



HERBS AND SPICES 101

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VEGGIE CHICK'S GUIDE TO HERBS & SPICES

Do you have a cupboard full of spices but have no idea how to use them?
Do you love the idea of fresh herbs but are not sure where to start?
I've created this Herbs & Spices guide to help you add flavor to your cooking!

Aleppo Pepper

Tastes like: ancho-like flavor, cross between cumin and cayenne, moderately hot
Turkish crushed chili pepper. Can be sprinkled on pizza, pastas, potatoes.

Health benefits: All chili peppers are anti-inflammatory (the hotter the better) and give your immunity a boost. But if handling fresh peppers with your hands, try not to touch your face or eyes; it hurts!



Allspice

Tastes like: cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and peppercorn. Popular in Caribbean cooking. Used in stews, curries, soups, desserts, chutneys & vegetables. **Health benefits:** Anti-inflammatory and digestive benefits, gas reducing effects.



Anise

Tastes like: black licorice, fennel.
Also known as anise, aniseed, sweet cumin. Used in liqueurs, puddings, candies, etc.
Health benefits: Seeds and oil are used to treat upset stomach; also used as a diuretic, and many others.



Basil, fresh

Tastes like: sweet, highly fragrant

Use fresh basil as much as possible; dried basil does not have the same flavor. Use in Italian dishes, pastas, sauces, pesto, tomatoes, sandwiches, pizza, cocktails, etc. Added at the end of the cooking process.

Health Benefits: Anti-inflammatory and antibacterial characteristics. Rich in magnesium.



Bay Leaves

Tastes like: very mild flavor, adds robustness

Can be added to soups, chilies, bean and lentil dishes to add flavor. Remove before serving. Tip: Replace bay leaves every year. Keep in the freezer and they'll last longer.

Health Benefits: Wound healing, rich in Vitamin C and A.



Caraway Seeds

Tastes like: warm, sweet, peppery

Member of parsley family. Used in soups, salads, breads, cakes, and biscuits.

Health Benefits: Rich in dietary fiber, protects colon from cancer, and many others.



Cayenne Pepper

Tastes like: spicy

Can be used in vinegar-based sauces and marinades. Add to fajitas, enchiladas, or other Mexican dishes. Use as a marinade or rub, add to hummus or guacamole, and many others.

Health Benefits: Natural pain reliever, contains Vitamin A, and may reduce cholesterol, and more.



Celery Seed

Tastes like: Very strong celery flavor.

Very good in coleslaw, soups, potato salad, BBQ sauce, and goes great for making your own pickles. If you're using it in anything but pickle brine, be sure to grind it. You can also use if you run out of celery and still want the flavor.

Health Benefits: Used to treat joint pain, contains antioxidants, vitamin K, A, C, and potassium.



Chia Seeds

Tastes like: nutty flavor

Ch-ch-ch-chia! These seeds do more than grow cute plants. The seeds are super nutritious. Add it in smoothies, cereal, yogurt, jam or make chia pudding.

Fun Fact: Chia is the Mayan word for "strength".

Health Benefits: Rich in Omega-3 fatty acids and other important minerals.



Chili Powder

Tastes like: moderately spicy, adds extra kick

This is a blended mix of ground chilies, cumin, oregano, cayenne and other ingredients. Most commonly used to season chili. But can also be used in enchiladas, and other Mexican dishes.

Health Benefits: Contains Vitamin A and C, and other minerals.



Chinese Five-Spice

Tastes like: warm, spicy-sweet flavor

This is a blend of star anise, Szechuan peppercorns, fennel, clove and cassia. It's used in Chinese cuisine, stir fries, as well as spice cakes and cookies.

Health Benefits: Contains all the health benefits of the five spices.



Chives

Tastes like: Delicate onion flavor.

Great with soups and potatoes, used as a garnish. Use at the end of the cooking process.

Health Benefits: Contains fiber, Vitamin A, C and K, and much more.



Cilantro

Tastes like: fresh, citrus-like

Best used fresh. Used in many Mediterranean, Asian and Eastern European dishes, guacamole, salsas, salads, tacos, and many others.

Fun Fact: Cilantro is actually the leaves of the Coriander plant. Coriander is the seed. Also, studies have shown some people are genetically predisposed to dislike cilantro and it may have a soapy taste. But to most of the world it's a delicious herb when used appropriately.

Health Benefits: Cleansing agent, Vitamin C, K and protein.



Cinnamon

Tastes like: bitter, woody, spice-like

Often paired with apples and added to other sweet dishes. Can also be used in Middle Eastern or Asian recipes.

Cinnamon sticks can be added to curries, rice, coffee, tea, and goes well with orange or honey.

Health Benefits: May lower blood sugar, other studies are mixed on the benefits.



Cloves

Tastes like: similar to cinnamon, spice-like, aromatic taste

Very strong so use sparingly. Can be used in a variety of sweet and savory dishes, including curries, marinades, stews, and apple pie. Used in a lot of Indian dishes and chai tea.

Health Benefits: Anti-inflammatory, used for upset stomach, toothaches, and many other uses.



