

August's Spice is: Za'atar

Za'atar is a Middle Eastern herb in the thyme, marjoram, oregano family. *Thymbra spicata* often called wild thyme in English. It grows wild in the Syrian Lebanese mountains. The flavor is similar to other thyme species and has longer slimmer leaves than the thyme we know.

Za'atar is also a Middle Eastern condiment made from a mixture of local herbs mainly thyme, oregano, basil, sesame seed, sumac and salt. Each region has its own slight variation with some using more sesame seed, others more sumac and some adding marjoram.

Za'atar herb blend is used to season chicken, and fish, sprinkled over hummus, salads and yougurts. It is also mixed with olive oil and served with flat breads.

Source: O'Connell, John, *The Book of Spice: From Anise to Zedoary* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2016), 253.