

# Food

The Estherville Daily News is proud to bring you the Food page every Tuesday. If you know anyone who should be featured on this page, please send their names and why you think they should be featured to: [Managing editor, 10 N. Seventh St., Estherville, 51334 or editor@esthervilledailynews.com](mailto:Managing_editor, 10 N. Seventh St., Estherville, 51334 or editor@esthervilledailynews.com)

## DOES ANYBODY REALLY KNOW WHAT THYME IS?

By MARY ANN MENENDEZ  
SPECIAL TO THE EDN

It was 1966 when the song sung by Paul Simon & Art Garfunkel featured thyme and a trio of other herbs of equal importance in the kitchen; that being parsley, sage and rosemary. The folk song weaved a tale of a lost love, Scarborough Fair and the heartaches of life. It provided vivid imagery of a time long ago with the refrain including the four herbs.

Today we focus on thyme.

A delicate looking herb with a resonating fragrance, thyme is a wonderful addition to bean, egg and vegetable dishes. Thyme, fresh and dried, is available in the supermarket throughout the year.

Thyme leaves are curled, elliptically shaped and very small, measuring about 1/8 of an inch long and one-sixteenth of an inch wide. The upper leaf is green-grey in color on top, while the underside is a whitish color. Along with fresh sprigs of parsley and bay leaves, thyme is included in the French combination of herbs called bouquet garni used to season stock, stews and soups.

Thyme has been used since ancient times for its culinary, aromatic and medicinal properties. Egyptians used it as an embalming agent to preserve their deceased pharaohs in the ancient world.

Over in the Greek Isles, this herb was burned in sacred temples for its fragrant qualities. Thyme was also a symbol of courage and admiration. According to [www.whfoods.com](http://www.whfoods.com), "Thyme's association with bravery continued throughout medieval times when it was a ritual for women to give their knights a scarf that had a sprig of thyme placed over an embroidered bee. Since the 16th century, thyme oil has been used for its antiseptic properties, both as mouthwash and a topical application."

Thyme is cultivated on several continents including Asia, southern Europe and the Mediterranean region and North America.

The website included these tasty tips for thyme:

■ Add thyme to your favorite pasta sauce recipe.

■ Fresh thyme adds a wonderful fragrance to omelets and scrambled eggs.

■ Hearty beans such as kidney beans, pinto beans and black beans taste exceptionally good when seasoned with thyme.

■ When poaching fish, place some sprigs of thyme on top of the fish and in the poaching liquid.

■ Season soups and stocks by adding fresh thyme.



On a healthy note, Thyme is an fantastic source of iron, manganese and vitamin K. It is also a very good source of calcium and an excellent source of fiber.

### Thymed Tuna Steaks

**1 pound fresh tuna (4 pieces)**  
**1 teaspoon dried thyme**  
**1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon olive oil**  
**Fresh ground black pepper to taste**

**Sweet red pepper slivers & lime wedges, garnish**  
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. If necessary, trim dark parts from tuna. In a small bowl, combine thyme, oil and black pepper into a smooth paste and rub into each piece of fish.

Place fish in an ovenproof glass baking dish and bake uncovered until cooked through, 30-45 minutes, depending on thickness. Place fish on serving platter and serve hot. Garnish with sliver of peppers and lime slices on the side. Serves 4.

### Chops with Thyme & Apples

**1/2 cup flour**  
**Salt & pepper to taste**  
**8 extra thin (1/2 inch thick) loin pork chops**  
**1/2 stick unsalted butter**  
**4 tablespoons olive oil**  
**16 sprigs fresh thyme (2 tablespoons dried thyme)**  
**2 tart apples, unpeeled, cut in 1/3 inch slices**

Combine the flour with salt and pepper. Lightly dredge the pork chops in the flour. Heat half the butter and oil in a large skillet. Saute half the chops for 5 minutes on each side. While the chops are cooking, put some of the thyme under each chop so the herb will

stick to the meat. Remove the chops and keep warm. Add the remaining oil and butter to the skillet and cook the rest of the chops the same way. Remove them and keep warm. Using the same skillet, saute the apples for 2-4 minutes, or until soft but not mushy. Arrange the chops and apples on a serving dish. Serves 4-6.

### Sprouts with Thyme & Filberts

**4 pounds fresh Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed**  
**2 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried**

**Salt and pepper**  
**1 1/2 sticks butter**  
**1 1/4 cup filberts**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1 tablespoon olive oil**

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place filberts on a baking sheet and toast until brown, about 15 minutes. Wrap warm nuts in a clean towel and rub together to loosen skins. Unwrap and cool. Finely chop. Bring large pot of water to boil. Add salt and oil. Add Brussels sprouts and boil uncovered until bright green and crisp tender, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Drain. Transfer to bowl of cold water. Drain thoroughly and cool. Melt butter in heavy large skillet over high heat until golden brown. Add Brussels sprouts and thyme and stir until heated through. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to serving bowl. Add hazelnuts and toss gently.

