

Spice It Up

Lose the salt. Use herbs and spices to kick up the flavor of your meals.



Make the most of your herbs and spices with these tips.

- **Make herbs and spices last longer.**
 - **Fresh:** Wrap the stems in damp paper towels. Store them in a plastic bag in the produce bin of your refrigerator. They will last about 1 week.
 - **Dried:** Store in airtight containers away from heat (e.g., not above your stove), moisture, and direct sunlight. They will last about 1 year.
- **Cut down on costs.**
 - **Use dried herbs and spices,** particularly if you would only use a small amount of the fresh. Dried are often cheaper.
 - **Look for dried herbs and spices sold in bulk.** Buy just the amount you need for the recipe, particularly if you do not use that spice often.
 - **Check out ethnic food aisles** or ethnic food stores for herbs and spices. They often have much cheaper prices for the same ingredient.
 - **Substitute with more commonly used herbs or spices.** If a recipe calls for an herb or spice you do not have on hand and will likely not use again, try using a more common item. See the table on page 38 for ideas.
- **Make your own spice mixes.** Making your own helps you limit sodium and other unnecessary ingredients added to premade mixes. You can also use the spices right in your pantry instead of buying a new mix you may not use up! See the mixes on page 39 for ideas.
- **Try new flavor combinations.** Got a craving for Italian food? Mix it up by flavoring a favorite dish with garlic, basil, and oregano. Check out the table on page 39 for ideas.
- **Use them at the right time.**
 - Fresh herbs add great flavor to uncooked dishes, like salads or cold pastas. If using them in a cooked dish, add in the last few minutes so flavor stays vibrant (unless the recipe says otherwise).
 - Dried herbs and spices are great for marinades, slow-cooked soups or stews, pastas, casseroles, and many other dishes. Add them near the start of cooking so they have time to soften and release their flavors.
- **Replace them when needed.** Throw out fresh herbs when many brown spots appear. For dried herbs and spices, check the color and scent. If the color has faded, or the smell is weak, it's time to replace them.

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Common Substitutions for Herbs and Spices

If the recipe calls for...	Try this instead!
Allspice (1 teaspoon)	½ teaspoon ground cinnamon + ¼ teaspoon ground cloves + ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Basil	Oregano or thyme
Cardamom	Ginger or cinnamon
Chervil	Parsley or dill
Cilantro	Parsley
Cinnamon (1 teaspoon)	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg or allspice
Cloves	Allspice, cinnamon, or nutmeg
Cumin	Chili powder
Ginger, fresh (1 Tablespoon)	Ginger, ground (⅓ teaspoon)
Marjoram	Basil or thyme
Nutmeg	Cinnamon
Oregano	Thyme, basil, or marjoram
Rosemary	Thyme or tarragon
Sage	Marjoram or rosemary
Thyme	Basil, marjoram, or oregano
Any fresh herb (1 Tablespoon)	The same herb in dried form (1 teaspoon)



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Homemade Spice Mixes

Mix spices together in a small bowl. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

Italian Seasoning

- 1 Tablespoon dried basil leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried rosemary leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried thyme leaves

Jerk Seasoning

- 1 Tablespoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Pumpkin Pie Spice

- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Taco Seasoning

- 4½ teaspoons chili powder
- 4½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- ¼ teaspoon salt



To use taco seasoning: In a large skillet, add 1 pound lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken. Cook, crumbling meat with a mixing spoon or rubber spatula, until no longer pink. Add 1 batch of seasoning (3 Tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon) and ¼ cup water. Stir to mix. Cook until water evaporates, about 1 minute.

Herbs and Spices Around the World

As your cooking skills improve, try using new flavors to jazz up your favorite meals. Use the list below to test out flavors commonly used by cultures around the world.

Asian Flavors	Italian Flavors	Middle Eastern/African Flavors		Latin/Caribbean Flavors
Cinnamon	Basil	Allspice	Ginger	Allspice
Cloves	Marjoram	Caraway	Hot peppers	Cinnamon
Coriander	Oregano	Cardamom	Marjoram	Chili powder
Curry	Rosemary	Cinnamon	Mint	Cilantro
Ginger	Sage	Cumin	Paprika	Cumin
Hot peppers	Thyme	Curry	Parsley	Curry
Mint		Dill		Hot peppers
Mustard seeds				Nutmeg
Turmeric				Oregano