

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES: WEEK 19

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 without relying on salt, sugar, and store-bought marinades and condiments. By cooking at home, you have more control over what is in your 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. Remember to have your kids help choose which herbs to grow, and then have them help take care of the plants.

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 you're choosing premixed herbs and spices, remember to check the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to make sure you're only getting the herbs and spices you want.



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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 combining with the Fun Family Corn Tortillas recipe from Week 16.

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