



The laurel



In ancient times the noble laurel crowned heroes, conquerors and famous artists: it was this practice that gave us the term 'laureat' (laurel wreath) and 'baccalaureat' (laurel berry).

An evergreen bush of the Lauraceae family with dark green leaves that have been used for their fragrance since the first century. Originally from the Mediterranean basin, it was dedicated to the god Apollo in Ancient Greece.

Not to be confused with the cherry-laurel (white flowers) or with the pink-laurel which do not come from the same family and are poisonous.

Choice

Bay leaves can be used whole or crumbled, fresh or dried. They are usually used dried as they can be bitter when fresh.. Good quality bay leaves are greenish brown and glossy.

Consumption

In either form, bay leaves flavour sauces, soups, stews, marinades for meat, game and fish. They are part of the make up of a bouquet garni with parsley and thyme. Bay leaves are also an ingredient in many fricasses and civets, court-bouillons and terrines.

Conservation

Preserve dried bay leaves in an airtight container away from the light for up to a year. Fresh bay leaves can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days wrapped in damp kitchen paper or dried in a shady place to preserve their fragrance.



The berries and leaves of the laurel have medicinal properties: as an antiseptic, an aid to digestion, an expectorant and in preventing rheumatism, entorses et ecchymoses.



PREPARATION

Use sparingly: one leaf for a recipe for 4-6 people is sufficient as they are very perfumed.



COOKING

The more they cook in liquid, the more they impart their flavour to the recipe being prepared.



PRESENTATION

Always remove bay leaves before serving.

RECIPE SUGGESTIONS

- Always remove bay leaves before serving.
Fresh curd cheese with a compote of sweet peppers and piment d'Espelette

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