

TO DRY HERBS

Rinse leaves and stems in cold water. Shake off excess water. Cut off any discolored leaves or stems.

Bag Drying: Tie the herbs in small bunches with string. Suspend the bundles upside down in small brown paper bags by tying the string around the top of the bag. Cut some small 1/2 inch holes in the sides of the bag to let the air circulate. Hang the bags anywhere there is good, warm air circulation. It should take from 5 to 10 days for the leaves to dry enough to crumble easily.

Room Drying: Place herbs on a cookie sheet or on a tray; made of window screening. Cover the herbs with cheese cloth to keep them dust and insect free. Put in a warm place, anywhere with good air circulation. It should take 5 to 10 days for the leaves to dry enough to crumble easily.

Oven Drying: Even at the lowest setting, most ovens are too hot to dry herbs without destroying some of their flavor. If the oven is turned on at the lowest setting with the oven door left ajar, you will have fairly good results. It should take several hours for the leaves to reach the dry crumble stage.

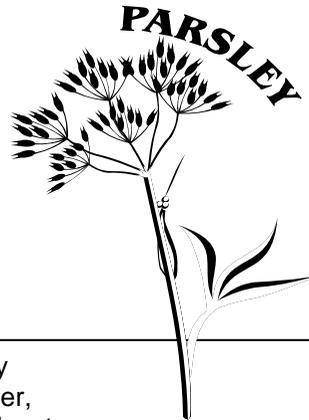
Microwave Oven Drying: THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED! The herbs have so little substance, it is similar to running the microwave with nothing in it. It could damage the magnetron tube.

Dehydrator: Place prepared herbs on the drying trays in a preheated dryer with the thermostat set for 90° to 100° F. It should take 1 to 3 hours to dry the herbs. Do not mix trays of herbs with other kinds of foods because the drying temperatures will differ.

Freezing Herbs: Clean the herbs and pat dry. Place on a cookie sheet and freeze for about an hour. Remove to a freezer bag or container. Use the same amount of frozen herb as you would fresh herb.

TO STORE HERBS

Store dried herbs in a cool, dark place. It is best not to store herbs near the stove since the extra warmth will cut their shelf life considerably. Store in air-tight containers, either glass or plastic. Dried herbs should keep well for 6 to 13 months before they begin to lose their flavor.



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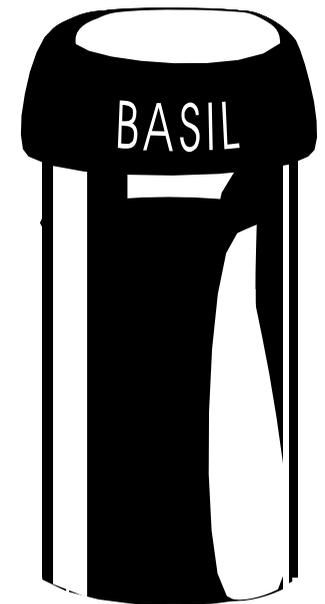
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Have You Tried?

- ❖ Rosemary with lamb or with peas
- ❖ Mace with squash
- ❖ Marjoram with mushrooms or with hash brown potatoes
- ❖ Cumin seed with green beans
- ❖ Mint leaves cooked with fresh peas
- ❖ Basil in deviled eggs
- ❖ Oregano in ground beef patties
- ❖ Celery seed in French dressing
- ❖ Sage with baked fish
- ❖ Savory with scrambled eggs
- ❖ Dill with sour cream or cream sauce
- ❖ Thyme on fresh tomatoes
- ❖ Garlic butter on vegetables
- ❖ Horseradish in applesauce served with pork
- ❖ Tarragon on broiled chicken
- ❖ Ground mustard in macaroni & cheese
- ❖ Any herb blend in hot biscuits
- ❖ Parsley and tarragon in green salad
- ❖ Caraway seed and vinegar as a marinade for beets

Herbs



Do Yourself a Flavor

HERBS

An herb is a temperate zone plant and is used for seasoning food (spices are from tropical plants). Usually the leaves or seeds are the part of the plant used for seasoning food.

Herbs can be used fresh, dried, or they can be frozen. Commonly, dried herbs are used by most people, but more and more people are beginning grow some herbs in summer gardens or in winter window pots. Even a few specialty markets are offering fresh herbs along with their produce.

Most recipes that include herbs refer to the dried variety. If fresh herbs are called for, the recipe will usually state “fresh”. The amount to use is quite different since dried herbs have a much more intense flavor.

1 teaspoon dried herbs – 3 teaspoons fresh herbs. If dried herbs are powdered, use about half that much.

