

Nettle Goodness

Learn about the many benefits of nettles. Discover recipes and forage for this abundant plant.

Nettles are an important food source for butterflies and a home for young ladybirds. Pack nettle leaves with fruit to keep them fresh for longer by keeping mould away. Native Americans have used nettles to treat aches and pains. They are high in vitamin C, A and full of calcium, magnesium, iron and potassium.

Picking Nettles: Nettles have a concoction of chemicals in fine needles on their stem and underside of leaves that are injected into our skin, to give the familiar stinging sensation. This gives them protection from animals that want to eat nettles. When picking use sturdy gloves to protect yourself, scissors are handy too. Once laid out and wilted they will no longer sting.

Nettle Tea: Take a handful of nettle leaves (1 cup) and add to a pan of water (2 cups). Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Add optional sugar or honey to taste.

Nettle Soup: Fry 1 onion, 1 carrot, 2 celery sticks and garlic clove in butter. When soft add 1 litre of vegetable stock and a cooked large diced potato. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Add 500g of nettle leaves and boil for 5 minutes. Blend with optional double cream, salt and pepper.

Nettle Pesto: Add 50g of wilted nettle leaves, 50g pine nuts, 3 garlic cloves, 50g parmesan cheese to a food processor. Then add olive oil until it thickens and mix further. Salt and pepper to taste.

Crispy Nettles: Fry nettle leaves in butter with a pinch of salt for a couple of minutes until golden and crispy. Great for a quick snack or as part of a main meal.

Notes:

Always cook nettles or leave out until wilted to destroy the stinging acid. They can't be used in salads!

Health and Wellbeing

Identify and adopt a healthy lifestyle

Time:
30 min+

Space:
Park, Woods

Equipment:
Nettles, Gloves

