



Garden Notes for Amateur Gardeners

A cooperative project of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program and Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Tips to Use Spices & Herbs

- ❖ **Fresh Herbs:** Add fresh herbs near the end of the cooking time or before serving to keep the aroma and flavor. For Fresh Delicate herbs: Add a minute or two before the end of cooking and/or sprinkle before food is served. Delicate herbs include basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, marjoram and mint.
- ❖ **Fresh Grinding of spices:** Such as ground pepper and nutmeg provides more flavor than buying them already grinded.
- ❖ **Less Delicate Herbs:** Add about the last 20 minutes of cooking. Like dill seeds, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, and thyme.
- ❖ **Dried Herbs:** Add these herbs during cooking. Whole dried herbs release the flavor slower than the ground herbs. Bay leaves and allspice are ideal for soups and stews. It is best for shorter cooking and/or added at the end of the cooking.

Adapted from University of Nebraska
Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.
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Spices & Herbs

Spices and herbs have been used in foods for centuries. Parts of certain aromatic plants help make food taste better. Spices come from different parts of the world and people use them in different ways. Both spices and herbs can help increase the flavor while cutting back on fat, sugar and salt. Most herbs and spices can be grown in your own backyard, and do not require too much space.

Herbs and spices are plants and they can be used either fresh or dried.

Herbs are leaves from a shrub. Examples include parsley, thyme, marjoram, caraway, dill, oregano, rosemary, savory, sage and celery leaves.

Spices can be obtained from the bark, roots, bud, seed, or fruit of a plant. Cinnamon is a bark, while ginger, garlic, and onion are roots. Yellow mustard, poppy, and sesame are seeds. Allspice and paprika are fruits of a tropical plant.



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Have a Fascinating Flavor and Aroma
with Herbs from Your Garden
**REDUCE FAT, SUGAR AND SALT USING
SPICES AND HERBS**

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REDUCE FAT, SUGAR AND SALT USING SPICES AND HERBS

No More Sugar. Reduce or eliminate sugar by using sweet-tasting spices such as Allspice, Anise, Cardamom, Cinnamon, Cloves, Ginger, Mace, and Nutmeg.

Say No to Salt. Use spices that are strong to replace the taste of salt. For example, add black pepper, ginger, coriander, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, dill seeds, or basil. Do not add salt when cooking pasta. Instead, add basil, oregano, and parsley. Use fresh garlic or powdered garlic and onion without salt.

Substitute Flavor for Fat. Remove the extra fat from chicken, meat, soup and other fried food. Removing a tablespoon of fat removes about 10 grams of fat and 100 calories. Add herbs to your dishes to increase the flavor.

STORING SPICES AND HERBS

“Spice a dish with love and it pleases every palate.” Plautus

Spices and herbs add flavor and aroma to your dishes. It is important to maintain their quality and prevent flavor and color loss.

- Avoid moisture, light, heat, and air.
- Store using tightly covered containers.
- Store in dark places away from sunlight; like inside cupboard or drawer.
- Avoid storing above dishwasher, microwave, stove or refrigerator.
- Use a dry spoon to measure spices and herbs from a container
- Refrigerate paprika, chili powder and red

How Long Can You Keep Spices and Herbs?

Check spices and herbs and determine when it is time to toss them. A general rule is to keep ground spices up to 1 year and whole spices up to 2 years.

- Buy small containers until you learn how fast you will be using the spice or herb.
- Smell the spice or herb. If the smell is strong and flavorful, it is still good.
- Check a whole spice (clove, cinnamon stick) by breaking crushing or scraping before smelling it.
- Avoid smelling pepper or chili powder as they can irritate your nose.
- Label the date you purchase the spice or herb.



Add Flavor and Aroma to Your Vegetables

Carrots: Try cinnamon, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary

Corn: Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley

Green Beans: Dill, curry powder, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme

Greens: Onion and 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