

Herbs and Spices

Seasoned cooks know that a pinch of this herb and a dash of that spice can really perk up a dish. A well stocked spice rack can be one of the quickest and least expensive ways to add flair to ordinary meals. Store dried herbs and spices in tightly closed glass containers. Keep them in a cool, dark, and dry place. Avoid storing them in sunlight or by a heat source like over a stove.

For best flavor, keep dried herbs and ground spices for up to 6 months. They can be used if they are older, but the flavors might not be as intense. Whole spices can be stored for 1 to 2 years.

Select fresh herbs that are fragrant with bright, fresh looking leaves. Avoid those with wilted, yellowing or browning leaves. Wrap fresh herbs in a slightly damp paper towel and place in a resealable plastic bag. Press as much air as possible out of the bag and seal. Store in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.

*To substitute dried herbs for fresh, use one-third less. For example if a recipe calls for 1 tablespoon fresh, use 1 teaspoon dried.

Allspice: Whole dried berries, or ground. Tastes like, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. Use for baked goods, jerked meats, sauces, roasts, and root vegetables.	Aniseed: Oval, greenish-brown seeds. Licorice-like flavor similar to fennel. Use for pickles, stews, seafood, beets, cauliflower, etc.	Basil: Fresh green or purple leaves or dried and crushed. Sweet flavor with hints of mint, pepper and cloves. Use for sauce, chicken, meat, zucchini, summer squashes.	Bay Leaf: Whole, fresh or dried, dull green leaves. Savory, spicy and aromatic. Use for soups, stews, pickles meat.	Black/White Pepper: Whole, cracked, coarse or ground (black); whole or ground (white). Black has a sharp, hot piney flavor; white is milder. Use for all types of cooking; white adds pepper flavor without flecks.	Caraway Seeds: Light to dark brown seeds. Sweet blend of dill and anise flavors. Use for breads, pork, potatoes, sauerkraut.
Cardamom: Pods, brownish-black seeds or ground. Sweet, spicy flavor and slightly pungent. Use for chicken, curries, meat.	Cayenne Pepper: Ground, also known as ground red pepper. Pungent, hot flavor. Use for chili, soups, sauces, poultry, meat, seafood.	Celery Seed: Light-brown or tan seeds. Strong and bitter flavor. Use for fish, eggs, salad dressings.	Chervil: Fresh leaves or dried and crushed. Fresh has a hint of anise and dry has a hint of parsley flavor. Use for fish, eggs, poultry, salads.	Chives: Fresh or freezer-dried hollow stems. Delicate and peppery, mild onion flavor. Use for potatoes, eggs, sauces, seafood, salads.	Cilantro: Fresh leaves. When dried, it's known as coriander. Pungent, strong flavor. Use for ethnic dishes (mexican or asian) chicken, seafood.
Cinnamon: Sticks or ground. Sweet and pungent flavor. Use for fruit desserts, warm beverages.	Cloves: Whole or ground. Pungent, medicinal, sweet flavor. Use for fruit desserts, lamb, warm beverages.	Coriander: Dried and crushed leaves, seeds or ground seeds. Mildly sweet, spicy flavor. Use for ethnic dishes (North African, Mediterranean, Asian), stews, curries.	Cumin: Seeds and ground. Pungent, earthy, slightly bitter flavor. Use for chili, chicken, stew.	Dill: Fresh leaves, dried and crushed or seeds. Fresh, sweet, grassy flavor. Use for pickles, fish, cucumbers.	Fennel: Seeds. Sweet and mildly licorice-like flavor. Use for seafood, sausage.
Ginger: Fresh root, crystallized or ground. Pungent, sweet, spicy, hot flavor. Use for pumpkin, chicken and drinks.	Mace: Ground. Nutmeg-like flavor. Use for poultry, fish.	Marjoram: Fresh leaves, dried and crushed. Oregano-like flavor. Use for meat, poultry, seafood and vegetables.	Mint: Fresh leaves or dried and crushed. Fresh, strong, cool flavor. Use for lamb, vegetables, meats.	Mustard: Ground or as seeds. Pungent, sharp, hot flavor. Use for meats, vinaigrettes, seafood, sauces.	Nutmeg: Whole or ground. Sweet, spicy flavor. Use for vegetables, poultry meat.
Oregano: Fresh leaves, dried and crushed or ground. Pungent, slightly bitter flavor. Use for chicken, lamb, vegetables.	Paprika: Ground. Mild to hot, sweet flavor. Use for poultry, meat, vegetables.	Parsley: Fresh leaves, curly or Italian (flat-leaf), or dried and flaked. Fresh, slightly peppery flavor. Use for poultry, seafood, vegetables.	Poppy Seeds: Seeds. Nut-like flavor. Use for fruits, smoothies.	Rosemary: Fresh leaves on stems or dried. Pungent flavor with a hint of pine. Use for lamb, poultry, vegetables.	Saffron: Threads (whole stigmas) or powder. Pungent, bitter flavor. Use for bouillabaisse, curries, fish, poultry, rice.

<p>Sage: Fresh leaves, dried and crushed or rubbed. Pungent, slightly bitter, musty mint flavor. Use for poultry.</p>	<p>Salt, Kosher: Only as nonionized. Coarser, larger grains with fluffier look. Less sodium per teaspoon than table salt. Use for brines, salt crusts on meats and fish, marinades, savory dishes, coating rims of glasses.</p>	<p>Salt, Sea: Many varieties and in large or fine grains. Color ranges from white to clay to pinkish-brown to gray. Less salty than table salt but may impart other subtle flavors. Use at the end of cooking to season food.</p>	<p>Salt, Table: Don't use when able.</p>	<p>Savory: Fresh leaves, dried and crushed or ground. Piquant blend of mint and thyme. Use for lamb, poultry.</p>	<p>Sesame Seeds: Seeds. Nut-like flavor. Use for breads, chicken, seafood, chickpeas.</p>
<p>Tarragon: Fresh leaves or dried and crushed. Strong, spicy, anise-like flavors. Use for poultry, seafood, meats, vegetables.</p>	<p>Thyme: Fresh leaves or dried and crushed. Pungent, earthy, spicy flavor. Use for meat, poultry, soups, stews.</p>	<p>Turmeric: Fround. Pungent, bitter, earthy flavor. Use for curries, lam, chicken, meat.</p>			