

**Using Herbs and Spices //**  
**Keep the Flavor, Lose the**  
**Calories**

The image features three wooden spoons arranged vertically. The central spoon is filled with small, dark, elongated seeds. The spoon to the left contains dark, irregular pieces of what appears to be dried fruit or bark. The spoon to the right is filled with dried, needle-like herbs. The background consists of a green bamboo mat with horizontal blue stitching, and the bottom portion is a light-colored wooden surface with vertical grain. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

HERBS & SPICES  
KEEP THE  
FLAVOR

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LOSE THE  
CALORIES

LIVE WELL UTAH

Charlemagne, Emperor of Rome, known for his good health, said, "An herb is the friend of physicians and the praise of cooks." Try these tips for using herbs as a healthy and flavorful alternative to fats, sugar and salt.

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If you are trying to find ways to lower the amount of sugar, fat, and salt in your diet, you may find that herbs and spices are a good solution.

## **Using Herbs to Reduce Fat, Sugar and Salt**

Fat, sugar and salt all add flavor to the foods we eat and enjoy. They also add calories and cholesterol. We can add flavor to many foods and decrease the fat, sugar and salt by using herbs and spices in many recipes.

One tablespoon of fat can equal 100 calories. A great substitute is to purchase fat-free salad dressing, margarine, yogurt, sour cream and cream cheese, then add flavorings of your choice with herbs such as thyme, rosemary or tarragon. You will be surprised at the great flavor they provide without adding calories.

Herbs and spices can also reduce the amount of sugar you may need in foods. Ginger, whether fresh or dried, is an excellent sweetener. Keep a little ginger root in your freezer and grate off the desired amount when cooking. Carrots, sweet potatoes and other foods combined with a little ginger root are sweet and tasty.

Herbs and spices can complement nearly all cooking. Using them will help reduce the amount of salt your recipe may need. You will find that you can flavor with the herb, then leave out some of the salt.

Experiment with spices and herbs in your sauces, vegetables, drinks or desserts. Keep in mind that the amount you use and when you add it to your ingredients will depend on if you are using fresh or dried herbs. If using fresh herbs, you will add three times the amount of dried. Dried herbs are added at the beginning of cooking, and fresh herbs are added at the end of the cooking time. Store fresh herbs in the refrigerator and dried herbs in the cupboard out of direct sunlight. If you add a little too much seasoning when cooking, throw in a piece of potato and let it absorb the extra flavor. Remove before serving.

These herbs are some that I wouldn't want to be without. They add flavor to many foods:

- **Basil** is absolutely essential for Italian cooking. I can't imagine a summer without fresh pesto.
- **Chives** are prized for both their extensive cooking applications and their gorgeous silhouette in the garden.
- **Cilantro** is used liberally in Latin American cooking, and its cool flavor is one of my year-round favorites. I love pomegranate and cilantro salsa.
- Tall **dill** plants waving in the breeze are a welcome sight in any garden. The seeds *and* herb are used in all sorts of vegetable recipes and bottled pickles.
- Although **mint** has the tendency to take over wherever it is planted, the aromatic herb adds pizzazz to summertime lemonade, smoothies and is refreshing in teas and many recipes.
- **Oregano** is another Italian food staple, and it's also wonderful in egg recipes such as omelets.
- Don't just use the little sprigs of **parsley** as plate garnish: toss it into salads, soups and vegetable recipes.
- **Rosemary** grows wonderfully in St. George. On the patio, it is sheltered from the winter cold and the summer

heat. Once your taste buds have experienced fresh rosemary, they will go on strike if you serve the dried variety.

- **Thyme**, growing in a garden, has an enticing aroma. It's also a favorite in fish recipes.

Try growing your favorite herbs in the yard, garden boxes, flower pots or even in the house. They add beauty, flavor, aroma and are a wonderful conversation piece.

## Minted Cucumber Salad

- 4 cucumbers, peeled, halved, seeded and sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fresh mint, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 orange rind, grated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup olive oil
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar substitute

Toss cucumbers in bowl with mint, rind and parsley. Whisk oil, vinegar and sugar substitute. Pour over cucumbers and chill for 4 hours.

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# Spice Up Your Life!



We all know how easy it is to buy taco seasoning and other spices at the store. When you need flavor in a hurry, the quick fix is packaged spice mixes. Have you ever thought about making your own?

Although it may seem intimidating, making spice mixes and seasonings at home is easier than you think! Along with the financial benefits of making your own spice mixes, homemade blends offer more flavor without any preservatives, fillers, or added sodium.

[Click here](#) to find easy recipes for your own seasonings so you can spice up your life!