

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

You Herb It Here First!

Herbs and spices can turn a bland, flavorless dish into a mouthwatering meal full of flavor the whole family will love! Not only do they add flavor, but they add health benefits too. Herbs and spices are full of nutrients and antioxidants that can make your meals more nutritious. For example, the antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral properties in garlic help reduce inflammation and provide immune system support.

In addition to adding flavor and health benefits, using herbs and spices to season your food can help reduce excessive salt intake. Those following a Heart Healthy diet, DASH (Dietary Approach to Stop Hypertension) diet, or simply monitoring their sodium intake will benefit from the addition of herbs and spices when cooking. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming no more than 2,300 mg of sodium each day. On average, Americans eat more than 3,400 mg of sodium a day! Incorporating herbs and spices to season foods can decrease sodium intake and help you stay within the recommended sodium guidelines.

Have fun experimenting with different herb and spice blends and discover your family's favorites! Try using different blends for different food items, and even make your own blends by drying fresh herbs from the garden.



Herb and Spice Recommendations by Food

- Poultry: Parsley, thyme, marjoram, sage
- Beef: Cloves, hot pepper, marjoram, rosemary, cumin, garlic
- Fish: Fennell, dill, tarragon, thyme, parsley, garlic
- Vegetables: Chives, basil, tarragon, mint, parsley, rosemary, dill
- Eggs: curry, dry mustard, paprika, parsley, basil

For more information on herbs, check out ISU Extension and Outreach's [Seasoning Savvy publication](https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/13985) (store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/13985).



Croutons

Serving Size: 1/2 cup | Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 4 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 tablespoon oil (canola, olive, or vegetable)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried basil

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut bread into one inch cubes.
3. Stir bread and oil together in a medium bowl.
4. Sprinkle garlic powder and dried basil on top of bread cubes. Stir until the bread is evenly coated with garlic and basil.
5. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Spread croutons evenly on the baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Stir. Bake for up to 5 minutes more or until croutons are golden brown.
6. Let croutons cool and store in an airtight container for up to one week.

These croutons are wonderful on top of your favorite soup or salad. To add extra tang to your salad, add some fresh herbs to the mix like basil or mint. They add extra flavor and are a great way to use up those herbs!

Nutrition information per serving:

70 calories, 3g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 85mg sodium, 8g total carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 1g sugar, 2g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu.



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Herbs and Spices Have an Expiration Date

Herbs and spices do not spoil; however, they do lose their flavor and potency over time. Next time you go through your spice cabinet, look at the expiration dates!

Typically spices last 2–3 years, but make sure to check the “best by” date. Try the fresh test:

- Smell: aroma should be strong
- Taste: flavor should be potent
- Color: should look vibrant and not dull

Average Shelf Life of Common Fresh, Ground, and Dried Household Spices

| Spice | Fresh | Ground | Dried | Whole |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Allspice | -- | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | -- |
| Basil | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 3–4 Years |
| Bay Leaves | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 3–4 Years |
| Black Pepper | -- | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 5–6 Years |
| Cayenne Pepper | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | -- | 2–3 Years |
| Celery Seed | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | 1–2 Years | 2–3 Years |
| Chili Powder | | 2–3 Years | -- | 2–3 Years |
| Chives | 7–10 Days | 2–3 Years | -- | 2–3 Years |
| Cilantro | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 4–5 Years |
| Cinnamon | -- | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 4–5 Years |
| Cloves | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | 2–3 Years | 4–5 Years |
| Coriander | 5–7 Days | 2–3 Years | -- | 2–3 Years |
| Cumin | -- | 2–3 Years | -- | -- |

Sources:

[Eat by Date](http://www.eatbydate.com/other/how-long-do-spices-last) (www.eatbydate.com/other/how-long-do-spices-last)

[McCormick](http://www.mccormick.com/toss) (www.mccormick.com/toss)

Any Movement Is Better Than No Movement!

Crunched for time? Any workout is better than no workout! It is recommended adults get at least 150 minutes of cardio training (i.e., walking, biking, swimming) a week and at least two days of muscle-strengthening activities (i.e., weight training) to promote living a healthy lifestyle. Working out and getting the blood pumping has many health benefits—including reducing the risk of chronic diseases, improving sleep, enhancing mood, relieving stress—and it can be fun! At-home circuit workouts, biking, walking, gardening, jogging, and bodyweight exercises (strength-training exercises that use your own body weight to provide resistance against gravity) are some easy ways to incorporate extra movement into your busy day. To reach the goal of 150 minutes per week, spread out your workouts into 30 minutes a day and bring a family member or friend along too!

Visit [Spend Smart. Eat Smart.](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/move-your-way-activity-planner) (spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/move-your-way-activity-planner) to find more ideas to increase your daily activity.