Coriander

Tastes like: lemony, warm, piney flavor

Vital ingredient in curry powder. Can be used in soups, sauces, cakes, breads, cookies, and pickling. Used in Arab, Egyptian, Indian, North African and Thai recipes, among others.

Health Benefits: Source of dietary fiber, iron, magnesium, etc.



Cumin

Tastes like: nutty and peppery

Main component of curry powder. Has a nutty and slightly peppery taste. Used in tex-mex, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Portuguese, Spanish, Cuban, and Eastern cooking, chili, guacamole, tacos, and stews.

Health Benefits: May control blood pressure, iron levels, and kill bacteria.



Curry Powder

Tastes like: combo of sweet and savory, unique flavor

A blend of 20 spices, herbs and seeds, such as coriander, turmeric, cumin, chili peppers, etc. Used a lot in Indian cooking and to flavor soups and stews. Can vary in spiciness.

Health Benefits: May control blood sugar, cholesterol, and detoxification, etc.



Dill Weed

Tastes like: light, fresh flavor

1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill is equivalent to 1 teaspoon dried dill. Use with dips and potato recipes. Can add to breads and salads.

Health Benefits: Vitamin A, Vitamin C, antioxidants



Fennel Seeds

Tastes like: licorice

Used with many Mediterranean dishes, soups, stews, vegetable dishes, or salads. Fresh fennel is preferred. If using seeds, you'll get more flavor if you grind first OR toast the seeds.

Health Benefits: Contains antioxidants, dietary fiber, and other sources of minerals and vitamins.



Fresh or Dried Herbs?

Some herbs are completely useless dried, such as cilantro, mint, basil, and parsley. Others tend to do better in the dry state, such as oregano, rosemary, marjoram and bay leaves. It's always best to use fresh when possible.

Flax Seed

Tastes like: has little flavor, doesn't have much taste, usually added as nutritional benefit. Added to salads or salad dressings, cereal, yogurt, smoothies, sandwiches, or baked goods.

Fun Fact: You can mix 1 tablespoon ground flax seed with 3 tablespoons water to use in place of an egg in a recipe.

Health Benefits: Contains omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and may reduce risk of heart disease,



Garlic Powder

Tastes like: dehydrated garlic, pungent Garlic can be used in a lot of dishes. Add to pasta sauces, stuffing, salad dressings, marinades, vegetables, dips, etc. Fresh garlic is preferred.

Health Benefits: May strengthen immune system and has a blood thinning effect, among others.



Ginger

Tastes like: pungent and spicy

Common in Asian cuisine. Used in vegetable dishes, breads, cakes, sweets (gingerbread man), tea, ginger ale, noodles, etc. Fresh ginger is preferred and has stronger flavor.

Health Benefits: May ease stomach problems, arthritis, and many other benefits.



Lemongrass

Tastes like: subtle citrus flavor

Common in soups and curries, popular in Thai and Vietnamese cooking.

Health Benefits: Vitamins A and C, folic acid, and many other essential oils and minerals.



Marjoram

Tastes like: subtle lemon flavor

Fresh is best. Goes well with English dishes, and in salads, pastas, dressings, and mushroom sauces.

Health Benefits: Contains Vitamin A and C, calcium, and iron. Aids in digestion.



Mint

Tastes like: fresh, cool tasting

Best used fresh. Goes well with vegetables, grains (quinoa, couscous dishes), green salads, desserts, yogurt dressings, and mojitos.

Health Benefits: Promotes digestion and may help with headaches, among many other benefits.



Mustard, Ground

Tastes like: aggressively pungent
Used in macaroni and cheese, salad dressings, sauces, etc. Seeds used in pickles, relishes, salads, cabbage, sauerkraut and cabbage.

Health Benefits: Rich in phytonutrients, great source of B-complex vitamins, niacin, and other minerals.



Nutmeg

Tastes like: earthy, nutty
Goes well with sweet-spicy dishes, pies, puddings, custards, and cookies. Also works well with soups.

Health Benefits: Contains antioxidants, potassium, copper, calcium and other vitamins and minerals.



Nutritional Yeast

Tastes like: cheese-like flavor, nutty, savory
Very different from bread yeast. This can be sprinkled onto or into sauces & pastas to give it a nutty, cheesy-like flavor. Also, sprinkle on popcorn, mashed potatoes, grits, polenta, etc. This is often used in vegan dishes. **Health Benefits:** Packed with B vitamins, folic acid, zinc, protein, and others. It's also gluten free.



Onion Powder

Tastes like: subtle onion flavor
Used in dressings, soups and stews, sauces, bread or pasta dough, pizza, etc. and Bloody Marys. 1 tablespoon of onion powder= 1/2 cup serving chopped raw onion. **Health Benefits:** Contains fiber, calcium, Vitamin C.



Oregano

Tastes like: slightly bitter, peppery

Used in tomato, vegetable and bean dishes. Also used in pizza, rice dishes, salads, soups, and many others. Retains good flavor when dried.

Health Benefits: Contains omega-3's, iron, manganese and antioxidants.



