

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), 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.