Herbs are used to enhance the flavor of food not overwhelm it. Use sparingly. You can always add more.

STRONG DOMINATE FLAVORS:

Bay, rosemary and sage:

- Fresh – use 1 teaspoon for 4-6 servings
- Dried – use 1/4 teaspoon for 4-6 servings

MEDIUM FLAVORS:

Basil, celery seed or leaves, dill, fennel, French tarragon, garlic, marjoram, mint, oregano, savory (winter or summer), thyme:

- Fresh – 1 to 2 teaspoons for 4-6 servings
- Dried – 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon for 4-6 servings

DELICATE FLAVORS:

Chervil, chives, parsley:

- Fresh – 3 or more teaspoons for 4-6 servings
- Dried – 1 or more teaspoons for 4-6 servings

TIPS FOR COOKING WITH HERBS

- Add herbs to a cooked dish about 1/2 hour before the end of the cooking time to maintain the best flavor of the herb.
- Use about 1/4 teaspoon of most dried herbs or herb blends for every 4 servings.
- Add the herbs to some of the cooking fat (oil, margarine, or butter) before adding to the recipe. This facilitates the release of the herb’s flavor.
- Add herbs to a cold dish several hours before serving to bring out the flavor of the herb.

ON A REDUCED SODIUM DIET?

Herbs or herb blends have been used for centuries to enhance the flavor of food. Lately they have regained great interest by people who are on sodium reduced diets. The herbs will lend flavor to a variety of foods without the addition of salt.

To use herbs or blends of herbs, add 2 teaspoons of lemon juice to the recipe for every 4 servings for a salt-like tang. Then add 1/4 teaspoon of a dried herb blend (or single herb) for every 4 servings. You can increase the amount if necessary.

HERB BLENDS TO REPLACE SALT

(Use these in your salt shaker to replace salt)

Saltless surprise: 2 teaspoons of garlic powder, 1 teaspoon EACH of basil, oregano, and powdered lemon rind. Mix well in a blender. Add a few rice grains to prevent caking.

Pungent salt substitute: 3 teaspoons of basil, 2 teaspoons EACH of summer savory, celery seed, ground cumin seed, sage, and marjoram, and 1 teaspoon lemon thyme. Mix well, then powder with a mortar and pestle or the back of a spoon in a small bowl.

Spicy saltless seasoning: 1 teaspoon EACH of cloves, pepper, ground coriander, 2 teaspoons paprika, and 1 Tablespoon rosemary. Mix ingredients in a blender.

HERB BLENDS

Herbs can be combined for specific foods. Having the combinations on hand will speed cooking, but fresh blends can be made as needed. These can be added loose to the dish to be cooked or they can be wrapped in cheesecloth and removed before serving.

Blends should be made with equal parts of each herb unless otherwise noted.

Some suggestions for herb blends:

Egg herbs: basil, dill weed, garlic, parsley

Fish herbs: basil, bay leaf, French tarragon, lemon thyme, parsley (options: fennel, sage or savory)

Poultry herbs: marjoram (2 parts), sage (3 parts)

Salad herbs: basil, parsley, French tarragon

Tomato sauce herbs: basil (2 parts), bay leaf, marjoram, oregano, parsley, (options: celery leaves, cloves)

Vegetable herbs: basil, parsley, savory

Italian blend: basil, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme

Barbecue blend: garlic, oregano, cumin, chili powder

Fine herbs: parsley, chervil, French tarragon, basil, fennel, oregano, sage

Bouquet garni: Bay leaf, parsley, & thyme. Wrap the herbs in cheesecloth, remove before serving the food.

Basic herb butter: One stick of butter or margarine (preferably unsalted), 1-3 Tablespoons dried herbs OR 1-6 Tablespoons fresh herbs, 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice, pepper to taste. Combine ingredients, mix until fluffy. Pack in covered container and set aside for at least one hour. 4 ounces of cream cheese may be substituted for the butter/margarine.

Herb Vinegars: Heat cider or white vinegar in an enamel pan (do not boil). Pour into a bottle and add one or several herbs of your choice. Fresh or dried will work. Let mixture “brew” for 2 weeks before using. If you have used dried herbs, you may want to strain the vinegar before using.

Tarragon is a popular flavored vinegar, but any herb you like will work. Use in salad dressings or in any meat or vegetable dish calling for vinegar.

WHEN TO PICK HERBS

For the best flavor, gather leaves and stems on a sunny morning just after the dew has evaporated. Harvest just before the plant begins to flower for the most delicate flavor. Some herbs become bitter after the flower has dried. The new leaves at the tip of the plant are the best.