



## CHICKWEED *STELLARIA MEDIA*

This very delicate yet sprawling vigorous winter annual plant from Europe has tiny white ‘starlike’ flowers. It is a prolific seeder and they are seeds which are highly viable. Flowers and seeds occur at the same time.

Chickweed has a number of uses. It is a favourite green with ‘chooks’, hence the common name. It is particularly useful for its cooling, anti-inflammatory soothing properties for eczema, cuts, burns, bruises and insect stings, and psoriasis. It can be used as a poultice or as an ointment.

Personally, I found chickweed was the only thing to bring relief from my dog’s severe itching after she had been walking in ‘wandering jew’ when it was in flower in summer. I used to keep a bundle of dried chickweed from the winter, then boil it and make a chickweed bath for her to stand in. After a few minutes the itching ceased.

I have also used chickweed in a green soup and the tips in salad. The Japanese like to use it in a special springtime festival. Because there are saponins in the leaves, it is better not to have large quantities of chickweed internally. It is also useful as a green manure if you don’t mind it reappearing the next year.



## RECIPES

### CHICKWEED PIE

By William Woys Weaver

This heirloom recipe for Chickweed Pie, a Pennsylvania Dutch country version of quiche, makes a delicious lunch or light supper dish.

- One 10-inch pie crust
- 3 cups chopped chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
- 1 cup diced slab bacon
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 3 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line a 10-inch pie dish with crust and make a raised border around the rim to prevent filling from overflowing during baking.

2. To prepare chickweed, remove all leaves, twigs and root ends, reserving only the greenest, leafiest parts. Rinse thoroughly in a colander and gently dry with paper towels. Bunch the chickweed together into a ball and chop it with a sharp knife until reduced to a confetti texture. Measure, then put chickweed in a large bowl.

3. Fry diced bacon in a skillet until it begins to brown, then add onion. Cook about 3 minutes, or until onion wilts. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon and onions to bowl with chickweed. Discard drippings from pan.

4. In a separate bowl, beat eggs until lemon coloured, then add sour cream, flour and nutmeg. Add egg mixture to chickweed, onions and bacon. Spread filling evenly in the pie shell and pat down firmly with a spoon. Bake 45 to 50 minutes, or until pie has set in center and top looks golden.

*Adapted from Pennsylvania Dutch Country Cooking by William Woys Weaver (Abbeville Press, 1993).*

*Read more: <http://www.motherearthliving.com/cooking-methods/wild-edible-greens-chickweed-pie.aspx#ixzz33KsiqA1n>*