### Mediterranean Potatoes

**3 pounds small new potatoes, scrubbed and washed**  
**Salt and pepper**  
**1/2 stick butter**  
**1/4 cup olive oil**  
**6 tablespoons fresh lemon**

**juice**  
**2 teaspoons thyme**  
**1 tablespoons grated lemon peel**

**3 tablespoons fresh parsley**  
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Quarter the unpeeled potatoes. Butter a roasting pan. Add potatoes. Generously salt and pepper. Heat butter and oil together until butter is melted. Add lemon juice. Pour over potatoes and toss to cover potatoes. Sprinkle thyme over potatoes. Bake for 45-60 minutes (test for doneness). Sprinkle lemon peel over potatoes and bake 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

### Carrots with Thyme & Bacon

**2 slices bacon**  
**1/3 cup chicken broth**  
**1/4 cup sliced green onions**  
**1 teaspoon sugar**  
**1/2 teaspoon thyme**  
**1/8 teaspoon pepper**  
**1 pound baby carrots**

In large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon from skillet; drain, reserving 1 tablespoon drippings in skillet. Crumble bacon; set aside. Add remaining ingredients to reserved bacon drippings; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 7-10 minutes or until carrots are tender. Remove cover; cook over medium heat until liquid reduces to a thin glaze, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle with bacon and serve immediately. Serves 5.

### Tuscan Chicken

**3 pounds fryer chicken pieces**  
**1 teaspoon oregano**  
**1/2 teaspoon thyme**  
**1/4 teaspoon pepper**  
**3 potatoes (cut into lengthwise wedges)**  
**3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley**

**1/3 cup flour**  
**2 teaspoons basil**  
**pinch of rosemary**  
**pinch of sage**  
**3 cloves garlic (minced)**  
**1/2 cup olive oil**  
**3/4 cup dry white wine**

Mix flour, basil, oregano, thyme, pepper, rosemary and sage in a shallow dish. Coat chicken lightly with flour mixture, shake off excess. Heat oil in heavy frying pan and fry chicken until brown all over. Remove to paper towel and blot off excess oil. Add potato wedges to pan and fry until light brown all over. Drain on paper towel. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons of oil. Put chicken and potatoes back into skillet. Sprinkle with garlic and parsley. Pour wine over all. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees about 25 minutes. Serve with some of the pan juices.

### Greens with Thyme Dressing

**1/4 cup olive oil**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley**  
**Salt & freshly ground pepper**  
**2 ounces green olives**  
**2 ounces spinach, stemmed & torn into pieces**  
**2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**  
**2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme**  
**1/2 small head green cabbage, shredded**  
**1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced**  
**Pickled onions**  
**Italian croutons**

Mix olive oil, lemon juice, parsley and thyme in blender until slightly thickened. Season dressing with salt and pepper. Mix cabbage, olives and onion in bowl. Add dressing and toss. Just before serving, add spinach and croutons; toss together.

### Thymed Corn Muffins

**1 cup yellow cornmeal**  
**1 cup all-purpose flour**  
**1/4 cup sugar**  
**3 tablespoons thyme**  
**1 tablespoon baking powder**  
**Salt, to taste**  
**1/4 teaspoon black pepper**  
**2 eggs, beaten**  
**1 cup buttermilk**  
**1/2 cup milk**  
**1/4 cup melted butter**  
**1/2 cup chopped scallions**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine first 7 ingredients in a bowl, and mix thoroughly. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs, buttermilk, milk and butter together and add scallions. Fold the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients, and continue to fold gently until the mixture forms a batter. Divide evenly into a greased 12 muffin pan or put batter into an 8 inch greased baking pan. Bake 20 minutes or until crust is lightly brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve warm.

## Sage & parsley – dynamic duo

By MARY ANN MENENDEZ  
SPECIAL TO THE EDN

Contained in this article are a special pair referenced in today's main food article. While sage and parsley are minor herbs in the great big cooking scene, they have their place. Rosemary was already featured in this space earlier this year.

According to [www.buzzle.com](http://www.buzzle.com), the herb called sage is distinctive with its greenish-gray foliage that sprouts springtime flowers in a violet-blue hue. Sage plays a common role in foods from the Mediterranean area and can be added to recipes for lamb, beef, fish, chicken, pork, vegetables and some cheeses.

Because of its pungency, sage should be used in small amounts. The herb is rich in Vitamins A and C.

Some folks incorporate sage greenery to their garden scene for its bright color and a constant supply of the herb for cooking purposes. The varieties of sage, among others, include pineapple sage, purple sage and golden sage.

The website article reads, "Since ancient times, sage has been believed to give eternal youth and immortality. Scientists have found anti-aging compounds in it. The July 2003 issue of the 'Pharmacological Biochemical Behavior' claims that sage has the power to improve memory. Sage is an all-in-one herb. It is also an antifungal, anti-septic. It curbs excessive sweating, treats depression, nervous anxiety and liver disorders and is also a miracle skin cure. It is also used for treating painful jellyfish stings and spider bites. Sage herb is the perfect antiseptic wash for wounds and forms a part of most concoctions that treat persistent and recurrent coughs. The mixture of sage, white vinegar and water forms a good astringent for oily skin."

