

NATIVE AUSTRALIAN FOOD FACT SHEET:

Wild Basil



Holy Basil [*Ocimum tenuiflorum*]

Grows widespread across the northern tropics of Australia, a small perennial, woody herb, it has many branches of soft furry fragrant and aromatic leaves, and purple flowers.

Uses:

Use in place of sweet basil in all type of Mediterranean and Asian dishes.

Flavour/aroma/texture:

The leaves have a pungent floral basil flavour with hints of spice and clove, and when dried, exude asweet, almost "bubble-gum" basil aroma.

Seasonality:

All year.

Edible parts of the plant:

Leaves.

Fresh/Frozen:

Fresh and dried leaf.

Seed to harvest (growing):

Small shrub - 30-60cm commercially grown in hot houses.

Leaf - green or purple leaves up to 5cm in length, on hairy stems.

Flower - Lilac flowers (late winter and spring).

Harvest to kitchen (processing):

- Fresh leaves can be harvested all year round

- Dried leaves can be crumbled to smaller particles or ground to a powder.

Kitchen to Plate (prep/cook):

Fresh leaf - Thai/Asian stir fry and salads or in tomato-based sauces.

Dried leaves whole or ground - used in sauces and baked goods.

Other nutritional info:

The nutritional value is also high, as it contains:

- Vitamin A and C, Calcium, Zinc, Iron and Chlorophyll.

Non-culinary uses:

Wild basil is also high in anti-oxidants and helps your body detox. Studies show that holy basil can protect your body against toxic chemicals. It may also prevent cancer by reducing the growth of cancerous cells.

Wild Basil is:

- antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, analgesic (a painkiller).

From the leaves to the seed, holy basil is considered a tonic for the body, mind, and spirit. Different parts of the plant are recommended for treating different conditions:

- Use its fresh flowers for bronchitis.
- Leaves and seeds, with black pepper, for malaria.
- Whole plant for diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.
- Pill and ointment form for eczema.
- Alcohol extract for stomach ulcers and eye diseases.
- Essential oil made from the leaves for insect bites.

Shelf life:

Fresh leaf - 2-5 days

Dried leaf/grounds - 12-18 months

Storage:

Fresh - chilled

Dried leaves/grounds - ambient

Substitute:

Sweet basil or Thai basil.

Interesting facts:

For centuries, the dried leaves have been mixed with stored grains to repel insects.

Early explorers recorded indigenous uses in northern Australia as a tea for medicinal purposes.

Reference resources:

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/plant-leaves-green-basil-40720/>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/basil-benefits>

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-agriculture-technology-and-ingenuity>

Nutritional Values*:

(per 25gm dry weight)

Calories	5
Fat	0
Protein	0
Sugar	0
Carbs	0
Calcium	4%
Fibre	0
Vit C	5%
Vit A	8%
Potassium	73mg
Iron	6%
Sodium	0mg
Cholesterol	0mg

Source: myfitnesspal.com

