

Selecting, Storing, and Using Fresh Herbs

HYG-5520

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Cooking with herbs can be a quick and simple way to add interesting flavors to foods without adding salt, sugar, or fat. The use of herbs in cooking has become more popular due to more herb selection and availability at grocery stores and farmers' markets, along with an increase in home herb gardening.

For information on herb varieties in Ohio, contact your [county educator in agriculture and natural resources](#) at Ohio State University Extension, or a [master gardener volunteer](#).



Figure 1. Rosemary is a rich source of antioxidants. Photo: CSU-Extension, Pixabay

Selection

Harvest herbs early in the morning after the dew has evaporated. Herbs contain volatile oils which escape when their leaves and stems are damaged. Handle herbs gently to avoid bruising the plants. Select only enough herbs for immediate use unless they are to

be dried or frozen. Herbs should be fresh, clean, and free of disease. Avoid herbs that are discolored or damaged.

Yield

Due to many variables such as moisture content, size, and variety, it is difficult to give specific recommendations. The recommendations below are approximations.

- 2 teaspoons of fresh herbs = $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon dried herbs = $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon powdered herbs

Nutrition

Many culinary herbs, both fresh and dried, have phytonutrients. Phytonutrients may help protect against chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

Storage

Since the flavor and aroma of herbs deteriorates quickly after picking, immediate use is recommended.

- Wash herbs in cool running water and shake to remove excess moisture before use. Do not use soap, detergent, or bleach because these liquids absorb into the herb.
- If unable to use harvested herbs right away, trim their stems and place them in a glass with one inch of water. Cover loosely with plastic bag to allow for air circulation and place in refrigerator. Change water daily. Herbs may last for up to a week stored in this manner.

TIPS ABOUT FROZEN HERBS

- Freeze herbs at their peak freshness for best results.



Figure 2. Parsley is a powerful natural diuretic. Photo: ReStyled Living, Pixabay

- Use frozen herbs within three to six months for best quality.
- Due to the textural changes that occur after freezing, use frozen herbs in cooked dishes.

TIPS ABOUT DRIED HERBS

- Dried herbs may be three to four times stronger than fresh herbs. When using dried herbs, use 1 teaspoon of dried herbs for every 1 tablespoon of fresh herbs that are needed in a recipe.
- Dried herbs can be stored for up to one year and maintain their quality.
- Store dried herbs in an air-tight container in a cool, dark area to preserve freshness.

Serving

Culinary Herb Uses

Herb	Some Uses
Anise	Pork, chicken, fish, stews, beverages, and stewed fruit. Use the seeds in baked goods.
Basil	Tomatoes and tomato dishes, vinegars, rice, eggs, meats, duck, salads, and vegetables.
Chive	Salads, stews, appetizers, vegetables, butter, yogurt, and sour cream sauces.
Dill	Fish and fish sauces, cottage cheese, breads, beets, cucumbers, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, and salads.
Fennel	Tomato dishes, eggs, fish, marinades for meats, carrots, pickles, breads, and baked goods.
Marjoram	Stews, soups, meats, tomato dishes, vegetables, eggs, breads, and French dressing.
Mint	Salads, lemonade, tea, potatoes, scallops, sauces and jelly, sherbet, lamb, and fruit.

Herb	Some Uses
Oregano	Italian tomato sauces, barbecue sauce, soups, eggs, cheese, pork, vegetables, and salad dressings.
Parsley	Tomato sauces, fish, meats and poultry, soups, stews, and vegetables.
Rosemary	Lamb, pork, vegetables, chowders, and cheese.
Sage	Fish, meat, poultry stuffing, chowders, soups, and tomatoes.
Savory	Pork, chowders, stews, fish, eggs, salads, beans, and biscuits.
Tarragon (French)	Eggs, yogurt and sour cream dishes, meat, asparagus, beans, and cucumbers.
Thyme (Lemon or English)	Stews, clam chowder, fish, meat, poultry, eggs, stuffing, bread, biscuits, lima beans, broccoli, and onions.

Herbed Cream Cheese

INGREDIENTS

- 1-pound low-fat cream cheese
- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1 clove minced garlic
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh basil leaves
- ¼ teaspoon chopped fresh marjoram leaves
- ⅛ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place cream cheese and butter in food processor or mixer.
2. Add garlic and herbs and blend.
3. Serve with crackers.

For more information on preserving herbs, go to ohioline.osu.edu or contact your local Ohio State University Extension office for the following fact sheet:

- [Preserving Herbs: Freezing and Drying, HYG-5360](#)

References

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Smith, Ronald, and Julie Garden-Robinson. *From Garden to Table: Harvesting Herbs for Healthy Eating*. Fargo: North Dakota State University, 2016. PDF. ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/from-garden-to-table-harvesting-herbs-for-healthy-eating/h1267.pdf.

Tufts University. 2017. "Maximizing Flavor with Herbs and Spices." Health & Nutrition Letter. May 5, 2017. nutritionletter.tufts.edu/issues/13_6/specialreports/Maximizing-Flavor-with-Herbs-and-Spices_2166-1.html.

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SEASONING CHEAT SHEET

Combine these seasonings to bring flavorful vibes to your plate.

- 1 Mix together equal parts of each individual herb/spice.
- 2 Add salt & pepper, to taste.
- 3 Rub, sprinkle or marinate your veggies.

