



Homemade Method™

Week 13:How to Cook Using Fresh Herbs & Spices

Overview

Spices & herbs have powerful nutritional and health benefits. The most important benefit for those seeking to adopt a healthy eating lifestyle and lose weight is that the flavors, aromas and colors created by herbs & spices is what make your home cooking delicious - without the need for too much added fat, sugar or salt.

The BEST thing about herbs & spices is you can use them to create infinite varied and tasty meals - USING THE COOKING SKILLS YOU HAVE ALREADY LEARNT! (today we show you how!)

You will learn how to make dry rubs & wet marinades to create 4 distinct world flavors: Chinese, Mexican, Italian & Indian, and how to use these in your cooking.

You will also learn how to properly buy, store and use fresh herbs, dried herbs and spices in your cooking. And of course you will learn the all important 'how much to use?' So start your love affair with real food by unlocking the world of flavors that herbs & spices provide.

Read on!

Make these Dry Rubs & Wet Marinades Once... Eat Tasty and Varied Meals for Weeks!

Ok, so here we're going to show you how to use the cooking skills - you already have - to cook a variety of delicious, tasty, fast meals! **Instructions below.**

	Chinese	Mexican	Italian	Indian
40+ serves	Your dry rub: (Keep this in a jar for months to use anytime)			
1 Tbs	Garlic powder	Crushed red pepper	Dried oregano	Curry powder
1 Tbs	Onion powder	Dried oregano	Dried thyme	Turmeric
1 Tbs	Ginger powder	Paprika powder	Dried marjoram	Ginger powder
1 Tbs	Five spice powder	Chipotle powder	Dried rosemary	Cumin powder
<i>*Add salt to taste - we recommend about 1 Tbs*</i>				
10-12 serves	Take 1 Tbs of your dry rub & add these liquids to make it a wet rub, marinade or dressing: (Keeps fresh for 5 days)			
1 cup	Soy sauce	Lime juice	Tomato paste (4 Tbs)	Coconut cream or milk
½ cup	Sesame oil	Olive oil	Olive oil	Ghee or olive oil
Per serve	Add fresh garnishes right before eating:			
1 Tbs or handful	Green onions	Cilantro	Torn Basil, Parsley	Cilantro
½ tsp	Crushed ginger	Chopped jalapenos	Crushed garlic	Crushed ginger

INSTRUCTIONS

What you will need:

- Mason jars with lids & labels (optional)
- All of the ingredients listed in the table for each World Flavor you want to make.

Instructions for Dry Rubs:

1. Each column shows the flavors for creating a different world flavor: Chinese, Mexican, Italian or Indian.
2. Now prepare the dry rub(s) of your choice. Just add 1 Tablespoon of each ingredient under that column. For example, to create your Chinese dry rub, add 1 Tbs of garlic powder, 1 Tbs of onion powder, 1 Tbs of Ginger powder, 1 Tbs of Five Spice powder. This is enough for about 40+ serves! (1 serve is about ¼-½ teaspoon of dry rub).
3. Label your jar with the World Flavor, the ingredients and the date. This will keep fresh when stored in a cool, dark place for several months.
4. We recommend you make all 4 World Flavors so you have many choices on hand!

Instructions for Wet Rubs or Marinades:

1. Take about 1 Tbs of your dry rub mixture and add it to a new jar.
 - a. Mix in 1 cup of the first wet ingredient; and
 - b. Mix in ½ cup of the second wet ingredient for that World Flavor.

For example, for Chinese, mix in 1 Tbs of the dry rub, 1 cup of soy sauce and 1/2 cup of sesame oil.

2. Mix together thoroughly. Let it stand for several hours for the flavors to marry.
3. Label your jar with the World Flavor, the ingredients and the date. This will keep fresh when stored in the fridge for 5-7 days (or longer). Makes about 10-12 serves.

