Chives are the smallest member of the onion (allium) family with bulbs so tiny you may not have noticed them. Ever wonder how they differ from scallions (green onions)? Both are alliums but chives are grown for their narrow green leaves and globes of lavender blossoms whereas scallions are grown for their white bulbs and green stalks. Chives are perennial. Scallions must be replanted each spring. Scallions are mild with more of a bite than delicately flavored chives. Scallions can be cooked but not chives—their flavor seems to disappear with cooking.

Choose chives with long slender leaves and fresh purple or pink flowers. Chives typically flower in cool weather so bunches of chives in the market may or may not have flowers included. Avoid bunches with yellowing leaves or flowers with brown on the tips of the petals. To store wrap the roots in a damp paper towel, then cover the base loosely with a plastic bag, and place in the refrigerator. Chives freeze well; just slice as desired and seal in an airtight bag.

You could try your hand at growing your own. Perfect for container gardening, chives thrive just about anywhere as long as they have well-drained soil and sunshine. Cut off a few leaves at a time or a whole bunch. They like to be cut back completely, within an inch or two of the base, about every 4 to 6 weeks.

Chives have such delicate leaves that they tend to get bruised and mashed when chopped using a typical rocking motion. Instead, align chives in a bunch on a cutting board, place the tip of a very sharp knife in front of the bunch, and pull the blade slowly across them. Snipping with scissors works well, too.

Use fresh or frozen chives like any other herb. Gently stir them in at the end of cooking or sprinkle on top as a garnish. Use chive blossom petals to sprinkle on salads for a similar flavor as the leaves only milder.

**Chive Rolls with Compound Butter**

*Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski.*

- 1½ c. warm whole milk (100° to 110°)
- 1 T. active dry yeast
- 2 T. sugar
- 2 t. sea salt
- 3 T. + ¼ c. sliced chives
- 1 T. minced fresh thyme leaves
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 7 T. butter, melted and cooled, divided
- 5-6 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 T. sesame oil
- 1 t. coarse sea salt

In the large bowl of a stand mixer, combine milk, yeast, and sugar. Let stand until yeast softens, 5 to 7 minutes. Add 2 t. salt, 3 T. chives, thyme, 2 eggs, and 5 T. butter and mix on low speed with dough hook until blended. Blend in 5 cups flour. Mix on medium until dough is smooth, stretchy, and pulling away from inside of bowl, about 10 minutes. Add additional flour so dough is only slightly tacky. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 1/4 hours.

Butter 20 muffin cups. Punch down dough. On a large, lightly floured work surface, roll out dough to an even 30- by 9-in. rectangle. Brush with 2 T. butter, sesame oil, and sprinkle ¼ c. of chives evenly over the surface. Starting with the long side, roll dough into a pinwheel log and cut into 18-20 disks. Place each disk into the buttered muffin cups. Loosely cover the pan and let dough rise at room temperature until puffy, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°. Beat remaining egg; gently brush over tops of rolls. Sprinkle with sea salt. Bake rolls until golden brown, about 20 minutes, turning pans halfway through baking. Let cool in pans on a rack for 5 minutes. Gently lift rolls from pans to cooling rack. Serve warm with compound butter.

**Compound Butter**

- 1# butter, room temperature
- 1/2 c. sliced chives
- 2 T. sour cream
- 2 T. lemon juice

Mix ingredients using paddle attachment. Place mixture on wax paper or plastic wrap. Fold one side of wrap over butter and form butter into a cylinder. Twist ends of wrap to seal it. Freeze to set up quickly or refrigerate overnight. To use, slice off the desired amount. Keeps in refrigerator for several days or in freezer for a month.

**Try Chive Rolls with Compound Butter** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square, and Riverwalk Market on May 6.

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**RECIPE for health**

**MAY 2015**

**featured food:**

**CHIVES**

**By Peggy Crum, MA, RD, Health4U Nutritionist**

Recipe demonstration on May 6 at 12:10pm.
- Join us in person at Brody Square Demo Kitchen.
- Sign-up at health4u@msu.edu.
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