

Spicy Solutions for Flavor Enhancement

The following is a list of some rule-of-thumb cooking hints that will enhance the flavor of the items you prepare:

- Substitute other liquids for water when applicable. For example, reduced-sodium chicken broth can be used instead of water to add a zesty flavor to mashed potatoes.
- Add a total of 1 to 3 tablespoons of herbs and spices per 50 portions.
- When doubling a large-volume recipe, only increase the amount of herbs by 25 percent.
- Prepare food al dente.
- Use ½ cup of seasoning for 5 pounds of meat.
- Use leftover fruits and vegetables and create salsa to serve as a garnish with entrees.
- Use other citrus juices in place of lemon (grapefruit, orange and lime) or try a combination.
- Seasonings (herb and spices) are usually added at the end of the cooking time (an exception would be large-batch cooking).
- Flavorings (vanilla) can be added at the beginning, middle or end of the cooking process.
- Soak legumes in a reduced-sodium stock prior to use.

Cooking methods such as braising, searing, sautéing, stir-frying, etc., add flavor and eye-appeal to foods. Well-flavored and tasty foods enhance the satisfaction of food choices. Salt is a key ingredient in baked goods and provides overall flavor to most foods, but emphasis on using less sodium is needed to meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Using more herbs and seasonings will enhance foods with less salt.

Get started with a few basic blends.

Use these blends to season soups and stews, and sprinkle over mixed vegetables, ground-beef dishes, chicken, pork and fish. Mix the ingredients and store them in a covered jar as needed.

Spicy Flavor Blend

2 T. savory, crushed
1 T. powdered mustard
2 ½ t. onion powder
1 ½ t. curry powder
1 ¼ t. ground cumin
½ t. garlic powder

Herbed Seasoning Blend

2 T. dill weed or basil leaves, crushed
2 T. onion powder
1 t. oregano leaves, crushed
1 t. celery seed
¼ t. grated lemon peel (dried)
Dash black pepper

All-Purpose Spice Blend

2 ½ T. onion powder
2 ½ t. garlic powder
2 ½ t. paprika
2 ½ t. powdered mustard
1 ¼ t. thyme leaves, crushed
½ t. white pepper
¼ t. celery seed

Simple Seasons Blend

1 t. basil
1 t. marjoram
1 t. thyme leaves, crushed
1 t. oregano leaves, crushed

Use this blend in cakes, cookies, fruit breads, muffins, pancakes, fruit desserts or sprinkle on toast.

Sweet Spice Blend

1 c. ground cinnamon	½ c. ground ginger
1 c. ground nutmeg	¼ c. ground allspice
¼ c. ground cardamom	2 T. ground cloves

Flavoring with Herbs and Spices

Basic blends are only a beginning. You won't miss salt in your food if you use plenty of herbs and spices instead. Fresh herbs are readily available at most supermarkets and major food distributors. Here is a list of foods and the herbs and spices that enhance their flavors.

Vegetables		Spices
Dark Green	Broccoli	Basil, caraway seed, curry powder, garlic, ginger, marjoram.
	Collard Greens	Garlic.
	Spinach	Basil, garlic, nutmeg, tarragon.
	Turnip Greens	Garlic, red pepper flakes.
Red/Orange	Carrots	Caraway seed, chives, cumin, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, tarragon.
	Squash (Winter)	Allspice, cinnamon, cloves, curry powder, ginger, mace, nutmeg.
	Peppers	Chives, coriander, garlic, marjoram, oregano, thyme.
	Sweet Potatoes	Allspice, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg.
	Tomatoes	Basil, chives, coriander, dill, garlic, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme.
Starchy	Corn	Chives, coriander, cumin, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme.
	Potatoes	Caraway seed, bay leaf, chives, coriander, curry powder, dill, garlic, mint, oregano, tarragon, thyme.
	Green Lima Beans	Basil, chives, dill, marjoram, sage, savory, tarragon.
Other	Asparagus	Basil, chives, dill, nutmeg, sesame seeds, tarragon.
	Beets	Allspice, caraway seed, chives, dill, ginger, horseradish, rosemary.
	Cabbage/Cauliflower	Basil, caraway seed, curry powder, garlic, ginger, marjoram.
	Cucumber	Dill, vinegar, sesame seeds.
	Eggplant	Basil, bay leaf, garlic, fennel, oregano.
	Green Beans	Basil, bay leaf, dill, garlic, marjoram, rosemary, savory, tarragon.
	Mushrooms	Basil, chives, dill, garlic, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, tarragon.
	Okra	Garlic, pepper, other vegetables such as onion and tomato.
	Squash (Summer)	Allspice, basil, chives, citrus, coriander, dill, garlic, ginger, lemon, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, savory, tarragon.
	Turnips	Allspice, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg.
	Zucchini	Allspice, basil, citrus, cumin, curry powder, dill, garlic, lemon, oregano, rosemary, sage, thyme.

Flavoring with Herbs and Spices

Meats	Spices
Beef	Allspice, basil, bay leaf, chili powder, cumin, curry powder, garlic, ginger, marjoram, oregano, thyme.
Eggs	Chili powder, dill, garlic, mint, oregano, rosemary, thyme.
Fish	Bay leaf, basil, chervil, coriander, curry powder, cloves, dill, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme.
Pork	Caraway seed, chili powder, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, garlic, rosemary, sage, thyme.
Poultry	Basil, bay leaf, chives, coriander, curry powder, cloves, dill, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme.

Grains	Spices
Rice	Chives, cumin, curry powder, garlic, sage, tarragon.

Reduced-sodium stocks and bases such as beef, chicken or vegetable base can be used for seasoning along with citrus zest from lemon, orange, lime and grapefruit.

A Dozen Essential Ingredients:

Keeping your spice cabinet well-stocked is the key to easier and more flavorful cooking and baking. In addition to salt and pepper, here are some spices, herbs and flavorings to keep on hand:

1. Basil
2. Garlic Powder
3. Minced Onion
4. Chili Powder
5. Ground Cinnamon
6. Dill Weed
7. Ground Ginger
8. Oregano
9. Paprika
10. Rosemary
11. Thyme
12. Vanilla Extract

