

Cooking With Herbs and Spices

What Spices Go With What Foods?

The following flavor and food combinations, adapted from information provided by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov), have the added benefit of making meat, poultry, fish and vegetables tasty without adding salt. For meat, poultry and fish, try one or more of these combinations:

If you are cooking:	Try flavoring it with:
Beef:	Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme
Lamb	Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint
Pork	Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano
Veal	Bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano
Chicken	Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
Fish	Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, marjoram, paprika, pepper
Carrots	Cinnamon, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
Corn	Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley
Green Beans	Dill, curry powder, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme
Greens	Onion, pepper
Potatoes	Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, sage
Summer Squash	Cloves, curry powder, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
Winter Squash	Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, onion
Tomatoes	Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper
Cucumbers	chives, dill, garlic, vinegar
Peas	green pepper, mint, fresh mushrooms, onion, parsley
Rice	chives, green pepper, onion, paprika, parsley

How To Use Spices and Herbs

- Use no more than 1/4 teaspoon of dried spice (3/4 of fresh) per pound of meat
- Add ground spices to food about 15 minutes before the end of cooking time
- Add whole spices to food a least one hour before the end of cooking time
- Crush dried herbs before adding to foods

How Much To Add

The amount to add varies with the type of spice or herb, type of recipe and personal preference. If possible, start with a tested recipe from a reliable source. If you're creating your own recipe, begin with trying one or two spices or herbs.

Substituting Equivalent Amounts of Different Forms. What if your recipe calls for fresh herbs and all you have are dried herbs? Here are some approximate amounts of different forms of herbs equivalent to each other:

- 1 tablespoon finely cut fresh herbs
- 1 teaspoon dried leafy herbs
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground dried herbs

General Rules for Amounts. If you don't know how much of a spice or herb to use, follow these recommendations from SpiceAdvice® at <http://spiceadvice.com> - remember to use more herbs if using a leafy or fresh form: Begin with 1/4 teaspoon of most ground spices or ground dried herbs for these amounts and adjust as needed:

- 1 pound of meat;
- 1 pint (2 cups of soup or sauce).
- Start with 1/8 teaspoon for cayenne pepper and garlic powder; adjust as needed.
- Red pepper intensifies in flavor during cooking; add in small increments.

When To Add

The type of spice or herb and the type of food for which it is used influence the time to add it during food preparation

As a general rule, add fresh herbs near the end of the cooking time as prolonged heating can cause flavor and aroma losses. For uncooked foods, add spices and herbs several hours before serving to allow flavors to blend.
Note: Remove whole spices and bay leaves at the end of cooking; secure them in a tea ball for easy removal.

Storing Herbs and Spices

Air, light, moisture and heat speed flavor and color loss of herbs and spices. Follow these guidelines to help preserve their quality:

- Store in a tightly covered container.
- Store in a dark place away from sunlight.
- Store away from moisture and prevent moisture from entering the container during use:
- Avoid storing near a dishwasher or sink. Remove from container with a dry spoon.
- Avoid sprinkling directly from container into a steaming pot to prevent steam moisture from entering the container.
- **DO NOT** store above the stove, dishwasher, microwave or refrigerator, or near a sink or heating vent.
- **DO** store inside a cupboard or drawer.
- For open spice rack storage, choose a site away from heat, light and moisture.
- Keep these points in mind regarding refrigerator/freezer storage:
- Refrigerate paprika, chili powder and red pepper for best color retention, especially in summer or hotter climates.
- Herbs and spices can get wet if condensation forms when a cold container from your refrigerator or freezer is left open in a humid kitchen.
- How Long To Keep Spices And Herbs

Tips

Follow these tips to help you use spices and herbs when flavor and quality are best:

- As a general rule, keep:
 - 1 year for herbs or ground spices;
 - 2 years for whole spices.
- Buy a smaller container until you determine how fast you'll use a particular herb or spice.
- To test freshness:
 - If it smells strong and flavorful, it's probably still potent.
 - To smell whole spices, such as peppercorns and cinnamon sticks, crush or break them to release their aroma.
 - Initial quality will influence shelf life. Label date of purchase on container with a permanent marking pen.

Recipes

No #1 Spice Blend

- 4 Tablespoons Mustard Powder
- 1 Tablespoon Garlic Powder
- 4 Tablespoons Onion Powder
- 2 Tablespoons White Pepper
- 1 Tablespoon Thyme
- 1 Tablespoon Basil
- 4 Tablespoons Paprika

Combine spices together and blend well. Put a small amount of uncooked rice in the bottom of each shaker to allow spice to blend and flow easily. Use funnel and fill shakers with spice blend. For longer storage, cover shaker holes with tape and label. Makes about one cup.

Garden Blend

- 1 Tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground basil
- 1 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- dash of cayenne
- 1 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon ground parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg