

Cooking with Herbs & Spices

Supports: Building Block 7 — Food: Satisfaction, Seasoning & Preparation

Why It Matters

Herbs and spices are the easiest way to make healthy food taste genuinely good — which is what makes healthy eating last. They add big flavor with no added salt, sugar, or fat, and they let you enjoy vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains without anything feeling plain. You do not need a cabinet full of them or any special skill; a handful of versatile seasonings will carry most of your cooking.

What to Know

A starter set that covers most meals

- Garlic and onion powder — savory depth for almost anything.
- Black pepper, paprika, and cumin — warmth and everyday flavor.
- Italian blend or oregano and basil — for tomato dishes, chicken, and vegetables.
- Chili powder or cayenne — a little heat when you want it.
- Cinnamon — for oatmeal, fruit, and sweet dishes without added sugar.

Getting the most flavor

- Add dried herbs early in cooking; add fresh herbs near the end.
- Bloom spices in a little oil or heat to wake up their flavor.
- Taste as you go, and build up gradually.

Salt swap: When a dish tastes flat, reach for an acid (a squeeze of lemon or a splash of vinegar) or more herbs before more salt. It brightens the food without the sodium.

A Herb & Spice Pairing Guide

★ **Bryce's Favorites** — *the herbs, spices, and blends our co-founder and home cook, Bryce, reaches for most. Starred items are his go-tos.*

Herb / Spice	Pairs well with
Allspice	Baked goods, sauces, beef, pork, Caribbean dishes
Basil ★	Italian dishes, tomatoes, soups, salads, pasta, infused water
Bay leaf ★	Soups, stews, beans, braises, tomato sauces, rice (add whole; remove before serving)
Black pepper ★	Nearly everything — eggs, vegetables, meats, soups, salads, dressings
Cardamom	Apples, Indian dishes, coffee, squash
Chili powder	Bean or meat stews, soups
Chipotle pepper	Mexican and Tex-Mex dishes, beans, chicken, pork, sweet potatoes, corn, soups, stews, marinades

Herb / Spice	Pairs well with
Chives	Soups, potatoes, salads, omelets, pasta
Cilantro ★	Mexican dishes, rice, beans, fish, chicken, vegetables, salsas, salads
Cinnamon ★	Baked goods, sweet vegetables, oatmeal, fruit, hot beverages
Coriander	Latin, Spanish, and Indian dishes, soups, curries, sauces
Cumin ★	Mexican and Indian dishes, soups, beans, chicken, fish
Curry	Indian dishes, chicken, fish, beef
Dill	Yogurt, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, fish
Fennel seed ★	Tomato sauces, sausage-style dishes, roasted vegetables, pork, breads, soups
Garlic powder ★	Almost any savory dish — vegetables, meats, beans, soups, dressings, rubs
Ginger	Vegetables, chicken, salad dressings, marinades, tea, Asian and Indian dishes
Marjoram	Poultry, tomato dishes, soups, beans, vegetables (milder than oregano)
Mint	Fruit, yogurt, peas, salads, lamb, tea, grain salads
Nutmeg ★	Baked goods, eggs, sweet vegetables, beef
Onion powder ★	Savory depth for soups, stews, dressings, meats, vegetables, rubs
Oregano ★	Italian and tomato-based dishes, soups, pasta, meat, poultry
Paprika	Spanish dishes, potatoes, soups, stews, baked fish, salad dressings
Parsley	Potatoes, tomato-based sauces, fish, soups
Red pepper flakes ★	Pasta, pizza, soups, roasted vegetables, eggs — anywhere you want heat
Rosemary ★	Mushrooms, roasted potatoes, ripe melon, poultry, roasted and grilled meats
Sage	Chicken, potatoes, bean stews, soups, stuffing
Sesame seed ★	Salads, stir-fries, roasted vegetables, grain bowls, Asian dishes, breads
Smoked paprika ★	Roasted potatoes, beans and lentils, chicken, pork, eggs, roasted vegetables, rice and bean dishes
Tarragon	Chicken, fish, eggs, salad dressings, tomatoes, mushrooms, carrots
Thyme	Fish, poultry, tomatoes, beans, eggplant, mushrooms, potatoes, squash, stuffing
Turmeric	Indian dishes, potatoes, vegetables

★ = Bryce's Favorites. Basil, oregano, and cilantro are favorites Bryce especially likes fresh. Kosher and sea salt are staples he keeps on hand — used sparingly to finish a dish after building flavor with the seasonings above.

★ Bryce's Favorite Blends (by Fresco Spice Blends)

A few pre-mixed blends do a lot of work. These are the ones Bryce keeps within reach — with what's in them and where they shine.

Southwest Chipotle *(Fresco Spice Blends)*

Ingredients: Chili powder, cilantro, cumin, onion, garlic, smoked chipotle, smoked paprika, unrefined sea salt, black pepper, and spices.

Pairs well with: Beans, chicken, pork, tacos, sweet potatoes, corn, soups, stews, roasted vegetables, eggs (used in the NuStart Southwest Chipotle Chicken Chili).

Penney's Little Italy *(Fresco Spice Blends)*

Ingredients: Garlic, sea salt, basil, oregano, red pepper flake.

Pairs well with: Pasta, tomato sauces, pizza, chicken, roasted vegetables, soups, garlic bread, salad dressings.

Everything but the Bagel *(Trader Joe's)*

Ingredients: Sesame seeds, sea salt, garlic, onion, poppy seeds.

Pairs well with: Eggs, avocado toast, cottage cheese, salads, roasted vegetables, chicken.

Pumpkin Pie Spice

Ingredients: Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves.

Pairs well with: Oatmeal, sweet potato, winter squash, smoothies, yogurt, baked goods.

Try This

Cook one dish with more seasoning this week — reach for one of the pairings above, or try one of Bryce's favorites you don't usually use.

- 🔍 *Which seasonings do you already have — and which one or two would round out your set?*
- 🔍 *What plain dish could you make more exciting with herbs, spices, or a blend?*
- 🔍 *Which of Bryce's favorites would you most like to try?*