



OREGANO

"Keep it light"

Oregano is a robust, strong herb and is best used sparingly and with strongly flavored foods and long-cooking dishes

- May be better to add a strong herb at the *end* of cooking to avoid bitterness
- In other cases, *long cooking* with other herbs, particularly bay and parsley helps to mellow flavors of *all* ingredients
- A traditional Mexican and Mideastern technique is to toast oregano in a dry skillet before using. Toasting yields a rich flavor and releases the true taste
- Flavor combines well with those of:
 - garlic, thyme, parsley, and olive oil
- Best known for appearance in tomato sauce has hot peppery flavor
- Enhances cheese and egg combinations including:
 - omelets, frittatas, quiches, and savory flans
- Adds dimension to:
 - yeast breads, marinated vegetables, roasted bell peppers, mushrooms, roasted and stewed beef pork, poultry, game, onions, black beans, zucchini, potatoes, eggplant and shellfish.
- By itself adds a dash to almost any buttered vegetable
- Pair with cilantro in:
 - guacamole, cooked or uncooked salsas, or in stuffings for large squashes
- Excellent in vegetal salads of squash, corn, and jicama
- Ranks high as salt replacement - use in place of salt for: vegetables, chicken, eggplant, summer squash, peas, baked russet potatoes or sweet potatoes and on tomatoes.
- Add to meat loaf
- Sprinkle generously over beef, lamb or pork before roasting.
- Use in BBQ; as smoke producer, barbecue brush and in marinades
- Tender whole stems can be used to stuff cavity of:
 - chicken, turkey or duck before roasting or
- Stuff whole fish along with lemon or lime slices and onion.
- Stir chopped fresh oregano into steamed cabbage with some fresh lemon juice and unsalted butter.
- For moist and tasty pork chops, coat with wheat germ, sprinkle with oregano and bake

Baked Kasseri Cheese

- 1 pound plus 2 ounces Kasseri Cheese
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh oregano
or
- ¾ teaspoons dried
- 4 teaspoons clarified butter
- buttered toast as an accompaniment

Chop the *Kasseri cheese* coarsely and divide among 4 individual gratin dishes, about 6 inches wide. Top it with the *lemon juice*, the *garlic*, the *oregano*, and the *butter*, and bake it in a preheated 400° F. oven for 7 to 10 minutes or until it is melted and bubbling. Serve the *cheese* with the *buttered toast*. Serves 4 as a first course.

Black Beans with Roasted Red Peppers and Oregano

The **Cubans** add a few tablespoons of dark rum to the black beans

The **Brazilians** mash half the beans with garlic to form a sauce for the rest

- 1 cup dried black beans
- 3 whole cloves
- 1 large onion, peeled
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 carrot
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 2 stalks celery
- 5 to 6 sprigs fresh parsley, tied with string
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 ½ tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh oregano, divided
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 large sweet red pepper, roasted and cut into 1/2-" strips

Soak *beans* in 3 to 4 cups water overnight. Then drain and rinse *beans*. Put *beans* into a 5-quart Dutch oven. Insert *cloves* into *onion*, and add to *beans* along with *garlic*, *carrot*, *bay leaf*, *celery*, and *parsley*. Then add *chicken stock*, bring to a boil, cover, lower heat, and simmer for 1 1/2 hours, or until tender. During the last 20 minutes of cooking, remove cover, and check on the amount of liquid. If there is too much, keep the cover off for the remainder of the cooking time. If there is too little, add a bit of boiling water. When *beans* are cooked most of the liquid should be absorbed.

Remove all the *vegetables* and the *bay leaf*, and discard. Add *olive oil* and *vinegar*, and stir well. then add 1 *tablespoon* of the *oregano*. Spoon *beans* onto a warm serving platter, add 2 *dollops* of *sour cream*, sprinkle with remaining *oregano*, and lay *strips of roasted pepper* over the top.