

Cooking With Spices And Herbs

The key to flavor is in the seasoning! Spices and herbs are amazingly healthy, and that's where a lot of the flavors we know and love come from.

USING SPICES

Spices add vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and protein to your dishes, so use them!

Try to get a wide variety of spices for more interesting flavor combinations, and nutrition benefits. Branch out from the usual few and try new ones, like cardamom, cloves or paprika.

Start small when you're not sure – you can always add more.

Having individual spices, instead of spice mixes, lets you control the flavor of every meal.

Mixing together your own spice mixes, of your favorite combinations, can save you time.

Spices have a bitterness to them, especially if you use too much, that you can feel as a numbness on your tongue. Offset that by:

- Infusing them into a dish with fat (use whole food fats like nuts, seeds, avocados)
- Using them in a thick puree of beans or starchy vegetables like squash
- Using whole spices to infuse into the cooking water for soup, grains or beans
- Dry-toasting spices before using them (whether whole or ground)

USING HERBS

Herbs are loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, so use them!

Use fresh herbs instead of dried whenever you can - they have more nutrients and flavor.

Fresh herbs are a great addition to salads, smoothies, bean dips and other dishes.

Fresh herbs wilt and lose their flavor very quickly, so add them at the end of making a hot dish, or use them as a garnish.

Dried herbs need to have their flavor released. Rub them between your fingers as you add them to a dish, or infuse them in a fat-based sauce to carry their flavor.

SPICE AND HERB MIXES

Italian Herb Mix

- 3 parts basil
- 2 parts oregano
- 1 part marjoram
- 1 part thyme

Indian Mix (Curry Powder)

- 4 parts ground cumin
- 4 parts ground coriander
- 2 parts ground ginger
- 1 part ground turmeric
- 1 part ground black pepper
- Optional: 1 part cayenne pepper
- Optional: 1 part ground cardamom
- Optional: 1 part ground cinnamon

Mexican Chili Powder Mix

- 2 parts cayenne powder
- 2 parts ground cumin
- 2 parts oregano (Mexican oregano if possible)
- 2 parts onion powder
- 1 part ground allspice
- 1 part garlic powder

Gingerbread Spice Mix

- 4 parts ground cinnamon
- 3 parts ground ginger
- 2 parts ground nutmeg
- 2 parts ground allspice
- 1 part ground cloves

Chinese Five Spice Mix

- 1 part ground black pepper
- 1 part ground cinnamon
- 1 part ground cloves
- 1 part ground fennel
- 1 part ground anise