

# Flavor and Food Spice Combinations

The following flavor and food combinations, adapted from information provided by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute ([www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)), have the added benefit of making meat, poultry, fish and vegetables tasty without adding salt.

For **meat, poultry and fish**, try one or more of these combinations:

- **Beef:** Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme
- **Lamb:** Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint
- **Pork:** Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano
- **Veal:** Bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano
- **Chicken:** Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme
- **Fish:** Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, marjoram, paprika, pepper

For **vegetables**, experiment with one or more of these combinations:

- **Carrots:** Cinnamon, cloves, dill, ginger, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
- **Corn:** Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley
- **Green Beans:** Dill, curry powder, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme
- **Greens:** Onion, pepper
- **Potatoes:** Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, sage
- **Summer Squash:** Cloves, curry powder, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
- **Winter Squash:** Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, onion
- **Tomatoes:** Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper

**The flavor of certain spices and herbs has been associated with different cultures, for example:**

- Oregano with Italian cooking
- Cilantro with Mexican cooking
- Ginger with Chinese cooking
- Marjoram with French cooking

Source: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension



# When to Add Spices and Herbs

The type of herb and the type of food for which it is used influence the time to add it during food preparation:

**Adding FRESH herbs during cooking.** As a general rule, add fresh herbs near the end of the cooking time or just before serving as prolonged heating can cause flavor and aroma losses.

- Add the more delicate fresh herbs . basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, marjoram and mint . A minute or two before the end of cooking or sprinkle them on the food before it's served.
- The less delicate fresh herbs, such as dill seeds, oregano, rosemary, tarragon and thyme, can be added about the last 20 minutes of cooking.
- For some foods, such as breads, batters, etc., you'll need to add fresh herbs at the beginning of the cooking process.

**Adding DRIED herbs and spices during cooking.** Follow these tips and techniques for best taste when adding dried spices and herbs during cooking.

**Whole** dried spices and herbs (such as whole allspice and bay leaves):

- Release their flavors slower than crumbled or ground ones.
- Are ideal for dishes cooking an hour or more, such as soups and stews.

**Ground** dried spices and herbs:

- Release their flavor quickly.
- May taste best in shorter-cooker recipes or added nearer the end of longer-cooking ones.

**Crumbled** dried herbs may differ:

- Milder herbs (such as basil) may flavor best added toward the end of cooking.
- More robust herbs (such as thyme) can stand longer cooking periods.
- Freshly grinding spices (such as black pepper and nutmeg) provides more flavor than buying them already ground. This also applies to using them in uncooked foods.
- Secure whole spices, such as cloves, in a tea ball for easy removal at the end of cooking.
- Warning: Remove bay leaves at the end of cooking. They can be a choking hazard if left in foods and can cause harmful cuts and scratches in your throat and esophagus.

**UNCOOKED foods.** For uncooked foods, add both fresh and dried spices and herbs several hours before serving to allow flavors to blend.