

Lilac Lovefest

Lilac Recipes!

Warning:
Do not bake with
(or eat) lilacs that
have been
sprayed or located
near a sprayed
lawn.

Lilacs have a lovely lavender-like flavor reflecting the gentle essence of spring.

General instructions for preparing lilacs: gather the flower branches and remove the florets. The darker the florets, the more flavorful they'll be. Be careful not to take too many branches from one spot. Three large branches will yield about 4 cups of flowers. Remove the tiny florets from each branch by grabbing the flower and pulling it down the stem. Make sure to save only the purple floret as the green stems will turn the syrup bitter. Place the florets in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse lightly to remove dust and debris. Florets are now prepared to be used in the following recipes.

Lilac Syrup

Makes about 4 cups

Lilac syrup, one of the easiest lilac recipes, gives a floral note to a variety of drinks, sauces, and icings, infusing them with a soft purple color. Try this in your next gin and tonic; mix with lemon and vodka, or use to sweeten tea. It's great drizzled over pound cake or whisked into cream to top pies and cakes.

4 cups lilac florets, prepared
2 cups granulated white sugar
2 cups water

In a small saucepan, stir together the sugar and water, bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Reduce the heat to a slow simmer, stir in the florets gently and simmer for 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat, cover and allow the florets to infuse the syrup with flavor for at least 3 to 8 hours.

Pour the syrup into a fine mesh strainer resting on a large bowl and allow it to sit for a few minutes, shaking occasionally. Pour the finished syrup into a clean glass container with a tight fitting lid and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Lilac Jelly

Makes about 3 half pint jars

Try this on lemon muffins or currant scones. Once the jelly has cooled, store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

4 cups lilac florets, prepared
3 cups boiling water
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ packet of pectin (12.5 g.)
4 tablespoons lemon juice
1 cup granulated sugar

Put the lilac florets into a large bowl or jar and cover with the water. Allow to sit for 6 hours. Strain the lilacs through a fine mesh strainer into a stainless steel pan. Discard the florets. Add the vanilla, pectin, lemon juice, and sugar. Set the pan over high heat, bring to a boil for 2 minutes, skimming as necessary. Pour the hot liquid into clean jars. Seal the jars, allow to cool, and store in the refrigerator.

Lilac Butter Pound Cake

Serves 8 to 10

Flecked with purple blossoms and glazed with lilac syrup, this cake is rich and buttery, delicious toasted for breakfast or garnished with whipped cream for dessert.

1 cup unsalted butter
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup lilac florets, prepared
¼ cup lilac syrup

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter and flour a 6 cup (8-1/2 by 4-1/2- inch loaf pan). In a large bowl, beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, beat in the vanilla and salt. With the mixer on low, gradually add the flour, beating until just combined, do not overmix. Fold in the florets.

Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, about 1 hour. Remove the cake from the oven and set on a rack to cool in the pan. Drizzle the lilac syrup over the cake and allow it to cool to room temperature before removing from the pan.