

Savor the Flavors of Fresh Herbs and Spices

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SAVOR THE FLAVOR

cooking with herbs & spices

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Among the most tantalizing smells and flavors that come from your garden or kitchen emerge from fresh herbs and spices.

These fragrant flavors add much to foods while helping cut back on fats, sugars and salts in recipes. Why not add some of the most used herbs and spices in your kitchen to your garden this year? You could plant fresh basil, oregano, mint and rosemary. These plants will add beauty to your garden and flavor to your foods.

An easy way to get started with herbs is container gardening. [Maggie Wolf and Teresa Cerny wrote an article](#) on herb container gardens. They list six ways to help your herbs be successful.

Choose herbs that grow in a compact habit. Herbs that are too tall can be out of scale with their container. While herbs that grow in a trailing matter can be a beautiful addition to your outside landscape, you'll want to consider where to place your containers, how to care for them and harvesting the herbs too.

The handy [Herb Container Gardens article](#) has answers plus a useful chart listing many types of herbs, their maintenance and how to harvest.

Speaking of harvesting herbs, did you know it's the oils from the leaves that give them their great aroma and flavor? You want these oils to be released during cooking, not during harvesting and storage. Exposure to light, overheating, bruising or cutting will release these oils before they are needed. Dennis Hinkamp references easy ways to harvest, dry, cook with and store your herbs in the article, [Getting the Most out of your Herbs](#). The article says, "Of course the optimal way to use herbs is to pick them from the garden immediately before cooking. Since most recipes are written using proportions of dry herbs, when you substitute fresh herbs, you'll need to add about three times as much as the original dry measure."

Are you adding herbs to your garden this year? What are you

some of your favorites to harvest and use?

[Find additional articles on herbs and spices here.](#)



Carolyn Washburn is a family consumer sciences agent for Utah State University Extension. Her responsibilities include financial management education, food safety and nutrition, healthy family relations, emergency preparedness and working with youth. Her goal is to help individuals and families become self-sustaining and resilient by being financially prepared and healthy for any emergency. She serves on the National Disaster Education Network and has just completed the new food storage manual for USDA. Her most cherished award is America's Promise, awarded by Colin Powell.