

Cooking with Roses

Story of Scent Cell Phone Tour at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum

When using roses for culinary purposes, it is important to use roses that have never been sprayed with a pesticide. The smell and taste of each type of rose can vary, so it is suggested that you taste each cultivar.

Cut the roses you plan to use on a sunny morning. They should be opened fully, but not faded. Rinse them and shake the water from them. Hold the rose so that flower is facing down. Using a sharp pair of scissors, snip right above the flower head and the petals will fall freely. Many roses have a bitter white part at the base of each petal, which should be snipped away. This easily can be done when removing petals all at once.

For taste, rugosa (*R. rugosa*), apothecary rose (*R. gallica officinalis*) and damask rose (*R. damascene*) are recommended.

ROSE-SCENTED SUGAR

Scented sugars can be easily made. Placing rose petals in a pint jar of sugar transforms the sugar into a pleasing, fragrant baking ingredient. Other sweet aromatic flowers can be used as well, such as violet and lavender blooms. This recipe makes 1 pint of scented sugar.

- To prepare scented sugar, use a clean pint jar with a tight-fitting lid. Fill the jar about 1/3 full with sugar, and scatter a small handful of very fragrant rose petals over the sugar.
- Cover petals with sugar so the jar is 2/3 full; add another small handful of flower petals and cover with sugar to fill the jar, leaving about ½-inch headspace.
- Shake the jar and place on a shelf in a cool, dark place. The sugar will be ready to use in 2 to 3 weeks and will become more flavorful with age. As the sugar is used, add more plain sugar, which will take on the fragrance in the jar.

CANDIED OR CRYSTALLIZED ROSE PETALS

Have an assortment of different colored rose petals on hand. This recipe will coat up to 300 petals.
1 extra large egg white, at room temperature

Few drops water or rose water

About 1 cup superfine sugar

Rinsed and dried rose petals

A small paint brush or two

- Spread a sheet of waxed paper on a baking rack. In a small bowl, combine egg white with water or rose water and beat lightly with a fork or small whisk until the white just shows a few bubbles.
- Pour sugar into a shallow dish.
- Holding a petal in one hand, dip a paint brush into the egg white and gently paint the petal. Cover it completely, but not excessively. Hold the petal over the sugar dish and gently sprinkle sugar evenly all over both sides. Place the petal on the waxed paper to dry. Continue with the rest of the petals.
- Let petals dry completely; they should be free of moisture. This could take 12 to 36 hours. They should be crunchy-crisp when dried. Store in airtight containers.