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Using Savory Herbs

PUBLICATION 1374 1968

USING SAVORY HERBS

Savory herbs are the fresh or dried leaves of aromatic plants. They are used to season meat, poultry, fish, eggs, vegetables and fruits, as well as salads, sauces, soups, and stuffings.

BUYING

Fresh Herbs

Many kinds of fresh herbs can be grown easily at home and some are available at local food markets. Fresh herbs are at their peak in quality from August to September, when they are green and have a delicate flavor.

Dried Herbs

Dried herbs are offered in a wide variety at grocery stores. Their flavor is less delicate and often stronger than that of fresh herbs. Whether whole, crushed or ground, the leaves are sold in 1/2 - 2-ounce containers. Usually, the smaller the container you buy the better, since dried herbs go a long way and lose some of their flavor within a year.

STORAGE OF FRESH HERBS

Wash and drain fresh herbs; refrigerate in plastic bags or covered containers. They will keep about 3 weeks. For longer storage, fresh herbs should be frozen or dried.

Freezing

Wash, drain and chop herbs. Spread on tray and freeze; pack in freezer containers and store in freezer. They will keep 1 year.

Drying

Use tops and perfect leaves. Wash, drain and spread on cheesecloth on a rack. Cover with cheesecloth and allow to dry 2 to 3 days in a dry, warm place where there is good air circulation.

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(1975 print)
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OR

Spread washed, drained leaves on a baking sheet and dry in oven at 250°F (leave door ajar). Remove from oven as soon as drying is completed to avoid evaporation of aromatic oils and discoloration of leaves.

Store dried herbs in covered containers in a dry, cool, dark place.





HERBS FOR SEASONING

- Anise fresh leaves; apple salad; seeds - pastries, candies, cottage cheese.
- Basil all tomato recipes, vegetable and turtle soups, meats; stews, meat loaf, liver, fish, shellfish, green salads, and cream sauce.
- Bayleaf stocks, consommé, soups, fish, braised beef, stews, variety meats, liver pâté, game, pickles, aspics, tomato juice.
- Chervil soups, (potato, vegetable) greens, cheese dishes, fish, eggs.
- Chives salads, omelets, potatoes, sauces.
- Dill cucumbers, pickles, salads (cabbage, potato), fish, shellfish, lamb, borsht, potato soup.
- Fennel fish, court-bouillon, sauces.
- Marjoram braised beef, pork or lamb, stews, game, poultry or game stuffings, tomatoes.
- Mint lamb (roast and stews), fruit salads and sauces, iced fruits, hot or iced drinks, sherbets, ices, jellies.
- Oregano Spanish, Mexican and Italian dishes, soups (vegetable, tomato), hard-cooked eggs, omelets, egg sandwich fillings, fried chicken, stuffings, pork, veal, fish.
- Parsley soups, chowders, sauces, greens, coleslaw, meats, stuffings, vegetables, omelets.
- Rosemary potatoes, turnips, cauliflower, fish, beef, pork, lamb, poultry.
- Sage pork, sausages of all kinds, stuffings, poultry, goose, duck, stews, salt water fish, legumes.
- Savory stuffings, legume soups and dishes (peas, beans, lentils), stews, meat loaves, hamburgers, veal, pork, fish chowders, sauerkraut, sauces.
- Tarragon soups, consommé, chicken, veal, game, fish, tartar sauce, mayonnaise, eggs.

Thyme oyster stew, clam chowder, stuffings, minced pork and beef, fish, shell fish, liver pâté, cheese dishes.

Bouquet garni or faggot of herbs (a small bay leaf, two or three sprigs of parsley and a little sprig of thyme tied together with a string; to be extracted after the dish is cooked) meat dishes, soups and stews.

TIPS ON HERBS

Savory herbs are used to enhance the flavor of a dish not to disguise it.

One teaspoon of crushed dried herb is equivalent to about 1 tablespoon of chopped fresh herb.

Always chop or mince a fresh herb before adding it to a dish.

Allow about 1/4 teaspoon of crushed dried herb per four servings in a recipe.

The flavor of a ground dried herb is twice as strong as the same amount crushed.

Before adding dried herbs to a mixture, crush them to release flavor.

Do not thaw frozen herbs before adding them to soups, stews and sauces.

Sprinkle herbs on steaks and chops during broiling.

Add herbs to soups or stews in the last hour of cooking.

Mix herbs with other ingredients for meat loaf, hamburger or stuffing.

Do not use herbs in several dishes at the same meal. Use them for accent and variety only.

Experimenting is the key to success. Use savory herbs sparingly until well acquainted with them.

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