

Life Time Learning Proudly presents: Using Herbs and Spices

When experimenting with herbs and spices, the first thing to remember is easy does it! Some of the herbs and spices we use can add a subtle flavor increase while other can overpower a dish with just a pinch or more. If you are doing a new dish or using a new herb or spice, go easy at first, then you can always increase depending on your taste. Use just enough to heighten the natural food flavors. By definition, an herb is something that comes from the leaves of a plant while a spice is something that comes from either the root or seed of a plant. One strongly seasoned dish per meal is generally a good rule of thumb. Almost all dried herbs and spices are best kept in a dry, cool spot away from direct sunlight and heat. Most have a lifespan of about a year; however they can be used beyond that except their flavor decreases with age. The following are some excepted rules of thumb insofar as the use of herbs and spices in dishes:

Start with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried herbs to four servings, or to one pound of meat, poultry, or fish, or to 2 cups of sauce or vegetables.

If substituting fresh herbs for dried, the recommendation is to use 3 times the amount of fresh over dried.

Measure dried herbs, and then crush them in the palm of your hand before adding. This helps hasten the release of flavor and oils.

Add herbs at the same time as salt and pepper to meats, vegetables and sauces. This is usually near the end of the cooking time.

In long-cooking foods, such as stews, add dried herbs in the beginning and fresh herbs during the last half hour of cooking.

Add herbs to juices or cold sauces ahead of time –let stand overnight, if possible to achieve the most flavor and taste.

It is important to remember that many herbs are compatible to each other, so don't hesitate to use several together.

Try some of these ideas for herbs, then experiment on your own and taste the delicious difference that herbs can make.

Basil is a natural for tomato and potato dishes. Try ¼ teaspoon for each cup of tomato juice for a quick appetizer. Sprinkle a little basil over tomatoes served atop cream cheese on your next bagel.

When making potato salad, cook the potatoes with a bay leaf and some onion, it will add flavor and the potatoes will stay white.

For a unique taste, sprinkle caraway seeds over coleslaw

Add a dash of chili powder to corn, especially corn-on-the-cob. It will increase the corn taste and give it a little "kick".

Chives are great to add to cottage or cream cheese dishes. They also go great with scrambled eggs.

Add curry powder to deviled eggs; also dry and/or Dijon mustard to the yolk mixture.

Oregano or Italian Seasoning gives character to meat loaf, stew, chili, and tomato items.

Spark seafood and chicken dishes with tarragon. Using either fresh or dried, it give the food a nice natural taste. It is also one of the key ingredients in tartar sauce.

Thyme is a popular herb used in soups and stews and is a natural partner to mushrooms, especially cooked in butter.

Sage is best known as a Holiday Herb. It is used in stuffing for turkey and chicken and goes great with pork dishes.

Herb substitutions:

What if you're completely out of a specific herb? What if you simply don't care for that particular herb and are searching for a good substitute for basil, sage, or oregano? The good news is that you likely have a perfect substitute right there in your spice rack.

The chart will help you choose a substitution or alternative that should work with your recipe. Whenever substituting, keep in mind that the flavor will not be exactly the same as originally intended. The selected flavors should harmonize or at least hint at the original.

It is wise to begin your substitution with half the specified recipe amount and then adjust it to your personal tastes. You should always feel free to adjust and add to any recipe to suit yourself and your family, anyway.

Basil	Oregano or thyme
Chervil	Tarragon or parsley
Chives	Green onions (scallions), onion, or leek
Cilantro	Parsley
Italian Seasoning	A blend of: basil, oregano, rosemary & ground red pepper
Marjoram	Basil, thyme, or savory
Mint	Basil, marjoram, or rosemary
Oregano	Thyme or basil
Parsley	Chervil or cilantro
Poultry Seasoning	Sage plus thyme, marjoram, savory, black pepper, or rosemary
Red Pepper Flakes	Dash bottled hot pepper sauce or black pepper
Rosemary	Thyme, tarragon, or savory
Sage	Poultry seasoning, savory, marjoram, or rosemary
Savory	Thyme, marjoram, or sage
Tarragon	Chervil, dash fennel seed, or dash aniseed
Thyme	Basil, marjoram, oregano, or savory

HERBS AND USES OF SAME:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Uses:</u>
Basil	Pasta sauces, tomatoes, seafood, vegetables
Bay	Soups, stews, pickling, seafood
Chives	Garnish, soups, stews, eggs, cheese, salads
Cilantro	Mexican and Asian dishes
Dill	Pickling, salads, eggs, soups, seafood, sauces
Marjoram	Meats, poultry, game, vegetables, sauces, salad, dressings
Mint	Drinks, lamb, sauces, fruit dishes, baking, desserts
Oregano	Tomato sauces, chili, barbecue sauces, soups, egg and Cheese dishes, pastas, Italian and Mexican dishes
Parsley	Garnish, soups, salads, sauces, seafood
Rosemary	Pork, Lamb, poultry, seafood, vegetables, breads
Sage	Stuffing's for poultry & meat, sausages, soups, sauces, marinades
Savory	Sauces, garnish, seafood, light meats, marinades, eggs
Tarragon	Béarnaise sauce, cold salads, marinades, pot roast
Thyme	Meats, poultry, seafood, sauces, stews, casseroles, tomato and cheese dishes, mushrooms

SPICES AND USE OF SAME:

