



# Beauty in Bloom

Edible flowers are everywhere, adding beauty and sweetness to the table

By **Rona Berg**  
Photography: **Robin Jolin**  
Stylist: **Olya Breton**

I love spring flowers, and I notice them wherever I go. They're lovely to look at, soft to the touch, and add an intoxicating scent to the air. But lately, I've been noticing flowers where I'm not so used to seeing them: in food, in drinks and at the spa. Brilliant blooms were sprinkled on top of a savory dish at a James Beard Foundation dinner in New York City and they brightened cocktails at Las Alcobas Spa and Meadowood Napa Valley.

Those sightings inspired me to pick up a few flats at my local farmers market in Manhattan and repot them in my window box, in place of the herbs that usually grow there. Edible flowers add a delicate flavor and a lovely spot of color to a dish, and some are rich in antioxidant vitamins. Rose petals serve up vitamin E and lavender is loaded with vitamin A. Herb blossoms, like chive and viola, are a great source of minerals. And oh, boy, they sure are pretty!



“Some of my favorite edible flowers include dianthus, lavender, gem marigolds, borage, nasturtium, bachelor buttons, calendula, nigella and pea flowers,” says Scott Beattie, beverage director for Estate Events at Meadowood Napa Valley, and author of *Artisanal Cocktails: Drinks Inspired by the Seasons from the Bar at Cyrus*. “It’s important to make sure that the flower(s) that you’re using make sense for the particular drink, i.e. the colors are complementary or the flower mirrors another ingredient such as a basil flower for a basil gimlet,” Beattie continues. “Herb blossoms are some of my favorite edible flowers to use because they add an extra aromatic element and I know that I’m always cutting off herb flowers anyways in my own garden to stop them from going to seed. So in this sense they’re great as a by-product that I might be throwing out otherwise.”

Here are some easy recipes for eating and drinking with flowers.

## POPSICLE POWER

This is how our stylist, Olya Breton, created the beautiful popsicles, photographed here.

1. Buy popsicle molds. (You can find these on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))
2. Pour organic unfiltered apple juice halfway into the molds. Add edible flowers. Cover the molds and put them in the freezer.
3. After the juice freezes, add more juice and flowers and let it freeze again.
4. If you don't care about the flowers being evenly distributed, you can do it in one go (they will be frozen on the bottom of the popsicle in this case) or if you like them to be distributed even better, freeze in three stages.

## A Short List of Edible Flowers

### Borage

Star-shaped and slightly fuzzy, these blue flowers taste subtly of cucumber.

### Calendula

These brilliant gold blossoms have a peppery bite.

### Chamomile

Often used in tea, these small, daisy-like flowers have a mild sweetness.

### Cherry

Japanese cherry blossoms are the preferred variety for eating as they are tender.

### Dandelion

These bright yellow flower heads are sweet and crunchy.

### Elderflower

Tiny individual star-shaped blossoms form large creamy-white umbels.

### Fuchsia

Tangy and frilly, these make a beautiful display.

### Hibiscus

Tart and brightly colored, these are often used dried.

### Lavender

The highly aromatic buds and flowers are used in sweet and savory preparations. Lavender's fragrant scent has been used for centuries to calm and soothe, and is said to cure a host of other ills.

### Nasturtium

Bold colors allude to potent peppery flavors.

### Rose

The velvety petals are sweetly perfumed, especially the darker varieties.

### Violet

This delicate flower has long been a popular flavoring in candies and baked goods.



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## Lavender Shortbread Cookies By Sara Ghedina



Sara Ghedina



### MAKES 25 COOKIES

The buttery richness of this classic shortbread is the perfect showcase for the delicately spicy fragrance and flavor of dried lavender. If you can find fresh lavender, substitute a tablespoon of the chopped flowers. This is the ideal cookie to serve with tea; a dollop of lemon curd would be a wonderful accompaniment, too.

### SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Food Processor  
Electric hand mixer  
Cookie cutters in desired shapes  
Pastry brush (optional)  
Sanding sugar, colored or plain (optional)

### INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon dried lavender, pesticide-free  
1 stick plus 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt  
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
3 tablespoons whole milk (optional)  
1/2 cup sanding sugar (optional)

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### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the sugar and lavender in a food processor and pulse to achieve a fine texture.
3. In a large bowl, combine the lavender sugar, butter and salt. Use the electric hand mixer to cream the ingredients until light and fluffy.
4. Gradually add the flour, mixing until the dough comes together. If it's too crumbly, lightly wet your hands with water and knead the dough in the bowl until the flour is completely absorbed and the dough is smooth.
5. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface. With a rolling pin, roll out the dough to a 1/2-inch thickness.
6. Use a cookie cutter to cut out the dough. Transfer the cookies to the parchment-lined baking sheet.
7. If desired, use the pastry brush to lightly coat each cookie with milk, then sprinkle with sanding sugar.
8. Transfer cookies to the oven and bake for approximately 25 minutes, rotating the pan once, until the cookies are golden brown.
9. The cookies will be very soft when you remove them from the oven, but will set once cool. Allow them to cool completely on the baking sheet before transferring them to a plate.