



**FORAGING AND
PREPARING HOSTAS**



You can eat hostas?!

A lot of people do not realize that you can eat hostas and what's even better is that they taste delicious!

We'll discuss how to collect them first and then we'll discuss how to prepare them at home.

History

Although typically thought of as an ornamental to us westerners, hostas have been eaten regularly in Japan for centuries.

As you probably already know if you have hostas is that, although they die back in winter, they regrow each spring. They can also spread via their roots. Many times they will be the first thing poking up out of the ground in early spring. Here in the South we see them as early as March.

Harvesting

Hostas are very easy to harvest. What you are looking for to eat is the young, tender shoots that haven't unfolded completely yet, only a few days old. Just bend the shoot over and slice off with a sharp knife. They are very easy to cut and resemble leeks when they are young.

They really are much more vegetable-like in this early stage and it's easier to make the connection to food at this point too. Once they are larger and the leaves have completely unfurled and begun to harden off they are past the point of being eatable. You could probably boil them down in a pinch but the young ones are very tasty!

I have noticed that slugs also find the young and tender shoots very tasty too so be sure that you examine all of the leaves and wash them. I have found a slug or two wrapped up inside a hosta stalk.





Sautéed hostas with bacon

Leafy green vegetables are rarely the star of the show. It's usually a sauce of some kind that makes Brussel sprouts or asparagus worthy of a meal. In this case, it's bacon of course!

INGREDIENTS

4 – 6 Bunches freshly cut and washed young hostas

2 Strips of good bacon

2 Cloves garlic thinly sliced

Soy sauce

Pepper

Coarsely chop the hostas.

Slice the bacon up in to very thin slices, about one eighth of an inch thick. These are known as 'lardons'.

In a large skillet, begin to render the lardons of bacon over medium heat.

Continue cooking the bacon lardons until they are crispy bits.

Use as slotted spoon to retrieve the bacon from out of the pan. Leave the bacon fat in the pan.



After you have retrieved the bacon from the pan, add the coarsely chopped hostas to the pan.

Sautee the hostas for about a minute until they begin to wilt down. Add the garlic.

Add pepper to the hostas if so desired.

After a couple of minutes until the hostas will be quite wilted down in size probably only a third as large as they were when they went in.

Just at the end add a few shakes of good soy sauce be careful though because soy sauce is very salty.

This dish makes a great side and would go perfectly with chicken or pork!



I hope you enjoy this recipe and I encourage everyone to forage as much as they can. With a little effort your yard can become a free gourmet buffet!

Les Dell

