

# August Spice Club:

## *Lavender*



### *Suggested Reading*

Sarah Berringer Bader, *The Lavender Lover's Handbook: the 100 Most Beautiful and Fragrant Varieties for Growing, Crafting, and Cooking*

Lesley Bremness, *The Complete Book of Herbs*

Ellen Spector Platt, *Lavender: How to Grow and Use the Fragrant Herb*

Fanny Slater, *Orange, Lavender & Figs: Deliciously Different Recipes from a Passionate Eater*

# Lavender

What does the smell of lavender mean to you? Lavender is used for myriad aromatic, cleansing, and cosmetic functions, but is often overlooked in cuisine. With a little introduction and inspiration, we hope to change that!

The lavender plant is native to the Mediterranean, an area that includes southern and western Europe, northern and eastern Africa, and southwest Asia. Maine gardeners interested in growing this heat-loving plant might consider the cold-hardy *L. angustifolia* hybrid variety, also known as “common” or “narrow-leafed” lavender. The leaves, stems, buds, and flowers of lavender all contain essential oils and can be used in general crafting. For cooking, it is important to use organic culinary-grade lavender buds as quality and pesticide use can vary greatly between crops that are and are not meant to be eaten.

A good rule of thumb for lavender culinary use is *less is more*. If you’re skeptical about the floral smell and taste, try reducing the amount of lavender added into a dish and see how it’s received. Make sure also to pay attention to whether fresh or dried lavender buds are called for in a recipe, as the potency of lavender increases with drying. When substituting fresh lavender for dried, use half or even just  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the called-for amount. Pair lavender with citrus when cooking sweet or savory dishes for a sure success.

This Spice Club kit includes 2 tablespoons of organic culinary-grade dried lavender flowers, enough to make a  $\frac{1}{2}$  batch of lavender sugar and the associated recipes *or* enough to make the lemon loaf and chicken recipes twice. Best if used by March 2024. If you would like to share reviews, photos, or suggest future spices, please email Meghan at [mfogg@freeportmaine.com](mailto:mfogg@freeportmaine.com).

*September Spice Club: Nutritional Yeast*

*Kits will available for pickup 9/20/21.*

# Lemon Loaf Lavandula

Ellen Spector Platt, *Lavender: How to Grow and Use the Fragrant Herb*

“Travels well, slices neatly, and tastes sensational.”

C A K E	1/3 cup butter
	1 cup sugar
	2 eggs
	1 tablespoon grated lemon rind
	1 teaspoon dried lavender buds (off the stem, no leaves)
	2 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
	1 tablespoon baking powder
	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk	
G L A Z E	1/2 cup sugar
	1/2 cup lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
	1/2 teaspoon lavender buds
	1 tablespoon grated lemon rind

Heat oven to 325°. Grease a 9” x 5” x 3” loaf pan. Cream the butter and sugar until soft. Add the eggs one at a time, beating until smooth. Add the rind and lavender. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt, mixing lightly with a spoon. Add the dry ingredients and the milk into the creamed mixture, alternating in two or three pours. Beat until just mixed – don’t overbeat! Pour batter into greased loaf pan and smooth the top with a knife. Bake for about an hour, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean.

Toward the end of the baking period, combine glaze ingredients in a small pan, bruising the lavender between your fingers before adding it. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, and when the sugar is all dissolved, remove from stove. Prick the top of the loaf all over with a toothpick. Pour the glaze slowly over the top of the loaf until it is all absorbed. When the loaf cools a little, remove from pan. Ideally let sit 10-12 hours before slicing.

# Lavender Lemon Shortbread

Betsey-Ann Golon

R E C I P E	1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
	¾ cup sugar (regular granulated)
	¼ cup lavender sugar*
	2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
	¼ teaspoon salt
3 cups cake flour	

Preheat oven to 325°. Beat butter, sugars and lemon zest with an electric mixer until just blended – don't overbeat! Stir in flour and salt, beating just until blended. Press dough firmly into a 10" pie plate. Score the dough into wedges then bake until golden brown, about 25-35 minutes. Cool for several minutes, then cut the wedges again. Let shortbread cool completely before removing from pan.



## Lavender Sugar\*

Betsey-Ann Golon

- ¼ cup culinary dried lavender flowers (no pesticides or sprays)
- 2 cups granulated sugar

Alternate sugar and flowers in layers in a tight-fitting jar. Let stand for two weeks or more. Sift the sugar to remove the flowers or, for a more colorful mix, process flowers and sugar in a blender until the lavender is finely ground. Store sugar in an airtight container for use in cookies, cakes, frostings and tea. Substitute ¼ of regular sugar for lavender-flavored sugar.

## Lavender Lemonade

Use ¼ cup lavender sugar\* in your favorite lemonade recipe.