Some individuals use sage as a mouth freshener. Manufacturers of perfume also use sage for its aroma properties. However caution is urged in home use as "sage essential oil is a good calming oil but contains

thujone (an addictive hallucinogenic), which may affect human health adversely when used in excess."

Perhaps the duo of Simon & Garfunkel knew what they were singing when they positioned parsley first in the list of herbs as parsley is the most popular herb the world over. Curly parsley and Italian flat leaf parsley are the two most popular varieties. Known mostly as a garnish, parsley has a clean and delicious flavor and offers its own set of healing characteristics.

According to [www.whfoods.com](http://www.whfoods.com), "It derives its name from the Greek word meaning 'rock celery' (parsley is a relative to celery). It is a biennial plant that will return to the garden year after year once it is established." With that in mind, it can save the green stuff in your wallet if you enjoy the taste of parsley and are in possession of a green thumb!

The next time you are presented a dinner plate with a sprig of parsley adorning your selection, don't ignore it. The website states, this herb "contains two types of unusual components that provide unique health benefits. The first type is volatile oil components-including myristicin, limonene, eugenol, and alpha-thujene. The second type is flavonoids-including apiin, apigenin, crisoeriol and luteolin."

Let's face it, those who work in medical laboratories and perhaps most doctors know how to pronounce these compounds and know what they are. My own computer spell check did not recognize these words either! But for basic information, all of these properties work to keep us healthy. That's the bottom line when talking about healthy cells and healthy body function. Like sage, parsley also provides a healthy helping of vitamins A and C. Other benefits include protein, vitamin E, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin,

vitamin B6, pantothenic acid, phosphorus, fiber and zinc, and a very good source of dietary fiber, vitamin K, folate, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, copper and manganese.

Parsley has weaved its way throughout human history, starting with the ancient Greeks who embraced it before the birth of Jesus Christ. This Hellenic culture touted its medical uses before it was taken into the kitchen. The website states, "The ancient Greeks held parsley to be sacred, using it to not only adorn victors of athletic contests, but also for decorating the tombs of the deceased. The practice of using parsley as a garnish actually has a long history that can be traced back to the civilization of the ancient Romans."

Some believe we need to credit Charlemagne for introducing parsley as an herb for consumption during the Middle ages.

Whoever coined the phrase, "The best things come in small packages may have been referring to these small, but mighty herbs!

### Sage Biscuits

**2 1/2 cups flour**  
**1 teaspoon sugar**  
**1 teaspoon dried sage**  
**1/2 teaspoon baking powder**  
**1/2 teaspoon baking soda**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**2 cloves garlic chopped finely**  
**3 tablespoons regular butter**  
**3/4 cup & 2 tablespoons of low-fat buttermilk**

Coat a baking sheet with non-stick spray and set aside. In a large bowl add flour, sugar, sage, baking powder, baking soda, salt, garlic and butter. Using a pastry blender cut the butter into the flour mixture until coarse crumbs form. Add the buttermilk and stir to form a soft dough. Place the dough on a floured surface and gently knead to form a ball. Roll out the dough until it is about three-fourths-inch thick. Cut into 12 round circles and place on the prepared baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 18 to 20 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown.

### Sage Pasta Sauce

**1/3 cup butter**  
**1/4 cup flour**  
**3 cups evaporated milk**  
**1 cup milk**  
**1 teaspoon freshly grated or ground nutmeg**  
**1 teaspoon dried sage**  
**1 teaspoon garlic, finely minced**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Remove the pot from the heat, add flour, and whisk together to form a roux. Return to heat and let the roux bubble for 1-2 minutes. Gradually add the evaporated milk, whisking constantly. Add the regular milk and bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, whisking occasionally, for 4-5 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened. Add the nutmeg, then sage. Let simmer for 2-3 minutes more. Remove from heat and add the salt and pepper. Serve immediately over your favorite hot cooked pasta.

### Pesto with Parsley

**2 cups fresh parsley**  
**1/3 cup olive oil**  
**2 cloves garlic**  
**1 teaspoon each basil & oregano**  
**1/2 cup hazelnuts**  
**1 pound cooked pasta**  
Mix together in blender. Toss the steaming hot fettuccine with 3 tablespoons butter. Add pesto and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

### Parsley Dumplings

**3 tablespoons shortening**  
**1 1/2 cups flour**  
**2 teaspoons baking powder**  
**3/4 teaspoon salt**  
**3/4 cup milk**  
**3 tablespoons snipped parsley**  
Cut shortening into flour, baking powder, salt and snipped parsley until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in milk. Drop dough by spoonfuls on hot meat and vegetables in a simmering stew pot. Be careful not to drop into liquid directly. Cook for about 10-12 minutes. Then cover pot and cook about 10 more minutes. Makes 8 to 10 dumplings.