MEDITERRANEAN



Onion Powder



Garlic Powder



Oregano or Basil



Dill or Thyme

use w/ mushrooms, cucumbers, eggplants, kale, tomatoes

AMERICAN



Onion Powder



Garlic Powder



Basil, Bay Leaf or Thyme



Cayenne Pepper

use w/ mushrooms, onions, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower

MIDDLE EASTERN



Cumin or Coriander



Garlic Powder



Allspice



Bay Leaf or Oregano

use w/ squash, sweet potatoes, carrots

FRENCH



Dill, Tarragon or Marjoram



Bay Leaf or Oregano



Basil



Thyme or Rosemary

use w/ eggplant, zucchini, potatoes, onions, celery, carrots

LATIN



Cumin, Coriander



Chili Powder



Onion Powder



Bay Leaf or Oregano

use w/ corn, onions, peppers, beans

INDIAN



Cumin or Coriander



Ground Ginger



Turmeric or Curry



Cayenne Pepper

use w/ cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, onions, okra, lentils

ASIAN



Onion Powder



Garlic Powder



Ground Ginger Red Pepper Flakes

use w/ snow peas, shiitake mushrooms, bok choy, napa cabbage, chinese eggplant, cucumbers

ITALIAN



Red Pepper Flakes



Garlic Powder



Parsley, Oregano or Basil



Thyme or Rosemary

use w/ bell peppers, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, mushrooms, arugula

CARIBBEAN



Cayenne or Red Pepper Flakes



Garlic Powder



Allspice



Sugar

use w/ eggplant, zucchini, asparagus, yuca, mushrooms, bell peppers, corn

Blackened Fish Recipe

This blackened fish recipe is the perfect easy weeknight meal with your favorite fish butter basted, generously seasoned with blackening seasoning and seared.

Prep Time
10 mins

Cook Time
10 mins

Course: Main Course Cuisine: American

Keyword: blackened, fish, seafood, spicy Servings: 4 Calories: 128kcal

Author: [Mike Hultquist](#)



★★★★★
5 from 8 votes

Ingredients

FOR THE BLACKENING SEASONING

- 2 tablespoons smoked paprika or use regular paprika
- 1 tablespoon cayenne powder use more for a spicier blend
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme

FOR THE FISH

- 4 fish fillets 6 ounces each, skinless - I used Icelandic cod today, but any fish fillet will do
- ¼ cup butter melted

Instructions

1. Mix all of the blackening spices together in a small bowl. Make sure it is blended evenly.
2. Brush one side of each fish fillet generously with melted butter.
3. Generously spoon on the blackening seasoning.
4. Heat a large cast iron skillet to high heat and add the salmon fillets, buttery-seasoned side down.
5. Cook 3-5 minutes to blacken.
6. Brush or drizzle on the remaining butter, then generously add more seasoning.
7. Flip the fish fillet and cook another 2-3 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through and flaky.
8. Serve!

Notes

Store any extra blackening seasoning in airtight containers and use as needed.

Nutrition

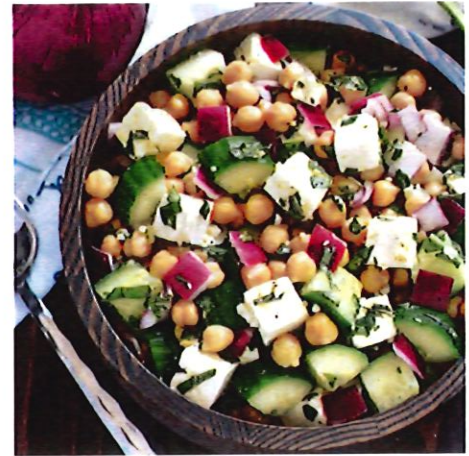
Calories: 128kcal | Carbohydrates: 5g | Protein: 1g | Fat: 12g | Saturated Fat: 7g | Cholesterol: 31mg | Sodium: 688mg | Potassium: 131mg | Fiber: 2g | Sugar: 1g | Vitamin A: 2599IU | Vitamin C: 1mg | Calcium: 25mg | Iron: 1mg

Yield: 10

Chickpea Cucumber Feta Salad

This Chickpea Cucumber Feta Salad has ALL the best flavors! Loaded with chickpeas, cucumbers, red onions, feta cheese, and fresh basil....this salad is so easy to make and is the perfect side dish for any meal!

Prep Time	Total Time
15 minutes	15 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 (15 ounce) cans chickpeas
- 1 large cucumber, chopped
- 8 ounces feta cheese, diced
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 1/4 cup minced basil
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Instructions

1. Drain and rinse the chickpeas. Chop the cucumbers, feta, red onion and basil.
2. Combine the chickpeas, cucumber, feta cheese, red onion, and basil in a medium mixing bowl.
3. Prepare dressing by combining remaining ingredients in a small bowl or jar. Mix well.
4. Pour dressing over salad and stir to combine.

Nutrition Information: Yield: 10 Serving Size: 1 grams

Amount Per Serving: Calories: 196 Total Fat: 16g Saturated Fat: 5g Trans Fat: 0g Unsaturated Fat: 11g Cholesterol: 20mg
Sodium: 272mg Carbohydrates: 8g Fiber: 2g Sugar: 3g Protein: 5g

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Cuisine: Mediterranean / **Category:** Salads

<https://www.lmontreedwelling.com/chickpea-cucumber-feta-salad/>



SPICES BY CUISINE

These spice combinations will have you whipping up dishes from all over the world! Use this chart as a guide to give your meals those traditional ethnic flavors you love.

MEXICAN



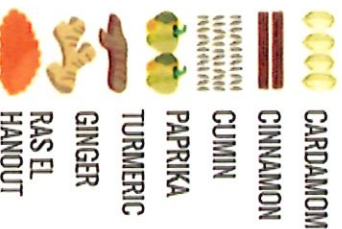
CARIBBEAN



FRENCH



NORTH AFRICAN



CAJUN



THAI



MEDITERRANEAN



INDIAN



MIDDLE EASTERN



COOKSMARTS

helping home cooks live happier, simpler, smarter in the kitchen

To learn more about adding flavor to your meals visit

cooksmaps.com/flavor

