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# THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF OREGANO

Mar 28, 2011 | By Sarah Thompson

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Oregano is an herb of the mint family that is cultivated in the regions of the Mediterranean. Native to northern Europe, the herb has been used for medicinal and culinary purposes for thousands of years. Though there is no evidence to support using oregano for medical benefits, the herb is touted for perks like inhibiting the growth of fungus and providing your body with antioxidants. Oregano has many other touted benefits, which may make you add an extra sprinkle of the herb to your next meal.

## ANTIBACTERIAL AND ANTIFUNGAL BENEFITS

Because of oregano's essential oils and its ingredients thymol and carvacol, the herb can inhibit the growth of many kinds of bacteria and fungus, including some forms of bacteria that cause serious food-borne illnesses. In addition, the oil of oregano has been known to inhibit the growth of yeast, including *Candida albicans*, the yeast that can cause infections like vaginitis and oral thrush. Oregano also kills germs just as well as prescription antibiotics like penicillin, streptomycin and vancomycin, and can even protect you against the common cold.

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## VITAMIN AND NUTRIENT BOOST

Oregano is rich with vitamins and nutrients. For instance, 20 g of dried oregano provides 333.8 mg of potassium, .88 mg of zinc, 8.8 mg of iron, 2.2 g of protein, 315.2 mg of calcium, .92 mg of magnesium and 8.56 g of fiber, all vital nutrients your body needs to stay healthy and working at its full potential. You'll also get some energy; oregano hits you with 256 kj of energy. Oregano is rich in vitamins too; it houses 1.24 mg of vitamin B3 and .24 mg of B6. All of this is at a cost of 61.2 calories, 2.05 g of fat and 3 mg of sodium. While 20 g may be large amount of the herb, you can gain these nutrients and vitamins at amounts relative to how much you do eat.

## ANTIOXIDANT BENEFITS

Oregano is one of the culinary herbs rich in antioxidants, substances that protect your cells from damage. It also slows cell deterioration, thus slowing the process of aging. In fact, the herb may even be a better source of dietary antioxidants than many other food groups like fruits, cereals and veggies. At 20 g, Oregano has 10 mg of vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps form collagen and hold cells together for healthy teeth and gums. It also contains around 3.6 mg of vitamin E, which protects red blood cells and helps prevent against vitamin C and vitamin A destruction in your body.

## CONSIDERATIONS

There is no clinical evidence to support the use of oregano for any health benefits, advises Drugs.com. There is also no clinical evidence to support specific therapeutic doses of oregano, notes the site. However, because of its wide use it has been recognized as safe by the Federal Drug Administration. Because the safety and efficacy are unsubstantiated, avoid administering doses of oregano that are higher than that typically found in meals. Adverse reactions can include contact dermatitis when applied topically and eczematous rash when large amounts are ingested.

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