

## Tips for Using Herbs & Spices

Herbs and spices are a must-have ingredient in a healthy pantry. They provide a flavor kick without adding sugar, salt or fat. Herbs and spices are also excellent sources of antioxidants, which help to keep your body healthy. Some have also been shown to help lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose levels. If you're used to using just salt and pepper for enhancing flavor, try some of these ideas below.

- Buy new-to-you herbs & spices in smaller quantities to experiment. Once you know herbs & spices you like and ones you use frequently, buy them in larger sizes.
- Visit ethnic food stores (Indian, Asian, etc...) for a wider variety of spices. Some carry herbs and spices in bulk so you can buy only what you need.
- Date the bottles once opened. Most dried herbs & spices last 6 months to one year. They don't spoil, but lose their potency and flavor.
- Store herbs/spices in a cool, dark place, away from sunlight and heat. Do not store above the stove or dishwasher. Make sure the container is air-tight. Herbs and spices also retain their natural essential oils best when stored in glass jars.
- Arrange herbs & spices alphabetically in storage organizers such as a spice rack, carousel/turntable, drawer organizers, or expandable shelves.
- The ratio for substituting dried herbs/spices for fresh is 1:3. Use 1/3 the amount dried as fresh since dried herbs/spices are more concentrated. So if a recipe calls for 1 tablespoon of fresh basil, use 1 teaspoon dried. Taste and adjust for personal preferences, but always start with less and add more if needed.
- Make your own dried herbs for less money. Wash and dry fresh herbs, then bake with the stems on in a 200-degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes.
- Dried herbs/spices need time and moisture to rehydrate to release their full flavor. Add dried herbs/spices around the start of cooking. Fresh herbs are best added at the end.
- For full flavor, sprinkle dried herbs in the palm of your hand and rub with your fingers before adding to a dish. This releases their natural oils.

## **Top Herbs & Spices to Keep in Your Pantry**

**Allspice** (Caribbean & Middle East cuisine, Jamaican jerk chicken; chai; desserts)

**Basil** (pasta; pizza; sauces; pesto; marinades; vinaigrettes; bruschetta)

**Bay leaves** (soups; stews; slow-cooking meals)

**Cardamom** (Indian & Far East cuisine; some desserts)

**Cayenne pepper** (soup; salad dressings; marinades; savory dishes; hot chocolate)

**Chili powder** (grilled meats; chili; soups; stews, Latin American cuisine)

**Cinnamon** (oatmeal; yogurt; rice dishes; desserts; sweet or savory cuisine)

**Cloves** (meats; stews; rich sauces; cider; chai tea; desserts)

**Coriander** (Latin American & Indian cuisine; pickling; spice rubs for fish & chicken)

**Cumin** (Mexican, Indian & Moroccan cuisine; wild game; chili; rice dishes; spice rubs)

**Curry powder** (Indian cuisine; meat & poultry; sauces; stews; soups; rice; vegetables)

**Dill weed** (tuna salad; fish; eggs; salads; yogurt dips)

**Garlic powder** (spice blends; dry rubs; dips; season meat & vegetables; roasted nuts)

**Ginger** (spice rubs; marinades, season meat; desserts)

**Nutmeg** (desserts; savory dishes; meats; stews; soups; winter squash; leafy greens)

**Onion powder** (dry rubs; marinades; dips)

**Oregano** (Italian cuisine; poultry; fish; dry rubs; marinades; vinaigrettes; egg dishes)

**Paprika** (spice blends; dry rubs; marinades; egg dishes, casseroles; vegetables, goulash)

**Red pepper flakes** (Asian cuisine; soups; pasta dishes; sauces)

**Rosemary** (lamb; beef; pork; poultry; roasted potatoes grilled/roasted vegetables; soups)

**Thyme** (soups; stews; meat; vegetables; sauces; braises; rice dishes; potatoes; bread)

**Turmeric** (Indian curries; egg dishes; soups; rice dishes; leafy greens; roasted vegetables)