

SUMAC

When most people think of “sumac,” they think of the itchy relative of poison ivy. Staghorn sumac, however, is an entirely different variety, and is both edible and delicious!



Staghorn sumac is easily identified by the red fruit clusters resembling an Olympic torch, or the velvety antlers of a male deer, hence the name of “staghorn.” Sumac is very popular in both the Middle East and the Mediterranean. In places like Israel, Turkey, and Italy, people use dried, ground sumac as a flavoring and a color enhancer. These berries have a tart flavor that is reminiscent of lemons, but not as sour. In fact, before lemons were imported to Europe, the Romans used these berries to add a tangy taste to their meals. They are high in vitamins A, C, and antioxidants.

Today, many Middle Eastern cultures still prefer sumac to lemons or vinegar. People keep it in shakers on the table to season their favorite foods in much the same way that we use salt or pepper. Ground, dried sumac berries taste great as a spice rub for lamb, fish and chicken. These berries are also used as a salad topping, and you can include them in your favorite dressings. Middle Eastern chefs use sumac as a topping for fattoush salad, and are often sprinkled on hummus to add both color and a zesty flavor. In the United States, one of the most common ways to use sumac is to make red lemonade.

Sumac berries also have a long history as an herbal remedy. Early pioneers treated coughs, sore throats and fevers with sumac, while Native Americans used these berries to treat anything from reproductive problems to stomachaches and wounds.

SHISH TAWOOK (LEBANESE CHICKEN DISH)



INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs chicken breast (bone and skin off)
- 1 cup whole milk yogurt
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp sumac
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut chicken breasts into 1 1/2 inch pieces and place them in a large bowl.
2. In another bowl, mix yogurt, olive oil, garlic, lemon juice, tomato paste, paprika, sumac and thyme.
3. Pour the yogurt mixture over chicken pieces and mix well. Cover with a plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least two hours (up to eight hours).
4. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Once the oil is shimmering, place the chicken pieces in the pan, but don't overcrowd the pan.
5. Sear the chicken pieces on one side for 3-4 minutes, then stir and sear the other side until the chicken is fully cooked.
6. Serve shish tawook with pita and/or salad.

CHICKEN WINGS WITH CHILI & DATE CARMEL



INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs chicken wings
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp sumac
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 6 dates, stoned
- 2 red chilis, deseeded, thinly sliced to serve
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2/3 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp sesame seeds, toasted

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 400°.
2. Tip the wings into a large bowl and toss with the cumin, sumac, flour, and plenty of seasoning. Spread out over a large baking tray, drizzle with oil and cook for 35 minutes, turning over halfway through cooking.
3. Make the glaze by putting the dates, chilis, sugar and vinegar in a food processor with 1/2 cup water and blitz. Pour into a saucepan and bubble for 5 minutes until thick and glossy.
4. Brush the glaze over the chicken wings, making sure they are well coated, and sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Return to oven for 10 minutes more, turning and brushing after 5 minutes until sticky.

TURNIPS WITH ROASTED GARLIC GOAT CHEESE AND SESAME



INGREDIENTS

- 1 head of garlic, halved crosswise
- 1 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 8 oz goat cheese
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 tbsp black and/or white sesame seeds
- 1 tsp finely grated lime zest
- 1 tsp chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1/4 tsp sumac
- 12 oz small turnips (about 16), peeled, half quartered, half thinly sliced into rounds
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
- Cilantro leaves with tender stems and mint leaves (for serving)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°. Combine garlic and 1 1/4 cup oil in a small baking dish. Cover dish with foil and roast until garlic is golden brown and tender, 45-50 minutes. Let cool.
2. Remove garlic from oil; squeeze cloves from skins and finely chop to a paste. Process in a food processor along with goat cheese, 1/4 cup garlic roasting oil, and 2 tbsp water until smooth. Mixture should be spreadable. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Meanwhile, toast sesame seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat until golden brown, about 1 minute. Transfer to a small bowl and let cool. Mix in lime zest, oregano, thyme, and sumac.

(Instructions continued on back)

STRAWBERRY SUMAC CAKE



STRAWBERRY INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup chopped hulled strawberries (1 inch pieces), plus 1 cup strawberries halved
- 1 tsp ground sumac
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- 1/2 tsp almond extract

CAKE INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plus 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup stone-ground yellow cornmeal
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1/4 tsp ground sumac

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare the strawberries. Combine the chopped strawberries, sumac, sugar, and almond extract in a small bowl and set aside to macerate.
2. Preheat oven to 350° degrees. Grease a 9" cake pan or springform pan with 1 tbsp olive oil.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, salt, baking soda, and baking powder to combine. Set aside.

(instructions continued on backside)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CAKE (continued)

4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment or in a medium bowl using a handheld mixer, beat the eggs and 1 cup sugar on medium-high speed until very pale and light yellow in color, about 3 minutes. The mixture should thicken and make ribbons that slowly lose their shape when they fall off the whisk attachment. With the mixer on high speed, slowly add the remaining 1 cup olive oil and beat until everything is combined.
5. Reduce the speed to medium-low and slowly begin adding the dry ingredients in 3 additions, adding the half-and-half in between additions. Mix until just combined. Remove the bowl from the stand mixer and fold in diced strawberries and their liquid. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a spatula. Arrange the halved strawberries on the top.
6. Bake for 50 to 65 minutes, until the cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. If the cake is becoming too brown before the center has set, cover loosely with foil.
7. In a small bowl, mix the remaining 2 tbsp sugar with the sumac. Sprinkle the cake with the sumac sugar while still slightly warm.
8. Allow the cake to cool in the pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Turn the cake out of the pan onto the rack or release the springform ring and remove it. (If using a standard cake pan, some sugar may fall off the cake. Use parchment or wax paper to catch any stray sugar and sprinkle back over the cake.) Let cool completely before serving. Store leftover cake in an airtight container or wrapped in plastic wrap at room temperature up to 1 day (or refrigerate up to 4 days).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TURNIPS (continued)

4. Toss turnips in a medium bowl with vinegar and 2 tbsp oil. Season with salt and pepper. Divide goat cheese mixture among plates, top with turnips, sesame mixture, cilantro, and mint, and drizzle with more oil.

*Note: Roasted garlic goat cheese can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill after made. Bring to room temperature before using. Sesame mixture can be made 4 hours ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.