



'Betty Boop' Rose

Rose Recipes

BY DEBORAH M. SCHNEIDER

THE GLAMOROUS LONG-STEMMED ROSE is a spectacular example of breeding for looks, rather like Paris Hilton. But if you want to eat a rose—and people have, for millennia—you need a sweet old-fashioned rose, or a spunky wild rose that's all spikes and attitude. Appearance doesn't matter and big hips are, at last, a good thing.



All parts of the rose except the thorns are edible. Most people are familiar with tart-sweet rose hips, delicious fresh or dried, made into tea, jam, syrups and sauces. A cup of rose hips is packed with vitamin E and contains as much antioxidant vitamin C as 60 oranges. An infusion of rose hips may be used as a skin tonic or immune system booster to keep colds and flu at bay.

Fragile rose petals have a delicate, ephemeral flavor and some definitely taste better than others. Generally speaking, the stronger the scent, the better the flavor. Large rose petals in every shade from blood red to palest lavender would be a colorful addition to a tossed green salad, scattered on a sandwich or pressed into sweet butter. Crystal-pink candied rose petals have topped *petit fours* and *gateaux* since medieval times; the best still come from France. Pickled rosebuds are surprisingly delicious, like capers. Perfumed rosewater is favored in the cuisines of the Middle East. It is extracted from lushly scented Damask rose petals (*rosa x damascena*) and used to flavor rice dishes, ice cream and desserts. The complex Moroccan spice blend known as *ras el hanout* contains dried rose buds. Rose essence flavors caramels, honey, sweetened wine and exquisite candies.

The rose also has a place in herbal remedies. Spiky rose leaves, made into teas, are mildly emetic. The young shoots and roots were harvested by native Americans and roasted or peeled and eaten raw. Chinese cooks may stir-fry the tender shoots and buds, while Mexican mothers add rose buds and leaves to homemade remedies for stomach ills and headaches. Attar of roses is used in aromatherapy to alleviate depression and stress, and rose-infused oil has mild antiseptic properties. Cool rose vinegar wrung out in a clean cloth and laid on the forehead relieves eye tension and headaches. In the Wiccan tradition, roses attract love: the best cure of all. ❖

ROSE CUISINE TIDBITS:

- Highly scented roses have the best flavor.
- Use only roses that have never been sprayed, located in beds well away from street dust and animals.
- Pick roses in the cool of the day and keep cool. Just before serving, rinse the roses quickly in cold water and drain thoroughly on paper towels. Carefully remove the petals. Tiny roses or rosebuds, with the spiky leaves carefully removed, may be eaten whole.
- If you plan to harvest rose hips, allow them to ripen fully on the plant. Freeze or dry in a dehydrator.
- Dried rose buds and leaves may be purchased in Mexican markets or from herbalists.



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Roses and Greens Salad with Rosebud Vinaigrette

ROSES AND GREENS SALAD WITH ROSEBUD VINAIGRETTE

Serves 6

In shades of rose-petal-pink amid peppery greens, this salad is as fresh as your garden on a summer morning. The vinaigrette has a haunting suggestion of essence of roses, while caramelized nuts and nut oils are both sweet and earthy.

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup white sugar
2 tablespoons water
3/4 cup walnut or pecan halves
1 cup fresh-picked large rose petals of various colors
1 bag washed baby spinach

1 bag washed baby arugula
Rosebud Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

1. Make the Rosebud Vinaigrette.
2. In a small, heavy pan, dissolve the sugar in the water over low heat. Add the nuts, increase heat and stir constantly until the syrup caramelizes and coats the nuts. Pour onto a sheet of waxed paper or a silicone mat to cool.
3. No more than an hour before serving, rinse the rose petals quickly in cold water and drain thoroughly. Wrap the rosebuds and petals in paper towels and keep in a cool place (do not refrigerate).
4. Combine the greens in a chilled salad bowl, preferably glass. Gently mix the rose petals into the greens. Scatter the nuts and rosebuds over the top of the salad. Pass the vinaigrette separately.



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Rose Petal Cupcakes



Rosebud Vinaigrette

- 1 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon dried rosebuds
- 1/2 cup good-quality nut oil, such as hazelnut or walnut oil
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 10 black peppercorns, crushed

1. In a small saucepan, combine vinegar and rosebuds. Bring almost to a boil, then remove from heat and steep for several hours. Strain and discard the rosebuds.
2. Measure out 1/2 cup of the vinegar and whisk in the nut oil, salt and pepper. Taste for seasoning. You may like to add a little more of the vinegar.

ROSE PETAL CUPCAKES

Call them angelic: little pure white cakes topped with swirls of creamy white frosting, crunchy pink crystallized roses and on top, a perfect rose petal. Inside the cupcake is a tangy surprise, a spoonful of rose hip preserves. This recipe could also be made as a layer cake, split and filled with the preserves and coated with a cloud of fluffy white frosting and heavenly pink rose petals around the base.

INGREDIENTS:

- Your favorite recipe for white cupcakes
- Rose hip preserves (recipe follows) or commercially made rose hip jam



8-ounce package cream cheese or neufchatel cheese
2 tablespoons milk
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
Yellow zest from one-half lemon, very finely chopped
1/2 cup powdered sugar, sifted
Candied rose petals (available from specialty gourmet stores)
Pink rose petals

1. Make the rose hip preserves and set aside to cool. Bake the cupcakes in muffin cups. Cool and carefully peel off the paper.
2. Soften the cream cheese. Place in the bowl of an electric mixer and whip on medium speed until lightened. Beat in the milk and butter until fluffy, then beat in the sifted powdered sugar a little at a time.
3. With an apple corer or half teaspoon measure, scoop some of the cake from the top of each cupcake going as deep as the center (reserve the bits of cake). Put a heaping teaspoon of rose hip preserves into the center of the cake and fill in the hole with the reserved cake.
4. Frost the tops of the cupcakes with clouds of cream cheese frosting, swirling it into high peaks. Sprinkle over a few bits of candied rose petal and set a perfect rose petal on the top just before serving.

Rose Hip Preserves

1 cup finely chopped rose hips
1/2 cup white sugar
Optional: a few drops of lemon juice

1. Combine the chopped rose hips and sugar in a non-reactive bowl, cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. Next day, in a small, heavy saucepan, cook the rose hips until thickened, stirring often; be careful the mixture does not scorch. Taste and add the lemon juice if necessary.

PERSIAN ICE CREAM

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup whipping cream
1 pint vanilla ice cream
1/4 teaspoon saffron threads (about 10 threads)
1 tablespoon hot water
1 teaspoon rosewater (available at Middle Eastern markets)
Optional: 1/4 cup shelled pistachios, roughly chopped
Rose petals for garnish

1. Pour the whipping cream into a flat, square container about 4 or 5 inches square so it is about a half-inch deep (a disposable plastic container works perfectly). Cover and freeze the cream overnight.
2. Freeze a small mixing bowl. Let the ice cream soften at room temperature for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, soak the saffron threads in the hot water in a small dish. When it is cool, add the rosewater.
3. Scoop the softened ice cream into the chilled mixing bowl. Stir in the saffron and rosewater until thoroughly combined (taste the ice cream and add more rosewater, by tiny drops, if you would like a more pronounced rose flavor.)
4. Fold in the optional pistachios, reserving a few for garnish. With a sharp knife, cut the frozen cream into half-inch chunks and stir in the cubes of frozen cream. Pack the ice cream into a small container, cover and freeze for at least one hour. Scatter a few chopped pistachios and fresh rose petals on each serving.

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