<u>NAME:</u>	<u>USES:</u>
Allspice	Soups, stews, marinades, seafood & baking
Anise	Licorice flavoring, used in desserts and salad dressings
Capers	Garnish for seafood, vegetables, and marinades
Caraway	Breads, vegetables and dips
Cardamom	Pastry, fruit pies, puddings, sweet potatoes & BBQ sauce
Celery	Dips, soups, garnish, canapes, cooking of seafood, boiled eggs
Cinnamon	Breads, cakes, cookies and fruit dishes
Cloves	Ham, pork, fruits, sauces, marinades, cakes, bread
Coriander	Pastry, seafood, soups, stew, sauces and garnishes
Cumin	Chili, BBQ sauce, marinades, salad dressings
Fennel	Salads, sauces, eggs, seafood, marinades and garnish
Garlic	Sauces, dips, soups, salad dressing, garlic bread and butter
Ginger	Marinades, cakes, cookies, sauces and Oriental dishes
Juniper	Game meats and poultry dishes, pates
Mace	Baking, meats and poultry, puddings, sauces
Mustard	Vegetable, meat, salads, egg and cheese dishes, sauces
Nutmeg	Drinks, puddings, desserts, sauces, glazed vegetables, pasta
Onion	Dips, soups, sauces, salad dressing, gravies, stuffing, eggs & cheese4
Paprika	Garnish, seafood, meats, egg dishes, soups, sauces

Pepper Cayenne	Hot spicy dishes, chilies, blackened dishes
Pepper	General seasoning except for baked goods
Pepper Red	Mexican & Italian dishes, sauces, meats
Poppy	Garnish, breads, baked goods, pasta, eggs and cheese
Saffron	Rice, soups, stews, seafood, pasta & vegetables
Sesame	Garnish for baked goods, salads, Asian dishes, candy & oils
Turmeric	Salad dressings, bread, soups, rice, noodles, seafood
Vanilla	Desserts, drinks, fruits, candies, French toast

And so my friends, be happy and try using herbs and spices in your everyday cooking. Experiment and when you find a combination you like, know that you have created a one-of-a-kind recipe.

Chef Cal

RECIPES FOR SAMPLES IN CLASS:

HONEY-THYME MARINATED CHEDDAR

8 – 10 ounces Extra Sharp Cheddar Cheese cut into ½ inch cubes

1/3 cup good extra virgin olive oil

2-3 tablespoons honey

A few fresh Thyme springs

½ teaspoon kosher salt

A big pinch of red pepper flakes

Place the cut cheese into a large bowl. Add the olive oil, honey, salt and red pepper flakes. Toss well and then transfer to a small sealable container. Add the few sprigs of fresh Thyme, and seal. Marinate about 30 minutes at room temperature. You can serve in the marinating container or place the cheese cubes into an open bowl style container. Serve with toothpicks or small forks.

HERBED BROCCOLI BISQUE

Leeks contribute a subtle, pleasing flavor to this easy soup, which gets its creamy texture from pureed potatoes and broccoli. We prefer to use a blender, but you may puree the soup in a food processor. In that case, the texture of the soup will not be quite as smooth.

3 medium leeks

1 garlic clove, minced

2 teaspoons non-diet tub-style canola or corn-oil margarine or butter

3 cups defatted chicken broth, divided

4 cups small broccoli florets

1 pound boiling potatoes (about 4 medium), peeled and cut into ¾" cubes

1 teaspoon dried basil leaves

1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves

¼ teaspoon ground white pepper

1½ cups 2% fat milk

1 teaspoon lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt, or to taste

Tiny blanched broccoli florets or fresh broccoli leaves for garnish

Clean the leeks by trimming of the root ends and all but about 1" of the green tops; discard. Peel off and discard 1 to 2 layers of tough outer leaves. Then, beginning at the green end, slice down about 1" into the leeks. Put the leeks in a colander. Wash them thoroughly under cool running water. Wash again to remove all traces of dirt. Set them aside until well drained. Cut into ½" pieces.

In a Dutch oven or other large heavy pot, combine the leeks, garlic, margarine or butter and 3 tablespoons of the broth. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes, or until the leeks are tender but not browned. (Add a bit more broth if the liquid begins to evaporate.) Add the 4 cups broccoli florets, potatoes, basil, thyme, pepper and the remaining broth. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 11 to 14 minutes, or until the potatoes and broccoli is tender. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly.

Working in batches, puree the mixture using a hand held blender stick, moving the stick around the pot until the mixture is completely smooth. Add the milk, lemon juice and salt. Mix well. Cook for an additional 4 to 5 minutes; **do not boil**. Garnish individual servings with the blanched florets or leaves

Makes 5 servings

FETA DILL MUFFINS

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons sugar

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 cup milk

½ cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dill weed

1 egg

Preheat oven to 400-degrees. Grease or use a paper liner in a 12 cup muffin tin.

Combine flour, sugar, and baking powder in a large bowl. Combine milk, feta cheese, oil, dill and egg in small bowl until blended; stir into flour mixture just until moistened. Spoon mixture evenly into prepared muffin cups.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until golden brown and wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from pan; cool on wire rack 10 minutes, serve warm.

Toasted Walnuts with Oregano

You can make these nuts with either olive oil- a sort of Greek taste – or butter - as you like. They couldn't be easier and they're more than slightly irresistible, so you may want to make a double batch.

2 ½ tablespoons olive oil or unsalted butter, melted

2 teaspoons dried oregano, crumbled

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 cups raw walnuts

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. In a medium size bowl, mix everything except walnuts together; then stir in the walnuts, coating them well. Scatter the nuts on a baking sheet. Roast them for about 10 minutes, stirring once or twice. Remove from oven when they smell good. Allow nuts to cool prior to serving. Nuts will keep for a few days in a tightly sealed tin if made with butter, longer made with oil.