

# Garlic

## History

Garlic originates in Central Asia prior to spreading to the Mediterranean region. It is mentioned in the Bible, found in Egyptian pyramids and Greek temples, and documented in books from Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India. In ancient medicine, garlic was thought to treat skin diseases, heartburn, weight management, colds, pain, and many other common ailments. Hippocrates prescribed garlic to his patients. Early soldiers, athletes, slaves, and laborers regularly ate garlic, trying to gain energy and strength from it.

Early physicians did not always care for garlic because of its strong and offensive odor. The noticeable smell comes from sulfur compounds found in the plant. These compounds function as antioxidants, which protect the body from illness and disease, specifically cancer and heart disease.

Today, garlic is grown all around the world. Although a vegetable, garlic is often used in small quantities like a spice. Garlic powder, a dried, ground variety of garlic, is found on many spice racks and is used in cooking.

Garlic does not grow well in a wet environment- it needs a warm and sunny environment. Garlic cloves should be planted in the fall. Shoots will form in the spring, and by summer, they will turn yellow and fall over- this indicates it is time to harvest. Sometimes the shoots flower in the spring- the blooms should be cut off as to increase the bulb size. The garlic should be dried for a few weeks and then stored in a cool, dark, dry place.



## Varieties

**Softneck garlic** are commonly seen braided, thanks to their flexible necks. This type does not do well in cooler climates, and is therefore recommended for a warmer growing region. They have a very strong and intense flavor.

**Stiffneck garlic** grows in one ring around the stem. While these are great for cold weather, they cannot be stored long. They have a lesser and mild flavor than the softnecks.

**Great-headed garlic** has a large bulb with four cloves. They are the most difficult to grow, therefore not seen often. It tastes similar to an onion.



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