

Fennel

Fennel is a versatile plant. You can eat all of it – bulb, stems, and leaves (fronds). The seeds of the fennel plant have been used for centuries as a flavorful spice and for a variety of medicinal purposes. In New England, fennel is grown as an annual.

CULINARY TIPS

- Fennel stems can be thinly sliced and added to salads, or sautéed with onions and garlic for the base of sauces and soups. The feathery fronds can be tossed into salads, and the bulb can be used raw or cooked in multiple ways.
- Look for heavy, full, white bulbs and crisp green stalks and fronds when buying fennel.
- Fennel has been used as a digestive aid for centuries. It is a natural diuretic and is believed to be very helpful for stomach distress.

HOW TO STORE FENNEL

Fennel keeps best in the crisper drawer. Remove the stalks and fronds from the bulb, and store them separately. If using a plastic bag for storage, don't overcrowd it – the bulb bruises easily.

3 WAYS TO PREPARE FENNEL

- Eat it raw! Sliced thinly or shaved in salads, fennel adds a delicious crunch with a mild, herby, licorice taste. It pairs well with fruit, citrus, or salty flavors like olives and cheeses.
- Grill it! Cut fennel in thick slices, brush with olive oil, and place on a hot grill until just tender and slightly charred, 4-5 minutes per side. Season with salt and pepper. Serve alongside other grilled veggies for a perfect summer meal.
- Roast it! Fennel is especially delicious with seafood and also pairs well with chicken and pork. When cooked, the bulb becomes very tender and sweet, similar in texture and sweetness to cooked onions. If you've tried fennel raw and don't care for it, try it roasted!

RECIPE

A classic and very easy preparation is a simple salad of thinly sliced fennel with slices of orange and/or grapefruit. Drizzle it with extra virgin olive oil, and season with a pinch of salt and freshly ground black pepper. This dish is often served as a digestive aid after a big meal.