

## Using Fresh Herbs

In most cases fresh herbs should be added near the end of cooking for the best flavor. In a long-cooking sauce, consider adding half during cooking and half at the end. If a recipe calls for dry herbs, substitute nearly double the amount of fresh.

PESTO! Pesto whether classic basil, or any other combination of herbs (try cilantro), is fast easy and versatile. Freeze pesto in an ice cube tray, pop out and freeze in a zip-loc bag. Ready to use when you need it.

- Swirl into homemade or canned soups
- Mix with mayo or sour cream for a dip
- Blend with cream cheese for a sandwich spread
- Add to spaghetti sauce for a fresh flavor
- Use as a pizza or bruschetta sauce
- Toss with pasta, vegetables, rice– with or without cream or stock

Many convenience foods can become company fare with your fresh herbs:

- Stir some into cornbread mix, biscuits, or pot-pie shells
- Mix into dumplings or homemade noodles
- Stir into mashed potatoes– your own or purchased
- Canned soup-Add chopped herbs to bean soups, chicken noodle, tomato, potato, clam chowder...whatever your favorite
- Salsa: add chopped fresh tomato, onion and herbs to purchased salsa for a chunkier, fresher “homemade” taste
- Salad Dressings: purchased dressings are special with fresh herbs, lemon juice, garlic, etc.
- Tartar sauce: add chopped dill, capers, lemon juice
- Deli salads and dips: make them special with your own fresh touches
- Eggs: omelets and scrambled eggs are a natural with herbs
- Bagged salads: snipped herbs, mint, chives, basil etc. are a nice surprise

Compound Butters: Add citrus juice or zest, herbs, garlic, shallots, or wine to softened butter, shape in a log and freeze.

Slice off coins to top vegetables, steaks, fish, chicken, pasta A favorite is lime zest, ginger, and garlic on grilled trout.



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## Growing and Storing Herbs:

Most herbs prefer full sun and to stay on the dry side...don't overwater! Use good well-draining potting soil, and an organic fertilizer for best flavor. The more you cut them and use them the better supply you will have and the more the plants will thrive. Do not allow most herbs to flower, as they will go to seed and their quality will suffer.

### Harvesting

Morning harvest is best as the oils are most concentrated in the leaves at this time. Use scissors or sharp pruning shears; you can back plants as much as 2/3 at one time.

### Sorting and Cleaning

Pick through your harvest and discard yellow or damaged leaves. Swish gently in cool water to dislodge and dirt or debris, then pat dry or use a salad spinner. Store wrapped in a damp paper towel, or in a glass of water in the refrigerator.

### Bunching and Drying

Keep bunches small-6 to 12 stems per bunch-for best air circulation. Hang from hooks or clothes hangers in a dark and airy location, such as garage, attic, or spare room. Temperature should be warm, but not hot. Herbs with larger, thicker leaves such as sage are best dried removed from their stems on a small raised screen.

### Stripping

Drying time can vary from a few days to a few weeks; check every several days. When they are crisp and crumbly, remove them from their stems. Place in glass jars with tight fitting lids. Store away from heat and light. Check after a few days to be sure there is no condensation' if there is, remove herbs to a tray to dry further.

### Freezing

Many herbs keep quite well frozen. Generally, herbs with woody stems (thyme, rosemary, oregano, marjoram) can be removed from their stems, spread in a single layer on a sheet tray, and frozen. Once frozen, transfer to an air tight container in the freezer, removing as much air as possible.

Fleshier herbs (basil, cilantro, parsley) freeze better when made into a paste of finely chopped herbs with a touch of oil, then frozen in ice cube trays and stored in Ziploc bags.

<b>Basil</b>	Sweet, sunny flavor. Use with vegetables, eggs, fish, potatoes, chicken dishes, tomato sauces, salads. Only add at end of cooking time or on prepared dish.
<b>Bay Leaves</b>	Pungent, mint like; dried leaves more widely available. Used in sauces, stews, soups
<b>Chives</b>	Delicate onion flavor, never overpowering. Use at end of cooking or as final garnish. Chop finely; snip with scissors. Great with eggs, salads, potatoes, dairy, poultry.
<b>Cilantro</b>	Fresh, aromatic, distinctive. Predominate in Mexican and Asian cookery; salsas, chutneys, chicken, pork, salads, tacos, rice.
<b>Dill</b>	Pungent, tangy; dominates, use alone or with parsley. Fish, peas, vegetables eggs, cucumber yogurt sauces, salads, pickling; predominate in Mediterranean cooking
<b>Marjoram</b>	Oregano-like but sweeter. Fish stews, stuffing's, carrots, greens, beans, egg dishes
<b>Mint</b>	Strong; sweet. Teas, desserts, lamb, fish, fruit
<b>Oregano</b>	Earthy. Lamb, chicken, pork, seafood, eggplant, tomato sauces; excellent with lemon: Retains good flavor when dried.
<b>Parsley</b>	Clean bright flavor. Good with almost any savory food; all seafood, beef, chicken, potatoes, sauces, soups, salads, grains. Fresh is better than dried
<b>Rosemary</b>	Fresh, piney, pungent; easily overpowers. Chop finely and use lightly. Poultry, pork, potatoes, white beans, lamb, breads, sauces, marinades.
<b>Sage</b>	Almost mint-like, slightly bitter; can overpower other herbs. Use whole stems in soups, stews, remove when done. Chop whole leaves in very thin strips. Pork, veal, sausages, poultry, salmon, stuffing, sauces. Dried herb has much different flavor
<b>Savory</b>	Reminiscent of thyme. Veal, pork, poultry, eggplant tomatoes, stuffing, vinegars.
<b>Tarragon</b>	Licorice, lemon flavor; strong. Use alone or with parsley; veal, chicken, fish. potatoes, mushrooms, tomato dishes, vinaigrettes
<b>Thyme</b>	Earthy, subtle, versatile; use whole sprigs in soups, stews. Pluck leaves and add at all stages of cooking. Excellent in seafood, poultry, pork, veal, tomato, vegetables, breads. Retains good flavor when dried