

## Herbs and condiments...

### Language

English

The Southern regions of Europe have a great faunal and botanical biodiversity, and the populations have learned, many centuries ago, how to collect and grow aromatic and seasoning plants and to use them in home cooking.

In Portugal close to the houses and the kitchens there are fruit plants, vegetable gardens and gardens which are useful, aromatic and embellish the spaces.

In convents, monasteries and palaces gardening traditions were practiced since ancient times using and recreating water environments, orchards and gardens, small paradises of freshness, aromas and flavours, where the herbs appear very often.

These “knowings and doings” based on empirical knowledge, of growing and maintenance, fertilization and plants potting, are still alive today in many places of the country, and these cultures are even being revived.

The herbs are used to intensify the flavours of the food and are essential components of the Mediterranean cuisine. They are used fresh, unlike the spices which are used after being dried.

The most used plants to season the dishes and the infusions in Portugal are among others, the coriander, pennyroyal, mint “hortelã da ribeira” (*perslia servina*), oregano, parsley, lemon verbena, thyme, Melissa, ...

The wild volunteer plants are also looked for close to brooks and in silvo-pastoral environments, such as “catacuzes”, chard, watercress, wild radish, purslane, asparagus, mushrooms, truffles, ...

In popular medicine plants and herbs are used namely in microbial prevention and to make digestion easier.