

# Kudzu Recipes

## New Food Precaution

Since some people are allergic to common ordinary foods, such as milk products and eggs and nuts, it is only reasonable to suspect that some people will be allergic to some wild foods, such as kudzu. Whenever you are experimenting with a new food you have never eaten before, you should only consume a very **SMALL** quantity of it the first time you eat it to determine if you are allergic to it. If you are allergic to it, then you should avoid it in the future. However, if you do **NOT** develop any allergic reactions to a very small quantity of the food, then the next day you may eat a little more of it. It is **NOT** wise to eat too much of an unknown food that your body has never digested before. Always begin with a very meager portion and then gradually add just a little more each day to help prevent a serious allergic reaction to a new food.

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## Introduction to Kudzu

The three parts of the kudzu plant that are edible are the:

1. **Young leaves and vine tips,**
2. **Flower blossoms,** and
3. **Roots.**

Look for a kudzu plant that is **NOT** near a highway where it will be contaminated by dust and automobile exhaust fumes. Also avoid kudzu that has been sprayed with deadly chemicals to control the growth of the evasive plant.

Beware of insects, birds, spiders, and wild animals that frequently live in kudzu patches.

Talk loudly when approaching a kudzu patch to give the critters a chance to depart before you arrive. Bees also love the flower blossoms so do not provoke them.

Wear long pants, a long sleeve shirt, shoes, gloves, and a hat when harvesting kudzu.

**AVOID** poison ivy and poison oak, which resembles kudzu.

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## Kudzu Leaves and Vine Tips

In the early spring and throughout the growing season, harvest the very end of an established kudzu vine where the new growth is forming small shoots and young leaves (called runners). Only the young leaves

and vine tips are tender enough for human consumption. The older leaves and vines are too tough for the human digestive system.

Wash the kudzu thoroughly in cool water. Then soak the kudzu for 20 minutes in some clean cool water with a little salt added. Rinse and drain. Process immediately or store in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days in an airtight container.

Kudzu leaves have a soft fuzz on them. The fuzz is offensive to most people when eaten raw. The fuzz wilts quickly when cooked. Therefore, briefly dip the fresh leaves in some boiling water and then immediately dip in cold water. The fuzz will wilt, the appearance of the leaves will change, but the taste will not have changed.

### **Kudzu Leaf Recipes**

Kudzu leaves and tender vine tips may be boiled the same way you boil spinach.

Boiled kudzu leaves mix well with other cooked greens including spinach and young poke sallet leaves. (Note: Young poke sallet leaves must be boiled three times in clean water prior to eating.)

Boiled kudzu leaves blend well with cooked rice and many cooked wild meats.

Fresh kudzu leaves may be processed in a pressure cooker following a spinach canning recipe, and stored in canning jars for future consumption.

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### **Kudzu Flower Blossoms**

Kudzu blooms from late July through September, depending on the climate and location. The most common species in the United States has magenta and reddish purple flowers that resemble a wisteria. A less common variety has white blossoms (illustrated in above picture).

Kudzu flowers smell like ripe grapes. However, the blossoms do NOT taste like grapes. They have a unique flavor that is just a little bit sweet.

The flowers are sometimes hidden behind the green leaves. Pick the flowers when they are dry (not covered with the morning dew or rain). You may just pick the flowers, but it is usually easier to cut the entire flower raceme of blossoms and then remove the individual flowers later. Wash the flowers gently but thoroughly in cool water and then drain. They will remain fresh for one day. Or freeze them for future consumption.

#### **Kudzu Flower Salad**

Kudzu flowers may be eaten plain or as part of a salad or other dish.

#### **Kudzu Flower Tea**

Pour a cup of boiling water over 1/4 cup fresh flowers and let it steep for 4 or 5 minutes. Strain and drink.

#### **Kudzu Flower Wine**

4 quarts water	6 quarts fresh kudzu blossoms	yeast
4 cups sugar	1 gallon jug	1 balloon

Pick kudzu blossoms when they are dry (mid-day). Wash in pan of water containing 1/2 cup vinegar to kill any bugs. Pour 2.5 quarts of boiling water over the blossoms and stir. Put a lid on the container and stir twice a day for four days.

Strain the liquid through a clean cloth. Press the blossoms to get all the liquid from them. Add four cups sugar. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm water. Pour the dissolved yeast into the liquid. Stir well. Transfer to a one-gallon jug. Add enough water to bring the liquid within 2 inches below the neck of the jug. Attach the balloon and secure it with twine or a strong rubber band. Place jug in a cool dark place that is between 60° F to 75° F.

Every other day gently loosen the balloon and allow the gas to escape and then replace the balloon firmly on the neck of the jug. In approximately 6 weeks the balloon will stop expanding and the wine is done. Strain the wine through a clean cloth and transfer it to airtight bottles. Allow it to sit for an additional two to twelve months before drinking.

## Kudzu Roots

Kudzu roots are normally harvested in the winter months. Only a kudzu root that was started from a seedling will produce a root that contains a good quantity and quality of starch. Good kudzu starch roots may weigh up to 200 pounds and be as long as 8 feet. The vast majority of kudzu roots are formed when an established vine touches the ground. Most of the roots growing near the surface are NOT high quality. Most kudzu roots look like tree roots and are NOT edible.

### Kudzu Root Sucker

In a survival situation, any kudzu root between 1/2 to 3/4 inches in diameter can be washed, cut at both ends to a length of about 6 inches, and then all the exterior bark should be scrapped off. The raw root can then be sucked on to gradually remove all its internal nutrients. Only suck the nutrients out of the root. The root is wood. Wood is NOT digestible. Do NOT eat the wood.

### Kudzu Root Tea

The thin, tender young roots can be dug up, washed, diced, boiled, and strained to make a tea.

## Nutritional Information

Fresh Kudzu Leaves  
8 Ounces (net weight)

Category	Amount	% RDV
Calories	258	12 %
Total Fat	0.1 g	0.2 %
Dietary Fiber	10.3 g	45.7 %
Protein	2.1 g	4.8 %

Calcium	34.3 mg	3.4 %
Phosphorous	41.1 mg	4.3 %
Iron	1.4 mg	7 %