

Spice (and Herb) Up Your Life!

Spices and herbs have been used in foods for centuries. Archeologists estimate that by 50,000 B.C.E., primitive man had discovered that parts of certain aromatic plants help make food taste better, according to the American Spice Trade Association (ASTA).

Spices were once so costly only the wealthy could afford them. In 11th Century Europe, many towns paid their taxes and rents in pepper. The reason for Columbus' voyage in 1492 was to seek a more direct passage to the rich spices of the Orient.

❑ **Herbs** are leaves of low-growing shrubs. Examples are parsley, chives, marjoram, thyme, basil, caraway, dill, oregano, rosemary, savory, sage and celery leaves. These can be used fresh or dried. Dried forms may be whole, crushed, or ground.

❑ **Spices** come from the bark (cinnamon), root (ginger, onion, garlic), buds (cloves, saffron), seeds (yellow mustard, poppy, sesame), berry (black pepper), or the fruit (allspice, paprika) of tropical plants and trees.

❑ Many dehydrated vegetable seasonings are available. These include onion, garlic, chives, pepper flakes, and shallots.

❑ Seasoning blends are mixtures of spices and herbs. Common seasoning blends include Cajun, Montreal steak spice, taco seasoning, seasoned salt, lemon pepper blend, curry blends, and so on... .

One of the best things about using herbs and spices in your dishes is that they allow you to add incredible flavour to your dishes without adding salt, fat or excess calories!

Certain areas of the world are known for using various herbs and spices. In Provence, France, they flavour their dishes with herbes de provence (savory, fennel, basil, thyme). In both Mexican and Asian cuisine, cilantro is a popular flavour, whereas around the Mediterranean Sea, common flavours include garlic, basil, oregano, bay leaves and mint.

Culinary genius is at hand when you use herbs and spices, as their use is limitless! Alone or blended, herbs and spices are very appealing to our senses of taste, smell and sight. Experimenting with combinations of herbs and spices can enhance the flavour and spiciness of many basic dishes in a healthy way. Ever tried chili-infused chocolate?

Take an ordinary chicken and rice dish. Add some garlic, basil, oregano and thyme to the dish, and you get an Italian or Greek-type flavour, whereas if you add a combination of curry spices to chicken and rice, you get a Middle Eastern or South Asian flare!

Herbs and spices can also add visual interest to any dish. Many a restaurant will garnish your plate with a piece of parsley – not only does it look pretty... it freshens your breath too! Herbs and spices appear in many convenience foods, atop breads and baked goods, in herbal teas, and as part of menu items in restaurants. So go ahead... Spice up your life!



SEASONING CATEGORIES

HERBS	SPICES	MUSTARD	VINEGARS	SEASONING BLENDS
Herbs are leaves of plants. They can be used <u>fresh</u> or <u>dried</u> . Dried herbs are 2-4 times stronger than fresh.	Spices are dried <u>roots</u> , <u>stems</u> , and <u>seeds</u> . Some people are confused as to whether spices are spicy or hot. Peppers and ginger are <u>hot</u> .	Mustard is made of ground mustard seeds. It is pungent.	Vinegars are acidic liquids made from fermented alcohol or wine and vary in strength and color. Herbed vinegar is made by adding herbs to any vinegar.	These are mixtures of dried spices and herbs, usually powdered.
Basil Bay Leaf Rosemary Mint Oregano Sage Tarragon	Ginger Mace Cinnamon Nutmeg Cloves	Dijon Yellow	White Red Wine Tarragon Cider	Chili Powder Curry
<p align="center">SOURCE LOCATION OF SOME SPICES:</p> <p>NATIVE TO THE ASIAN AREA (some imported B.C.) cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, tumeric, black pepper, clove, mace, nutmeg, tarragon</p> <p>NATIVE TO THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AREA (some used B.C.) basil, marjoram, oregano, mint, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme, anise, caraway, coriander, cumin, dill, parsley, fennel, bay, caper, fenugreek, garlic, mustard, poppy, sesame, saffron</p> <p>NATIVE TO THE NEW WORLD (imported 15th-16th centuries) allspice, red pepper, vanilla</p>				
<p align="center">HINTS AND RULES FOR USING HERBS AND SPICES</p> <p><u>TEST</u>: To determine if a spice is fresh enough, rub the spice between the palms and smell. If it has no smell then replace that spice.</p> <p>1/4 tsp. per 4 servings</p> <p>Cooking increases the strength of flavor. Add last hour of cooking.</p> <p>With cold dishes it takes longer to blend in flavors. Make at least 1 hour ahead.</p> <p>Store in a cool, dry, dark place.</p> <p>Flavor doesn't get stronger with age.</p>				

SPICES BY CUISINE



These spice combinations will have you whipping up dishes from all over the world! Use this chart as a guide to give your meals those traditional ethnic flavors you love.

MEXICAN

CORIANDE
CUMIN
OREGANO
GARLIC
POWDER
CINNAMON
CHILI
POWDER

CARIBBEAN

ALLSPICE
NUTMEG
GARLIC
POWDER
CLOVES
CINNAMON
GINGER

FRENCH

NUTMEG
THYME
GARLIC
POWDER
ROSEMARY
OREGANO
HERBES DE
PROVENCE

NORTH AFRICAN

CARDAMOM
CINNAMON
CUMIN
PAPRIKA
TURMERIC
GINGER
RAS EL
HANOUT

CAJUN

CAYENNE
PEPPER
OREGANO
PAPRIKA
THYME
ROSEMARY
BAY LEAVES
CAJUN
SEASONING

THAI

BASIL
CUMIN
GARLIC
GINGER
TURMERIC
CARDAMOM
CURRY
POWDER

MEDITERRANEAN

OREGANO
ROSEMARY
THYME
BAY LEAVES
CARDAMOM

CINNAMON
CLOVES
CORIANDER
BASIL
GINGER

INDIAN

BAY LEAVES
CARDAMOM
CAYENNE
PEPPER
CINNAMON
CORIANDER
CUMIN

GINGER
NUTMEG
PAPRIKA
TURMERIC
GARAM
MASALA
CURRY
POWDER

MIDDLE EASTERN

BAY LEAVES
CARDAMOM
CINNAMON
CLOVES
CUMIN

GINGER
CORIANDER
OREGANO
ZA'ATAR
GARLIC
POWDER

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