

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES FOR SENIORS: WEEK 13

Spice things up

Many people rely on salt and sugar to flavor their food, which isn't the most nutritious option. The wide variety of herbs and spices available to us are great for adding extra flavor to food.

What are herbs and spices?

Both herbs and spices come from parts of plants and are used to enhance the flavor and smell of food. The difference is the part of the plant they come from. Herbs are plant leaves and are used fresh or dried. Common herbs include basil, oregano and rosemary. Spices are usually dried and come from other parts of the plant (such as bark, seeds, roots and bulbs). Common spices include cinnamon, ginger and cloves.



Are they expensive?

Herbs and spices might seem expensive at first. But dried herbs and spices won't go bad as quickly as many fresh food products, and even a small amount of these seasonings can add a lot of flavor. You can also dry any fresh herbs that you don't use right away. You can grow many herbs in your garden, on a

windowsill or in another sunny spot in your home. You can buy food-producing plants and seeds with your Bridge Card. Consider planting herbs in a community garden and share your knowledge with neighbors by inviting them to join you when you plant, tend, harvest and eat your produce.

Endless combinations

Many combinations of herbs and spices create delightful flavors. Fresh or dried basil and oregano add flavor to homemade pasta sauce. Fresh or dried thyme combines well with the flavors of poultry and fish. Add paprika, turmeric and cumin to chopped sweet potato before roasting in the oven. Use cinnamon and nutmeg to enhance sweet or savory dishes. Try cinnamon and nutmeg with yogurt, fresh fruit and nuts, or add these spices to oatmeal. Explore the world of herbs and spices with your family and try making your own combinations at home.

When choosing premixed herbs and spices, remember to read the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to make sure you're only getting the herbs and spices you want. A lot of packet mixes have added salt or sugar.



Did you know?

Dried herbs are twice as strong as fresh. Store herbs away from direct light in a cool, dry place for maximum shelf life.



WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

Taco Seasoning

1. In a small bowl, mix together
 - 2 tablespoons chili powder**
 - 1 tablespoon cumin**
 - ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
 - ½ teaspoon onion powder**
 - ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper, ½ teaspoon dry mustard and 1 teaspoon cornstarch.**

(Note: The cornstarch, which acts as a thickener, is optional.)

2. Store in an airtight container.
3. Try the seasoning on fish, turkey or leftovers.

MSU Extension programming

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge and resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

To help you be healthy at every stage of life, MSU Extension delivers affordable, relevant, evidence-based education to serve the needs of adults, youth and families in urban and rural communities. Programs focus on helping you gain the skills you need to buy and prepare nutritious, budget-friendly foods, increase your physical activity and stretch your food dollars.

MSU Extension's children and youth programs address needs and issues from birth through age 19, providing parents with educational resources related to your child's development

and giving youth the opportunity through 4-H programs to build leadership and teach practical life skills.

With a presence in every Michigan county, Extension faculty and staff members provide tools to live and work better. From a personal meeting to information online, MSU Extension educators work every day to provide the most current information when people need it to ensure success – in the workplace, at home and in the community.

For more information or to join a class, visit www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/. To find your local county office, visit www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/county.

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