

Spinney Kitchen

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"Spice a dish with
love and it pleases
every palate."
—Plautus

Storing Spices And Herbs

Use the following guidelines for storing your spices and herbs to maintain maximum quality. To prevent flavour and colour loss, avoid moisture, light, heat and air.

Store in tightly covered containers.

Store in a dark place away from sunlight, such as inside a cupboard or drawer.

Avoid storage above the dishwasher, microwave, stove or refrigerator, or near a sink or heating vent.

If storing in an open spice rack, store in a site away from heat, light and moisture.

Avoid sprinkling dried spices and herbs directly from container into a steaming pot to prevent moisture from entering the container.

Use a dry spoon to measure spices and herbs from a container.

Keep these points in mind regarding refrigerator/freezer storage:

Refrigerate paprika, chilli powder and red pepper for best colour retention, especially in summer or hotter climates.

Spices and herbs can get wet if condensation forms when a cold container from a refrigerator or freezer is left open in a humid kitchen.

Add a Little SPICE (& HERBS) to Your Life!

Spices and herbs have been used in foods for centuries. Archaeologists estimate that by 50,000 B.C. primitive man had discovered that parts of certain aromatic plants help make food taste better.

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.

What's the difference between a spice and an herb?

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.



"An herb is the friend of
physicians and the
praise of cooks."
—Charlemagne

Fat, Sugar And Salt Reduction Tips

Spices and herbs can help retain flavour in your foods while cutting back on dietary fat, sugar and sodium/salt.

Reducing Fat. "... removing a tablespoon of fat removes about 10 grams of fat and 100 calories — an amount which could represent a 10 pound weight loss in a year. The calories in herbs and spices are far less than in batters, gravies, sauces and fried foods,"

Reducing Sugar. Reduce or eliminate sugar by using these sweet-tasting spices

- Allspice
- Anise
- Cardamom
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Ginger
- Mace
- Nutmeg

Reducing Salt. Here are some tips when using spices and herbs to help you reduce the salt in foods

Savory flavours, and flavours with "bite," such as black pepper, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, dill seeds, basil, ginger, coriander and onion, are the most effective in replacing the taste of salt

Flavour And Food Combinations

The following flavour and food combinations, 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:

Beef: Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme

Lamb: Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint

Pork: Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano

Chicken: Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme

Fish: Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, marjoram, paprika, pepper

For **vegetables**, experiment with one or more of these combinations:

Carrots: Cinnamon, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage

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

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

Potatoes: Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, sage

Tomatoes: Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper

General Rules for Amounts

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. The amount to add varies with the type of spice or herb, type of recipe and personal preference.

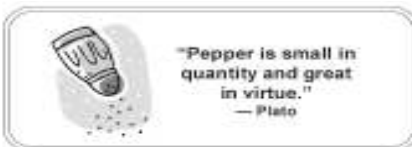
Substituting Equivalent Amounts of Different Forms.

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

1 tablespoon finely cut fresh herbs
1 teaspoon crumbled dried 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, try these recommendations remember to use more herbs if using a fresh or crumbled dried form:

.Begin with 1/4 teaspoon of most ground spices or ground dried herbs for these amounts and adjust as needed:
4 servings;
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 flavour during cooking; add in small increments.



When to Add Spices & Herbs

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

Adding FRESH herbs during cooking. As a general rule, add fresh herbs near the end of the cooking time or just before serving as prolonged heating can cause flavour and aroma losses.

Add the more delicate fresh herbs, basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, marjoram and mint . a minute or two before the end of cooking or sprinkle them on the food before it's served.

The less delicate fresh herbs, such as dill seeds, oregano, rosemary, tarragon and thyme, can be added about the last 20 minutes of cooking.

For some foods, such as breads, batters, etc., you will need to add fresh herbs at the beginning of the cooking process.



Adding DRIED herbs and spices during cooking.

Follow these tips and techniques for best taste when adding dried spices and herbs during cooking

Whole dried spices and herbs (such as whole allspice and bay leaves):
Release their flavours slower than crumbled or ground ones.
Are ideal for dishes cooking an hour or more, such as soups and stews.

Ground dried spices and herbs: Release their flavour quickly.
May taste best in shorter-cooker recipes or added nearer the end of longer-cooking ones.

Crumbled dried herbs may differ: Milder herbs (such as basil) may flavour best added toward the end of cooking.
More robust herbs (such as thyme) can stand longer cooking periods.

Freshly grinding spices (such as black pepper and nutmeg) provides more flavour than buying them already ground. This also applies to using them in uncooked foods

Secure whole spices, such as cloves, in a tea ball for easy removal at the end of cooking.

Warning: Remove bay leaves at the end of cooking.

They can be a choking hazard if left in foods and can cause harmful cuts and scratches in your throat