping down the sides once or twice, until coarsely chopped. Let stand for 30 minutes before serving.

## **Creamy Lovage Dressing**

3 tablespoons mayonnaise  
3 tablespoons yogurt  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons chopped lovage, leaves  
salt  
pepper

Whisk all the ingredients together until well blended and slightly thickened. Check seasoning and adjust to taste. Also excellent if used with lightly cooked and cooled spring vegetable salads such as peas, baby carrots, new potatoes and young broad beans. Store any unused dressing in a bottle or jar in the fridge for up to 2 days.

## **Lovage Soup** By Jenny McGruther

2 tablespoons butter  
1 bunch green onions (white and light green parts, chopped) (Optional substitute baby garlic for a garlicky flavor)  
1 medium yellow onion (peeled and chopped)  
2 quarts chicken stock  
3 medium potatoes (peeled and chopped)  
1 bunch/ 1 oz lovage leaves, (chopped fine)  
heavy cream (to serve)

Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed stock pot over medium-high heat. When it froths, reduce the heat to medium and stir in green and yellow onions. Fry until fragrant, about five minutes. Pour in chicken stock and stir in chopped potatoes. Simmer, covered, about thirty minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in lovage and simmer, covered, a further five or six minutes. Remove from heat and blend with an immersion blender until smooth. Season with unrefined sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Stir in a spoonful of heavy cream and serve.