

Tips for using herbs & spices

Here are some tried and true matches. Use one or two or a combination of up to three, but don't be afraid to try your own combinations.

Beans (dried) — cumin, cayenne, chili, parsley, pepper, sage, savory, thyme

Beef — basil, bay, chili, cilantro, curry, cumin, garlic, marjoram, mustard, oregano, parsley, pepper, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme

Breads — anise, basil, caraway, cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, dill, garlic, lemon peel, orange peel, oregano, poppy seeds, rosemary, saffron, sage, thyme

Cheese — basil, caraway, celery seed, chervil, chili, chives, coriander, cumin, dill, garlic, horseradish, lemon peel, marjoram, mint, mustard, nutmeg, paprika, parsley, pepper, sage, tarragon, thyme

Chicken — allspice, basil, bay, cinnamon, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, lemongrass, mustard, paprika, rosemary, saffron, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme,

Corn — chili, curry, dill, marjoram, parsley, savory, thyme

Eggs — basil, chervil, chili, chives, curry, dill, fennel, ginger, lemon peel, marjoram, oregano, paprika, parsley, pepper, sage, tarragon, thyme

Fish — anise, basil, bay, cayenne, celery seed, chives, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, lemon peel, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme, saffron, sage, savory, tarragon, marjoram

Fruits — allspice, anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, ginger, mint

Lamb — basil, bay, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, curry, dill, garlic, marjoram, mint, mustard, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, tarragon, thyme

Potatoes — basil, caraway, celery seed, chervil, chives, coriander, dill, marjoram, oregano, paprika, parsley, poppy seed, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

Salad Dressings — basil, celery seed, chives, dill, fennel, garlic, horseradish, marjoram, mustard, oregano, paprika, parsley, pepper, rosemary, saffron, tarragon, thyme

Salads — basil, caraway, chives, dill, garlic, lemon peel, lovage, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, tarragon, thyme

Soups — basil, bay, chervil, chili, chives, cumin, dill, fennel, garlic, marjoram, parsley, pepper, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme

Sweets — allspice, angelica, anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, fennel, ginger, lemon peel, mace, nutmeg, mint, orange peel, rosemary

Tomatoes — basil, bay, celery seed, cinnamon, chili, curry, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, gumbo file, lemongrass, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, savory, tarragon, thyme

Complimentary Herbs

As a beginner, you may want to stick with herbs and spices that are known to complement each other. Common flavor families include:

Bouquet Garnis — basil, bay, oregano, parsley

Herbal — basil, marjoram, rosemary, thyme

Hot — chili peppers, cilantro, cumin, garlic

Pungent — celery, chili peppers, cumin, curry, ginger, black pepper

Spicy — cinnamon, ginger, black pepper, star anise

Sweet — allspice, anise, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg

An easy method for testing herb and spice combinations is to mix them with small amounts of a mild cheese, like cream cheese. Allow them to sit for at least an hour, then sample your blends, noting which flavors you most enjoy. Be sure to label the samples so you'll know how to duplicate or modify each to suit your taste.

For Every Thing, There is a Seasoning

If you enjoy cooking with herbs and spices, you find creative cooking opportunities everywhere. You can make your own blends (curry powder or pumpkin pie spice, for example), herb vinegars, herbal cheese, teas, jellies... But don't neglect the endless possibilities for everyday cooking. A pinch of this, or a teaspoon of that, will make all the food you serve special.