To use your dry rub or wet rub & how to serve:

1. One serving of dry rub is about ¼-½ teaspoon.
2. One serving of wet rub or marinade is about 2 Tablespoon.
3. You can use your rubs in any of these dishes & techniques you have already learnt to create a World of Flavors!!
 - a. **Breakfast:** Add to pan when sauteeing vegetables for frittata or sprinkle on top of eggs
 - b. **Roasting:** Sprinkle on top of vegetables or meats before adding to the oven
 - c. **Salads:** Add 1 Tbs olive oil & vinegar or lemon juice for dry rub, mix and pour on top as a dressing. Use wet rub as is as a salad dressing
 - d. **Searing:** Rub well into meat, fish, chicken or vegetable before searing. Or add your rub to the pan with some water to deglaze and create a sauce after cooking the meat - simply scrape the pan on medium heat after removing your protein.
 - e. **Great grains:** Add to water used to boil the grains to season them.
4. **To serve:** the final touch is to add your garnish! Add these fresh immediately before serving - keep them on hand and store using our recommendations below in this guide. So for Chinese, you would add a Tablespoon of chopped green onions and some fresh crushed ginger right before serving.

Enjoy!

OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Health benefits of herbs & spices

An entire book could be written on the health benefits of fresh herbs & spices. Herbs and spices have been used for thousands of years by all populations around the world to treat and prevent illness. In recent times, modern science has shown that herbs and spices contain potent mixes of nutrients, phytochemicals and antioxidants which have proven health benefits. The actual properties are unique to each herb or spice. Here's some examples:

- Basil boosts immunity and fights infections
- Cinnamon lowers blood sugar levels and can help fight diabetes
- Peppermint aids digestion, soothes upset stomachs and reduces nausea
- Chillies & Cayenne Pepper contain curcumin which may reduce appetite, boost metabolism and protect against cancer
- Turmeric has powerful anti-inflammatory effects
- Ginger fights colds and flu, is great for upset stomachs and has anti-inflammatory properties
- Garlic is anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-viral, fights sickness and may protect against cancer.

What is the difference between a herb & spice?

Herbs are the leafy portions of a plant, dried or fresh. For example basil, bay leaves, parsley, cilantro, rosemary and thyme are some common herbs.

Spices are typically harvested from any other portion of the plant and are dried. Some spices come from: berries (peppercorns), roots (ginger), seeds (nutmeg), flower buds (cloves) or even the stamen of flowers (saffron).

Some plants yield both an herb and a spice. Cilantro is the leafy herb of the same plant that gives us the popular spice coriander seed. And dill weed (an herb) and dill seed (a spice) also come from the same plant.

How to buy & store herbs & spices

1. How to buy

Buying Herbs

Fresh herbs are available at most grocery stores & local supermarkets, as well as farmers markets. To buy herbs, use the same approach as you would use to buy produce: use your senses! **The herbs should look plump, shiny and be a vivid, bright and uniform color throughout. The scent should be fresh and pleasant.** If the herbs are brown, wilted or stained, then they are old or damaged and you might want to skip them.

Buying Spices

When buying spices, your best bet for good quality, fresh spices with the least effort is to head to your local artisan store or ethnic market. You can also buy whole spices and grind your own using a mortar & pestle or coffee grinder for the absolute best flavors. Otherwise, you can always stick with the stock you find at your local supermarket, although these spices tend to be the lowest quality. Always check the expiry date because the shelf life of most spice is about 6 months, and sometimes spices can sit on the shelf for a year or more.

2. How to store

Storing Herbs

Keep fresh herbs wrapped in a damp paper towel in a ziplock bag or cut the bottom of the stalks off and keep in a glass of water like flowers. They will last for several days like this. Do not wash until ready to use (as the herbs will rot quickly when they are wet). To dry herbs and keep them for later use, hang them upside down or place them on a plate (chopped or whole), then keep for several days in a cool dry area.

