



Use herbs and spices to boost the

season for future self

flavor and nutritional value of food

Healthy eating doesn't have to be boring.

In fact, adding some flavor through herbs and spices can boost the nutritional value of your food!

The world of food seasoning is diverse and colorful. From **fresh** to **ground**, or **blended mixes** and **pastes**, there are lots of herbs and spices used in cooking around the world. Herbs are the green, leafy parts of the plant and spices are generally the seeds, roots, fruit, flower or bark of the plant.

Some herbs and spices have been proven to be a **source of phytochemicals**. These are active compounds in plant foods that may have health benefits beyond basic nutrition. Phytochemicals can be associated with colorful plant foods, like herbs and spices, and are **rich in antioxidants**. These protect the health of our body's cells! Whether fresh or dried you'll still be getting the benefits.

Benefits of common herbs & spices:

Parsley – a good source of vitamin K, a nutrient that supports bone and heart health as well as blood clotting and wound healing.

Thyme – contains thymol, a compound found in thyme oil that has antimicrobial properties. For this reason, thyme oil is commonly used in mouthwashes, toothpastes, and as a remedy for sore throats.

Green Onion – have sulfur-containing compounds. Sulfur is a mineral that assists with protein synthesis and building of cell structures in our body. This supports the health of skin, tissues, and ligaments.

Garlic – contains allicin, an antioxidant that may reduce inflammation which can prevent or aid many diseases. Allicin is only briefly present in fresh garlic when it is first cut or crushed.

Ginger – contains gingerol, a phytochemical that may benefit digestion and provide nausea relief.

Tips:

Chop fresh herbs before they go bad – mix with olive or avocado oil and freeze in an ice cube tray (this also works great with garlic and ginger)! Once frozen store in freezer bag for later use.

Purchase fresh herb plants. These are often inexpensive and provide more product than packaged herbs. With extra leaves (or if the plant starts to wilt), strip the leaves and place them in a sunny window to dry out. Once dry, crumble or crush to make your own dried herbs. Store in a glass jar or reuse a spice container.

Use herbs & spices as an alternative to added salt. Get creative and make your own homemade seasoning blends and spice rubs! Add dried citrus/citric acid or dehydrated mushroom powder for an extra savory, umami flavor.

Crush dried herbs with a mortar and pestle (or a spoon/roll with a jar) to help **release the flavors**. When using dried herbs, the general rule of thumb is one teaspoon dried is equivalent to one tablespoon chopped fresh.

Add spices with oil or fat at the beginning of long cooking dishes such as stews, to bring out their flavor.

Add herbs near the end of the cooking process to minimize the "cooking off" of its flavors.

Enjoying your nourishment is important for maintaining healthy, long-term habits!
Be sure to talk to your doctor or a dietitian before making any significant dietary changes.

