

HERB BASICS

General Health Benefits of Herbs

- Herbs are rich in vitamins and minerals, such as vitamins A, C and K, iron, calcium and magnesium.
- Many herbs contain antioxidants that help protect cells from damage and reduce inflammation.
- Herbs like mint, ginger, and fennel can aid digestion and relieve symptoms of indigestion and bloating.
- Herbs such as turmeric, ginger and rosemary have anti-inflammatory properties that can help reduce inflammation and pain.
- Herbs like garlic, echinacea and elderberry can boost the immune system and help fight off infections.
- Herbs such as lavender, chamomile, and lemon balm can help reduce stress, anxiety and promote relaxation and sleep.
- Herbs enhance the flavor of dishes and can replace less healthy condiments.

Fresh vs. Dried Herbs

Flavor Intensity: Fresh herbs have a more delicate flavor; dried herbs are more concentrated

Usage: General Rule: Use 1/3 the amount of dried herbs as you would fresh

Storage: Fresh herbs need refrigeration, dried herbs should be stored in a cool, dark place

Shelf Life: Fresh herbs last a few days to a week; dried herbs can last up to a year if stored properly

Applications: *Fresh herbs*

have more delicate and vibrant flavor
are great for garnishes and finishing dishes
best used in raw dishes and salads
Great in pests, salad dressings, chimichurri-type blends

Dried herbs

have more concentrated flavor, use in smaller quantities
are ideal for long-cooking dishes, stews and sauces

Drying Herbs

Air Drying: Hang small bunches upside down in a dark, dry, and well-ventilated area

Oven Drying: Spread herbs on baking sheet, set oven to low (~100-110°F), & dry for 2-4 hrs

Dehydrator: Use a food dehydrator following manufacturer's instructions (low setting)

Tips:

- Ensure herbs are fully dry to prevent mold
- Store dried herbs in airtight containers away from light and heat
- Label containers with the herb name *and date of drying*
- Use dried herbs within a year for the best flavor

Freezing Herbs

Whole Leaves: Wash and dry herbs, place in a single layer on a baking sheet, freeze, then transfer to freezer bags

Herb Ice Cubes: Chop herbs, place in ice cube trays, fill with water or olive oil, and freeze

Tips:

- Label containers with the herb name *and date*
- Use frozen herbs within 6 months for best flavor, but up to a year is OK

CLASSIC HERB COMBINATIONS:

- **Italian Blend:** Basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme
- **French Fines Herbes:** Tarragon, chives, parsley, chervil
- **Herbes de Provence:** Thyme, rosemary, lavender, savory

Basil / Tomatoes Rosemary / Lamb Thyme / Chicken Mint / Peas Dill / Fish

Experiment with different combinations to find your favorites

Use fresh herbs for a more delicate flavor and dried herbs for a stronger taste

(for more ideas on herb combinations and food pairings, see separate document)