Storing Spices

To store spices, keep them in tightly sealed containers, close right after use and keep dry. Keep them away from heat and light to prevent aging or going rancid.

How to cook & use herbs & spices

Cooking & Using Herbs

Firstly, it must be said that herbs are at their best when they are raw - and can be added straight into salads, sandwiches, soups before serving, sauces, dressings & dips.

Before using your fresh herbs, tear them in your hands or crush with the back of your knife or a mortar and pestle. This releases the oils, flavors and aromas of fresh herbs.

Wash herbs thoroughly before using. Soil particles (and little critters) can be hidden amongst the leaves and stems. Alternatively, float and rinse them in a bowl of cold water. When washed, dry them with some paper towels or a salad spinner.

Add your herbs towards the end of the cooking process or better yet, after you have turned off the heat. Unlike spices, herbs taste best and the flavor stands out most when they are barely cooked or raw. This also preserves more of their health properties, as many nutrients are damaged by cooking.

Generally dry herbs are best used for dishes which require long cooking, like stews or soups, as the flavors of dried herbs develop with cooking (the opposite of fresh herbs which taste best with little or no cooking).

Of course, you can always substitute one for the other and use what you have. If your recipe calls for dried herbs and you are using fresh herbs, then use 3 times as much, and vice versa. So 1 Tbs dried herbs = 3 Tbs fresh herbs.

Cooking & Using Spices

Take your spice from the container using a dry spoon and add to the dish you are making. This has two advantages: Firstly, it prevents accidental spills of excess spice. Secondly, it avoids steam rising up from your food from getting inside the spice jar and spoil the spice or cause it to clump.

As a general rule, ground spices release their flavors readily and therefore can be added towards the end of the cooking process, to prevent the flavor 'cooking off' (diminishing).

On the other hand, whole spices, like cloves, cinnamon sticks, peppercorns & bay leaves release their flavors more slowly so should be added towards the beginning of the cooking process.

If you are adding spices to an uncooked dish such as a salad or dressing, let the flavors marry for several hours if possible.

How much to use?

In general, most beginner cooks probably use too little herbs and too much spices in their cooking.

Herbs

While there is no universal rule and it is subject to personal taste, **you can generally add a generous handful of most leafy herbs to your cooking or salads** to serve 2-3 people to really celebrate their flavors and enjoy their health properties. For example, parsley, cilantro, mint and basil can all be used abundantly. **The exceptions include oregano, thyme and sage which have really strong flavors, so limit these to 1 Tbs for 2-3 serves.**

Spices

With spices, it is best to err on the side of caution, until you get to develop a feel for how much to use and what suits your palate. You can do this by following recipes initially or just experimenting at home and work out what you like.

As a general rule, you should use about ½ a teaspoon of each spice you are adding for 4 servings of food, a pound of meat or 2 cups of sauce or dressing. If you are adding something spicy like chilli, beware that the hotness intensifies with cooking, so start light and add more as needed.

Stocking up: The Basic Pantry

As a home cook, you should try to stock your pantry with a variety of herbs & spices ready for your cooking needs. If you have the basics, then you can improvise for most recipes. If a recipe calls for a herb or spice you don't have, don't stress - in most cases, you can skip one or two ingredients without detracting noticeably from the end product. Cooking is really an art, so feel free to improvise and experiment.

Basic Herbs

Here are the basic and most often used herbs that we recommend you look for at your local grocery store or farmers market. Don't worry too much about what to use them for - just throw a handful in your cooking or salads and see what you like. It really is that simple!

Typically you should buy 2-3 fresh herbs when you do your weekly grocery shopping and aim to use them throughout the week. You will naturally develop favorites, so try to buy 2 you know you like and then a new one to try each week.

Basil	Thyme
Parsley	Oregano
Mint	Sage
Cilantro	Rosemary
Chives	Dill

Basic Spices

Here are the most common spices that you are most likely to need if you start cooking more. Stock up now so you are ready when a recipe calls for one of these. It's a good investment because most spices will last for at least 6 months (and are fine for 12 months or more but lose some of their freshness).

