

Fresh Herbs: A Nutritious and Delicious Way to Flavor Your Food

Kristen Johnson, Registered Dietitian, Associate Professor, Nutrition Specialist, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Kristin Riggsbee, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist/Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist, Assistant Professor,

Nutrition and Food Safety Specialist, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Patricia Paden, Extension Agent II, UT Extension Anderson County

Fresh herbs are full of flavor, vibrant color and nutrition. People have been preparing food with fresh herbs throughout history. There are many types of fresh herbs that you can find throughout the year. Use this publication to learn more about ways you can use fresh herbs to add rich flavors and bright colors to foods and drinks that you prepare at home.

Tips for Using Fresh Herbs

- Add herbs and other flavorings like spices, citrus juice and vinegar instead of salt and added sugars to flavor your food.
- In general, fresh herbs should be added at the later stages of the cooking process.
 - Add tender herbs like chives, parsley and cilantro to dishes just before serving or at the end of the cooking process to preserve their flavor, texture and appearance.
 - Use sturdy herbs like rosemary and thyme that have a stronger flavor about 10-20 minutes before the dish has finished cooking.
- Use fresh herbs in place of dried herbs in recipes. Dried herbs typically have a stronger flavor than fresh herbs and should be added to a recipe early in the cooking process. A general rule is to use a 3:1 ratio of fresh herbs to dried herbs. For example, if your recipe calls for one teaspoon of dried herbs, substitute three teaspoons of fresh herbs.
- Adjust the amount of herbs in recipes based on your preference. You can always start with a smaller amount and add more until the dish suits your preference.
- Purchase fresh herbs just before using them to preserve their freshness and flavor. Look for herbs that have a fresh, flavorful fragrance. Avoid herbs that are wilting or discolored.
- Wash fresh herbs under cool running water before using them.
- Store fresh herbs in the refrigerator to preserve freshness and flavor. Remove rubber bands and wilted and/or discolored leaves before refrigerating. Cut the stems of fresh herbs diagonally, place stems in a jar filled with about two inches of water, cover loosely with a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator.
- Freeze fresh herbs before they spoil. Wash, drain and gently pat the herbs dry with a clean paper towel. Wrap a few sprigs or leaves in freezer paper and place them in a freezer bag. Seal the bag and freeze until you're ready to use the herbs.
- Drying herbs is both a cost effective and space saving way to save your herbs. You can easily dry them in ovens, dehydrators or air fryers (with a drying function) at low temperatures until completely dry and brittle. The herbs can then be stripped of their stems and stored in air-tight containers indefinitely.



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Table 1. Use the table below to use fresh herbs in your favorite dishes

Herb	Flavor....	Preparation...	Pair it with...
Basil	Sweet or Genoese basil has a sweet, peppery flavor. Thai basil has a stronger anise flavor that is like licorice. There are many types of basil, but these are some of the most common	Use a culinary technique called chiffonade - Remove the leaves from the stem. Roll up the leaves tightly and gently slice. Chop the leaves to smaller pieces, if desired.	Pair sweet basil with pasta dishes, tomatoes, salads, pizza, soups, vegetables, chicken and fish. Pair Thai basil with soups, stews, stir fry and curry.
Chives	Like an onion, but milder	Chop the long, slender stems to the desired size. Add chives at the end of cooking or just before serving to preserve their flavor.	Chives pair well with eggs, salads, fish, vegetables, soups, dips, potato dishes. Chives are a great garnish for your meals! Sprinkle chives on top of your dishes just before serving for a mild onion flavor and a beautiful green color.
Cilantro	Bright, refreshing	Remove the leaves from the stems, chop if desired, and top dishes with the fresh herbs. Add fresh cilantro to dishes just before serving. Avoid cooking with cilantro to preserve the flavor.	Cilantro is commonly used in Latin and Asian dishes. Cilantro pairs well with rice, fish, beans and lentils, salads, soups, salsa and vegetables. Sprinkle chopped cilantro on your dishes just before serving them for a bright, fresh flavor and green color.
Lavender	Floral, sweet, strong, fragrant	Choose varieties that are labeled as culinary lavender.	Lavender pairs well with fruit, ice cream, lamb, stews, honey and sweets. Keep in mind that lavender is very strong. Consider infusing items with lavender for a milder flavor. Place lavender leaves or flower buds in sugar or salt to add a mild lavender flavor. Make a lavender simple syrup to flavor teas and other drinks.
Mint	Sweet, cool, slightly peppery	Remove leaves from the stem. Chop if desired.	Mint is commonly used to prepare or garnish sweets and in teas and salads. Mint is commonly used in savory Middle Eastern and North African dishes. There are many types of mint with different flavors. Experiment with different types of mint to find what you enjoy!
Oregano	Earthy	Remove the leaves from the stem. Chop if desired.	Oregano is commonly used in Mediterranean and Mexican dishes. Pair oregano with tomato dishes, pasta dishes, pizza, soups, stews, meat dishes, fish and poultry dishes. Oregano can be used as a substitute for marjoram.

Parsley	Light, peppery	Remove the leaves and tender parts of the stem. Chop if desired.	Flat leaf parsley can be used as an ingredient while cooking and preparing food. Curly parsley is best used as a garnish. Pair flat leaf parsley with chicken, fish, pasta dishes, vegetables, sauces, salads and soups. Add flat leaf parsley to dishes just before serving for a bright, fresh flavor and vibrant green color.
Rosemary	Woodsy, Lemony, Strong	Remove the leaves by gently pulling the leaves down the stem. Chop leaves if desired.	Rosemary has a strong flavor that pairs well with meats, poultry, soups, stews and sauces.
Thyme	Light, lemony	Remove the leaves by gently pulling the leaves down the stem.	Thyme is commonly used in European and American dishes. Pair thyme with meat, poultry fish, soups, stews and vegetables.
Marjoram	Earthy, Similar to Oregano but milder and sweeter	Remove the leaves from the stem. Chop if desired.	Marjoram is a versatile herb that pairs well with meat, fish, poultry, vegetables, pizza and pasta sauce.

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