Oregano

Origanum spp.

NOTES:

• Marjoram is milder and sweeter than oregano.
• The best culinary marjoram is Origanum majorana.
• O. vulgare subsp. hirtum or O. onites are both commonly referred to as Greek Oregano (or Turkish Oregano in Turkey).
• Flavor varies so select varieties pleasant to your own sense of smell and palate.
• Za’atar, commonly used in Middle Eastern cooking, is either a blend of herbs or just one herb depending on the region of origin. O. maru or O. syriacum is one such za’atar with a spicy fragrance and flavor. This plant is also known as Syrian oregano, bible hyssop and Lebanese oregano.
• *The Herb Society of America’s Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs* edited by Katherine K. Schlosser can be found [here](#).
• *Oregano and Marjoram, An Herb Society of America Guide to the Genus Origanum* can be found [here](#).

Basil and Oregano Pesto

2 cups fresh basil leaves ¾ cup walnuts
3 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves ½ cup olive oil
2 cloves garlic Salt and pepper
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Combine the basil, oregano, garlic, cheese and walnuts in a food processor. With the machine running, slowly add the olive oil through the filler tube. Season with salt and pepper and process to desired consistency. Store tightly covered in the refrigerator for up to a week or freeze.

Joe Money, South Jersey Unit

*The Herb Society of America’s Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs*
Roasted Greek Chicken

5 pounds chicken quarters (leg and thigh together)  6 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano
⅓ cup minced garlic (about 3 heads)  2 tablespoons black pepper
⅓ cup lemon juice  2 teaspoons salt
⅛ cup olive oil  ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 375°F. Rinse chicken, pat dry and remove any visible fat. Place the quarters in a large pan.

In a large bowl, mix the minced garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, oregano, pepper and salt. Smear the garlic mixture evenly over the chicken, then arrange the chicken in a single layer. Bake about 1 ½ hours (until skin is well browned). After 45 minutes, baste the chicken with pan juices about every 15 minutes.

When done, transfer chicken to a warm platter. Skim the fat off of the juices and discard. Add ½ cup boiling water to the pan, stirring to loosen browned bits, while heating on a medium burner. Boil for a minute or so and transfer to a bowl or gravy server.

Sprinkle the chopped parsley over the chicken and serve with the sauce. Yields 8 servings.

Debra Seibert, Rocky Mountain Unit
Debra Seibert, Rocky Mountain Unit

Warm Chicken Salad Oreganato

2 fryer chickens, cut into serving pieces  ½ teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons salt, divided  2 cloves garlic, cut in several pieces
2 ½ pounds new red potatoes or other boiling type  ¼ cup lemon juice
½ cup olive oil  1 bunch watercress, chopped or ½ cup chopped nasturtium leaves if in season
4 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves and tender stems – mild O. xmajoricum or strong Greek type  2 hard-boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons fresh parsley leaves and tender stems  Nasturtium flowers to garnish, optional

Cook chicken with 1 teaspoon salt in a small amount of water until tender. Remove and drain, reserving broth. Cook potatoes in reserved broth with remaining teaspoon of salt. While potatoes are cooking, prepare dressing by blending the olive oil, herbs, pepper, garlic and lemon juice together in a food processor or blender. When potatoes are tender, drain and reserve broth. Add marinade along with cooked chicken and about ¼ cup broth. Taste for salt and adjust as needed. Serve warm or at room temperature with watercress or nasturtium leaves and hard-boiled eggs, garnished with nasturtium flowers.
Notes: Meat may be taken off bone to serve but avoid breaking up too small. Firmly pack the fresh herbs for measuring. It is not necessary to chop the oregano and parsley before blending.

Yield: 8-10 generous servings

Recipe © Madalene Hill and Gwen Barclay

*Oregano and Marjoram, An Herb Society of America Guide to the Genus Origanum*

Za’atar recipes vary from region to region and family to family. Below are two examples. The za’atar blends can be used to make many dishes. The blends can also be mixed with olive oil for bread dipping or spread on bread or pita and toasted. The blends can also be sprinkled on chicken, lamb or vegetables and roasted, or used on grilled fish.

**ZA’ATAR**

1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano  1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon sumac  1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon ground cumin  1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine chopped fresh oregano, sumac, ground cumin and sesame seeds. Stir in kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Can be made 2 weeks ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Silvena Rowe

Bon appetit, [www.bonappetit.com](http://www.bonappetit.com)

**ZA’ATAR RECIPE:** Middle Eastern Spice Mixture

¼ cup sumac  2 tablespoons marjoram
2 tablespoons thyme  2 tablespoons oregano
1 tablespoon roasted sesame seeds  1 teaspoon coarse salt

Grind the sesame seeds in a food processor or with a mortar and pestle. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.

Store za’atar in a cool, dark place in a plastic zip bag or in an airtight container. When stored properly, za’atar can be used from 3-6 months.

Saad Fayed

[www.mideastfood.about.com](http://www.mideastfood.about.com)

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