Salt	Cumin	Dried Oregano	Garlic powder
Pepper	Curry Powder	Turmeric	
Cayenne Pepper	Cinnamon	Red Pepper Flakes	
Chilli Powder	Dried Basil	Paprika	
Bay Leaves	Dried Thyme	Ground Ginger	

A Word on Garlic

Garlic is not technically a herb or spice (apparently it is a vegetable!), but it is such a common and critical flavoring tool for any cook that we feel incomplete not to mention it.

Garlic health benefits

Garlic has incredible health properties - particularly when eaten raw. It is antiviral, antifungal, antibacterial which means it is very beneficial when fighting back a cold, flu, or throat infection. Garlic is particularly rich in a variety of sulfur containing compounds, which are well documented in providing the numerous health benefits of garlic. These benefits include cardiovascular benefits such as helping dilate blood vessels, keeping blood pressure under control, reducing blood cholesterol levels, and protecting against oxidative stress and inflammation of blood vessels. There is also research that suggests garlic has cancer protective qualities.

How to use garlic

Garlic is a fantastic flavor addition to any savory dish and amazing in its versatility. It can be enjoyed raw (crushed or chopped finely) and added to salads or dressings, or rubbed on toast. It can be added to meat marinades, used to saute vegetables or included in soups. The trick to cooking garlic is to cook it minimally to maintain flavors and health properties and on low or medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Do not cook on high heat - burnt garlic has a terrible bitter flavor which will ruin your dish. If you burn the garlic, discard it, wash your pan and start again - it is worth it!

Finally, you can roast garlic, and then use the roasted garlic to season dishes, giving a wonderful sweet, creamy, nutty flavor. Here is a simple way to roast garlic: Take the whole garlic bulb. Peel off half of the outer papery layers, cut the end off, and pour 2 Tbs olive oil on top. Wrap tightly in aluminum foil and bake on medium heat, 350 degrees fahrenheit for about 20-30 minutes. Enjoy!

More World Flavors

Different countries and regions around the world combine herbs & spices in different ways - and that is what gives these regions distinct flavor profiles.

These flavor profiles are common and often repeated throughout many different dishes in that country, with slight variations. It is easy to learn the common combinations of different regions, and then use these when you are cooking your meals.

For example, if you wanted to cook Mexican style chicken, you might add cayenne pepper, chilli flakes, cilantro, paprika and lime juice. If you wanted to cook the same chicken Italian style, you might add oregano, basil & tomatoes. This way you will never get bored of your cooking - because there are infinite possibilities. Alternatively, discover your favorite combos and make them your 'go to' dishes.

World Flavors Cooking Guide! (Stick it on your fridge!)

Below we've set out some common country combinations as a reference guide:

Chinese Cuisine

Garlic, Ginger, Chilli Flakes, Sesame Oil, Soy Sauce, Green Onions,

Mexican Cuisine

Fresh Cilantro, Coriander Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Jalapeno, Garlic, Lime, Oregano,

Italian Cuisine

Basil, Bay Leaves, Garlic, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Red Pepper, Rosemary

Indian Cuisine

Coriander Seeds, Cumin Seeds, Curry Powder, Chile, Garlic, Ginger, Mustard Seeds, Turmeric, Cardamon

French Cuisine

Bay Leaves, Black Pepper, Chives, Garlic, Marjoram, Parsley, Rosemary, Shallots, Tarragon, Thyme

Greek Cuisine

Garlic, Lemon, Mint, Nutmeg, Olives, Oregano

Spanish Cuisine

Cumin Seeds, Garlic, Olives, Paprika, Parsley, Saffron

German Cuisine

Allspice, Caraway Seeds, Dill Seeds, Dry Mustard Powder, Ginger, Mustard Seeds, Paprika, White Pepper, Cinnamon.