

# Cilantro

By Barbara Brown

The culinary herb we call Cilantro are really the leaves of the coriander plant, a member of the same family as carrots. The leaves are also called Chinese parsley by some and look like, but are not the same as, Italian parsley. Cilantro has a pungent odor and is widely used in Mexican, Caribbean and Asian cooking. Not all people do perceive cilantro the same way. Some people love the bite and the almost citrus overtones; whereas, others do not like the herb, at all. It is speculated that people who do not like cilantro may have an enzyme that changes the way they experience cilantro - making it almost soapy tasting.

All parts of the coriander plant are edible, but the fresh leaves and the dried seeds are the most commonly used in cooking. The seeds are commonly called coriander and are used to season chili and other soups and stews with a southwestern flavor. Cilantro is used to flavor guacamole and salsas. It is also used in Indian cooking to flavor chicken and in many Asian chutneys. Cilantro does well with eggs and also with fruit.

Fresh cilantro is best stored in the refrigerator in airtight containers, after chopping off the roots. The leaves do not keep well and should be eaten quickly. You can also store cilantro by removing the bottom leaves and storing it upright in a container of water. In cooking, cilantro loses its flavor quickly and should be added at the end of cooking or just before serving.

Recipe:

## Salsa Verde



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|---|------------------------------|
| 1 to 1 ½ lbs tomatillos   | 1 cup cilantro chopped       |
| 1 or 2 chili peppers either jalapenos or serranos – how much depends on taste preferences | ¼ cup green onions chopped   |
| 1 clove garlic  | 1 tsp sugar                  |
|   | 2 tbsp lime juice (optional) |

Clean tomatillos and create a small puncture with a fork or knife tip. Cover with water and boil until the color changes to a light yellow-green and they are soft. Set aside to cool in their water. In a food processor chop the cilantro, onions, peppers and garlic. Add sugar and lime juice. After the tomatillos have cooled, place all ingredients in a blender. Add enough liquid to get the consistency desired. If you want, you can add the liquid after you have blended the other ingredients. Serve with enchiladas, tacos, shredded chicken or eggs.