Make your own Spice Blends

A fun cooking experience is to make your own spice blends, using spices you already have on hand. You can save money and also avoid unnecessary chemicals sometimes added to spice blends (such as MSG).

Paprika

Tastes like: sweet-spicy

Used in Hungarian goulash, and other Hungarian cooking. Also found in tomato based sauces. Sprinkle on fries or potatoes.

Health Benefits: Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and others.



Parsley

Tastes like: Mildly peppery Use fresh parsley when possible. Used in salads, pasta dishes, sauces, soups, potatoes, vegetables, and it's the main ingredients in tabouli. **Health Benefits:** Contains carotenoids, phytonutrients and flavonoids. Anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory.



Peppercorns, dried black

Tastes like: sharp bite, vibrant

Pepper enhances our ability to taste food, stimulating our salivary glands. Used for salads, potatoes, vegetables, and nearly every savory dish.

Health Benefits: Anti-inflammatory, contains essential oils, and other minerals and vitamins.



Poppy Seeds

Tastes like: nutty

Primarily used for baking pastries and other baked goods, used in salad dressings, and Indian dishes.

Health Benefits: Good source of fiber, calcium, zinc and other minerals. Used to treat insomnia.



Rosemary

Tastes like: piney, tea-like aroma

Add to tea, lemonade, marinades, roasted potatoes, breads, or infuse in olive oil. Can also be combined with mint and lemon to make infused water.

Health Benefits: Rich sources of antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, improves digestion.



Saffron

Tastes like: spicy, bitter, pungent

Very pungent, best used dried. Cook with stews, lentils, risotto and other rice dishes. A little goes a long way. Saffron has always been considered a very valuable spice. Can be pricy.

Health Benefits: Rich in many vitamins, disease preventing, antioxidant, etc.



Sage

Tastes like: musty mint, wood-like, savory flavor
Used in Mediterranean dishes, marinades for vegetables. Tip: You can thread sage leaves in between vegetables in kebabs. Use fresh sage when possible. **Health Benefits:** Used for digestive problems, women's health uses, and others.



Sea Salt

Used in many dishes. You can find either fine-grind or flaked sea salt. The flaked is more expensive, but provides more flavor and versatility. Tip: To avoid overusing salt, don't add it during the cooking process. Add it to your finished meal.

Health Benefits: Contains many important minerals, aids in electrolyte balance.



Sesame Seeds

Tastes like: white sesame seeds are nutty, black sesame seeds are more bitter
Used in breads, cookies, and salad dressings. Used frequently in Asian cuisines. Nearly always toasted before using.

Health Benefits: Contains calcium, high in minerals, and protein.



Smoked Paprika

Tastes like: sweet and smoky
Adds a smoky flavor to dishes, can be used in tomato-based sauces, rice, soups, and salad dressings.

Health Benefits: Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and others.



Summer Savory

Tastes like: similar to thyme, peppery

A member of the mint family. Great with string beans, and other beans, vegetables, soups, stews, marinades, rice and teas. Used in the French combination of herbs “Herbes de Provence”. Blends well with other herbs such as basil, bay leaf, marjoram, thyme and rosemary.

Health Benefits: Used for cough and sore throat, intestinal issues, also used as an aphrodisiac.



Tarragon

Tastes like: bittersweet, anise-like aroma

Used in French sauces. Use in tartar sauce.

Can also be preserved in vinegar for a delicious condiment for salad dressings. Add tarragon toward the end of cooking.

Health Benefits: Used as a toothache remedy, antioxidant, source of iron and additional vitamins and minerals.



Thyme

Tastes like: slight mint flavor, earthy

Used when roasting vegetables, casseroles, soups, stuffings, and marinades. Great with herbed bread, mushrooms, fried potatoes, carrots. Retains good flavor when dried.

Health Benefits: Antioxidant, potassium, iron and other minerals and vitamins.



Turmeric

Tastes like: peppery, warm, bitter

Very strong spice. Used in a lot of Indian dishes and curries. Warning: This spice will turn your white plastic kitchen utensils yellow!

Health Benefits: Used for arthritis, heartburn, stomach issues, etc.



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Vanilla Extract

Tastes like: sweet, alcohol taste

Extracted from vanilla beans, Commonly used in pastries, desserts, baked goods, and coffee. Can also be added to smoothies.

Health Benefits: Antioxidant, anti-inflammation abilities



Winter Savory

Tastes like: piney, peppery, stronger presence than summer savory

Best used in dishes that require long cooking times, such as stews, or added to water when cooking dry beans.

Health Benefits: Used for intestinal issues, cough and sore throat, may decrease sex drive



Sweet Curry Seasoning

A Veggie Chick recipe

Mix together the following: 1 teaspoon garlic powder (fresh garlic is better) 1 teaspoon ginger powder (fresh ginger is better) 1 teaspoon ground cumin 1 teaspoon cinnamon 1 teaspoon ground coriander 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper 1/2 teaspoon turmeric 1/2 teaspoon sea salt

**Add this seasoning to coconut curries, soups, etc.*

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