

“I used to think peppermint was an ‘old person’ flavor when I was a kid,” a colleague recently remarked. “Now I’m hooked.”

Surely, we have all felt similarly toward some food as we were growing up, before our taste buds evolved. As children, with our freakishly high tolerance for sugary syrups, we typically opted for bubblegum over spearmint. Our only foray into Mint City was for the Girl Scout cookies, rather than hot tea.

If it’s been a few decades since you tried peppermint, I suggest you do it now. It’s delicious! And good for you.



A cross between water mint and spearmint, peppermint has shown promise to alleviate a number of health conditions, most notably irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). [According to a](#)

[New York Times health blog](#), “The peppermint plant has been used for centuries as an herbal remedy. It is thought to have the ability to relieve some gastrointestinal problems by blocking the flow of calcium into muscle cells in the intestines, which in turn reduces muscle contractions.”

In addition to IBS treatment, [WebMD points to a host of other medical discomforts](#) peppermint has shown to help, including morning sickness, nerve pain, inflammation, and toothaches. [The World’s Healthiest Foods website](#) described peppermint as an anti-microbial oil, blocking the growth of bacteria like salmonella, E. coli, and MRSA.

However, the University of Maryland Medical Center warns of possible interactions peppermint could impose on a compromised intestinal system:

“Do not take peppermint or drink peppermint tea if you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD: a condition where stomach acids back up into the esophagus), or hiatal hernia. Peppermint can relax the sphincter between the stomach and esophagus, allowing stomach acids to flow back into the esophagus ... By relaxing the sphincter, peppermint may actually worsen the symptoms of heartburn and indigestion.”

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As you enjoy those home-cooked meals this winter, take the digestive miracles of pure peppermint oil into account. Better yet, incorporate it into your holiday potluck:

Candy Cane Cookies



Makes: 30 cookies

- o 1 c butter or margarine
- o 1 c sifted powdered sugar

- o 1 egg
 - o ½ tsp vanilla
 - o ½ tsp peppermint oil
 - o 2 ½ c flour
 - o ½ tsp red food coloring
1. Preheat oven to 375°. Beat butter until soft. Add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add egg, vanilla, peppermint, and a dash of salt. Beat well.
 2. Add flour. Beat until well mixed.
 3. Divide dough into two parts. Add red food coloring to half. Chill dough for 30 min.
 4. Shape cookies by taking 1 tsp of each color dough and rolling into long round cords. Twist cords around each other and bend at top to make cane shape.
 5. Bake for 8-10 min.

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