

# Cilantro

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The leaves and seeds of cilantro are used in many dishes, from Mexican food to Thai food. Cilantro leaves are used fresh in salads, salsa, and meat dishes. The seeds, which are referred to as coriander, have a distinct flavor similar to orange and are used in pastries, sausage, and cooked fruit. Cilantro is a cool-season crop that does best at temperatures between 50 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- Calypso, Long Standing, Leisure

### Soil preparation

- Incorporate a 3-inch layer of compost into the top 4 to 6 inches of soil.

### Planting

- Plant seeds or transplants in January or February for a spring crop or in September for a fall crop.
- Space seeds or plants 8 inches apart in rows 12 to 15 inches apart.
- Plant seeds ¼ to ½ inch deep

### Fertilizing

- Cilantro should be fertilized twice during the growing season.
- Apply ½ teaspoon of ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) per square foot.

### Watering

- The plant's most critical need for water occurs during seedling germination and establishment. After the plants become established, they do not need much water but should be watered when the soil is dry.

### Insects & Diseases

- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

### Harvesting

- Cilantro leaves are ready to harvest 45 to 70 days after seeding.
- Cut exterior leaves once they reach 4 to 6 inches long. Or, cut the whole plant about 1 to 2 inches above the soil level to use both small and large leaves.
- When the weather becomes hot, the cilantro plant will send up a flower stalk and produce seeds known as coriander. To harvest the seeds, cut the stems after the plant and seeds turn brown. Place them in a paper bag and hang or store in a cool, dry place until seeds are completely dry. Remove the seed pods from the stem and store them in an airtight container.<sup>1,2</sup>



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-drained



Planting:  
Cool



Harvest:  
Cool



Life Cycle:  
Annual



Container:  
Friendly



## Buy it

- Select a bunch of cilantro that is bright green and free of blemishes.

## Store it

- Take the bunch apart, wash the stems and leaves, place them in a plastic bag, and refrigerate immediately. Use fresh cilantro within 5 to 6 days of harvest or purchase.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](https://nchfp.uga.edu).

## Use it

### Easy Cheesy Enchiladas

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 10

#### Ingredients:

##### Sauce

- 2 cups plain nonfat yogurt
- 1 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp. ground cumin

#### Enchiladas

- 1 (4-oz.) package nonfat cream cheese
- 2 cups cooked chicken breast, chopped
- 12 oz. chunky mild salsa
- 1 cup shredded Mexican-blend cheese, reduced fat
- 10 corn tortillas

#### Instructions:

Heat cream cheese in large skillet over medium heat until soft.

Stir in chicken and ½ cup of the salsa. Mix well.

Add ½ cup shredded cheese. Stir until melted.

Spoon enchilada filling onto each tortilla and roll up.

Place seam side down in baking dish.

Top with remaining salsa and cheese. Bake at 350°F for about 15 minutes, or until heated through.

While the enchiladas are baking, mix the sauce. Stir together yogurt, cilantro, and cumin until well combined.

Top enchiladas with yogurt sauce and serve.

### Cilantro Lime Grilled Shrimp with Dip

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 5

#### Ingredients:

##### Marinade

- 1 lb. shrimp; frozen or fresh, peeled and deveined
- 1 Tbsp. jalapeño (optional: remove seeds)
- 1 cup green onion
- 2 cups cilantro
- 4 tsp. lime zest
- ¼ cup lime juice (about 2 whole limes)
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- ½ cup pineapple juice
- 2 Tbsp. minced garlic
- ½ tsp. coconut aminos
- ½ tsp. black pepper

##### Dill Dip

- 1 (8-oz.) container plain Greek low-fat yogurt
- 2 tsp. lime zest
- 2 tsp. lime juice
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh dill

#### Instructions:

Prep shrimp. If frozen, let thaw. If fresh, peel and devein.

Place jalapeño, green onion, and cilantro in food processor and pulse.

Whisk together olive oil, 1/4 cup lime juice, pineapple juice, 4 teaspoons lime zest, minced garlic, coconut aminos, and black pepper in a bowl. Combine with processed ingredients to create a marinade.

Pour the marinade into a large, sealable, food-safe plastic bag. Place shrimp in the marinade (plastic bag). Before sealing, press out the excess air.

Let the shrimp marinate in the fridge for 10 to 30 minutes (max).

While shrimp is marinating, create dill

dip. In a medium bowl, stir together yogurt, 2 teaspoons lime zest, 2 teaspoons lime juice, garlic powder, and dill. Cover and chill.

You are now ready to grill. Thread the shrimp onto skewers or place them in a grill pan over the stove.

Grill the shrimp over direct, medium heat for 5 to 7 minutes, turning the shrimp halfway through the process. Make sure shrimp are pink and cooked through. A fully cooked shrimp has an internal temperature of 120°F. Check the temperature with a meat thermometer.

When done, take the shrimp off the grill, and squeeze some lime juice on top.

Garnish shrimp with cilantro and lime wedges and serve.

## Learn about it

Cilantro is rich in vitamin A, potassium, calcium, and dietary fiber, moderately rich in vitamin C and folate, and low in calories, fat, and sodium.

<sup>1</sup>University of Illinois Extension. (2021). Cilantro. University of Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved from: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/herbs/cilantro.cfm>

<sup>2</sup>Miller, Colt, and Dan Drost. (n.d.). Cilantro/Coriander in the Garden. Utah State University, Extension Yard and Garden. Retrieved from: <https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/research/cilantro-coriander-in-the-garden>