



## Cilantro Crema

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time 5 / Cook Time / Serves 4 - 6**

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**mash:** to reduce food, like potatoes or bananas, to a soft, pulpy state by beating or pressure.

**tear:** to pull or rip apart a food, like basil leaves, into pieces instead of cutting with a knife; cutting breaks cell walls more, so herbs can discolor faster.

### Equipment

- Small bowl
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons

### Ingredients

Cilantro Crema

- 1 handful cilantro
- 1 lime
- 1/4 C Greek yogurt or sour cream **\*\*(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free yogurt/sour cream)\*\***
- 1/4 to 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

### Food Allergen Substitutions

Cilantro Crema

**Dairy:** Substitute dairy-free/nut-free yogurt or sour cream.

## Instructions

### Cilantro Crema

tear + combine

Have your kids tear up the leaves of **1 handful of cilantro** and add to a bowl with the juice of **1 lime**, **1/4 cup Greek yogurt**, **1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt**, and **1 pinch of black pepper**.

mash + enjoy!

Mash everything together until combined and creamy. Enjoy the Crema with your tacos!

## Featured Ingredient: Cilantro & Coriander!

Hi! I'm Cilantro!

"I'm the leaves of the coriander plant. Some people love me, and some people hate me. The ones that can't stand me think I taste like soap. The ones that love me, can't get enough of me in their Mexican or Thai food. My cousin, Coriander, is the fruit or seed of the plant, and we don't taste anything alike!"

### History & Etymology

Coriander plants are native to Southern Europe, Western Asia, and Northern Africa. Evidence of coriander seeds found in Israel is believed to be 6,000 to 8,000 years old.

Coriander seed is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Greek and Roman physicians praised its medicinal powers. It may have been one of the plants that grew in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Coriander is mentioned in the Ebers Papyrus, an Egyptian medical resource on herbs, written around 1550 BCE, and coriander seeds were found in Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamen's tomb. Since it does not grow wild in Egypt, ancient Egyptians must have cultivated the plants.

Coriander is one of the earliest cultivated plants in colonial North America, dating back to 1670. It soon appeared in Latin America, where the leaves, rather than the seed, became most popular and where it is called "cilantro."

In the United States, the coriander leaves are also called "cilantro," possibly due to their prevalence in Mexican food. The seeds are called "coriander" in American English.

Today, coriander plants are cultivated in temperate areas, such as the Mediterranean region of Southern Europe, Mexico, and California in the United States. Mexico exports the most cilantro worldwide, and California produces the most in the US.

The word "coriander" is Middle English from the Old French "coriandre," from the Latin "coriandrum," from the Greek "koriannon."

## Anatomy

*Coriandrum sativum* is a small, hollow-stemmed plant in the Apiaceae family. Other aromatic flowering members of the Apiaceae family include carrot, celery, cumin, dill, fennel, and parsley.

Coriander is fast-growing and prefers cool weather, so plant it in the spring or fall. You can harvest the leaves throughout the growing period when they are large enough to eat. When the air warms, a stalk will grow from the plant with pink or white flowers, producing fruit or seeds that are about .12 to .2 inches in diameter.

## Flavors & Culinary Uses

Coriander is a popular herb and spice used around the globe, including India, Mexico, Thailand, Vietnam, China, the Caribbean, and North Africa. All of these places use cilantro or coriander in their native cuisines. Coriander is also known as cilantro and Chinese parsley. In the United States, cilantro refers to the fresh leaves used as an herb and coriander to the seeds used as a spice. They are quite different in flavor and cannot be used as substitutes for one another. The roots are also eaten as a vegetable.

Cilantro leaves are one of those tastes that people either love or hate and descriptions of flavor and aroma vary widely. It is often described as pungent, with a lemon, pepper, and parsley-like flavor; however, it tastes like soap for some people. Dried cilantro leaves are subtler in flavor.

Whether you think cilantro leaves are delicious or taste like soap may have to do with genetics! Taste a leaf. Does it taste bright and lemony or soapy? If it tastes soapy, this is due to a difference in your body's olfactory-receptor genes and their reaction to the natural aldehyde chemicals in the leaves.

Cilantro can be a small addition to your salsa or the primary ingredient. You can add its distinctive flavor to guacamole, salads, coleslaw, and soups. Pesto can be made with cilantro leaves instead of basil. It is a garnish for Mexican and Thai dishes.

Coriander seed, whole or ground, tastes lemony and slightly peppery. It is sometimes compared to caraway. It goes well with other sweet and warm spices, such as cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, and nutmeg. Coriander is in Indian spices, like curry powder and garam masala. It is also found in chili powders and barbecue rubs.

## Nutrition

Coriander seeds are high in fiber! Its seeds are an excellent source of minerals, such as calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, and selenium.

Coriander seeds have essential volatile oils and fatty acids that are helpful for digestion.

Cilantro leaves are rich in vitamins A, C, and K! Our cells, eyes, and immune system need vitamin A to stay healthy. Vitamin C also benefits our immune system and is associated with wound healing. Vitamin K is necessary for blood clotting and bone building.

