

Cooking with Herbs & Spices



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Spices and Herbs: Their Health Benefits

By Elizabeth M. Ward, MS, RD

(Source: retrieved May 8, 2014 from webmd.com)

Everyday herbs and spices may do more than enhance the flavor of food.

Common herbs and spices may help protect against certain chronic conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Herbs, including basil and parsley, are from plants and plant parts. Spices often come from the seeds, berries, bark, or roots of plants. Seasonings, such as cinnamon, often lead lists of commonly eaten foods with the highest levels of measured antioxidant activity.

“Studies show that many different herbs and spices offer health benefits,” says David Heber, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, and director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. “Most of the evidence exists for cinnamon, chili peppers, turmeric, garlic, oregano, basil, thyme, and rosemary,” Heber tells WebMD.

Polyphenols, a type of plant compound, provide one of the main health benefits associated with herbs and spices. Polyphenols are also abundant in certain fruits and vegetables, tea, and red wine.

Certain herbs and spices curb inflammation in the body, which may give rise to heart disease and cancer. For example, antioxidants in cinnamon have been linked to lower inflammation, as well as reductions in blood glucose concentrations in people with diabetes.

Savor the Flavor, Reap the Rewards

Liberally seasoning your food with herbs and spices may also help if you use them in place of other flavor boosters. “Using herbs and spices expands your palette without extra calories and may decrease the amount of salt, fat, and sugar you use without sacrificing flavor,” says Kate Geagan, MS, RD, author of *Go Green, Get Lean: Trim Your Waistline with the Ultimate Low-Carbon Footprint Diet*.

The proposed Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 suggests that adults limit their sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams a day to manage high blood pressure and reduce the risk of developing the condition. If the guidelines are adopted, nearly all Americans will need to find alternatives to salt and other sodium-based additives.

Seasonings may even play a part in weight control.

“Tastier foods are more satisfying than bland ones, which you tend to eat faster, and with less fulfillment,” Heber says. If you’re not satisfied, you’re more likely to overeat. According to Heber, dihydrocapsiate, a compound in chili peppers, boosted fat-burning capacity when people ate it three times a day during a study. And a recent study in *Cell Metabolism* showed that consuming capsaicin, the ingredient in chili peppers that provides heat, lowered blood pressure in lab animals.

Maximize the Health Benefits of Herbs and Spices

Research about the therapeutic effects of herbs and spices is enticing, but how does it translate to what you eat every day? Quite easily, as a matter of fact. It turns out that relatively small amounts of dried and fresh herbs and spices may have health benefits. For example, Heber says it's reasonable to expect benefits from 1.5 teaspoons of ground cinnamon. Spread it throughout the day to make it most palatable.

"Use herbs and spices at their peak to get the most out of them," Geagan says. "The active compounds in herbs and spices degrade with time." Capitalize on the potency of dried herbs and spices by purchasing brands with "Best By" dates on them, and storing them in airtight containers away from heat, moisture, and direct sunlight. Using fresh herbs or spices? Double the amount to get the same levels of active substances in their dried counterparts, Heber says.

Fresh or Dried Herbs

(source: The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs, Katherine K. Schlosser)

- Aroma is the deciding factor
- Fresh herbs are typically preferred to dried for cooking
- Often dried herbs, such as chives and parsley, provide very limited flavor. Best to use fresh chives and parsley for flavor.

Substituting Fresh for Dry Herbs

- Common ratio is to use 3 parts fresh herb for 1 part dry herb or 1 tablespoon fresh herb for one teaspoon dry herb...but this doesn't always work. Different herbs contain different levels of volatile oils, which are retained through the drying process at different rates.
- In most cases, oils are concentrated from drying, so that less volume of the herb is necessary to get the flavor desired. Herb sprigs collected from a single plant can vary in intensity of flavor based on where on the plant you collect. Leaves closer to the growing tip are likely to have more oil glands and be more flavorful than leaves closer to the base of the plant, which are older and may have already lost some of their volatile oils.
- Ex: basil is more flavorful when harvested before the plant begins to flower. Lavender is only harvested after the flower buds have formed and begun to open, since the bud is used rather than the leaves.

When to Add Herbs During Cooking

- Typically add herbs near the end of cooking time.
- Herbs such as rosemary, sage, and bay can hold up to longer cooking times and can be added earlier in the cooking process.
- In general, dried herbs can be added earlier than fresh herbs.

Roasted Vegetables

Vegetables: Choose 4 cups of 1 or more	Spices: Choose 2-3 tsp of 1 or more	Oil: Choose 1 tbsp
Broccoli Red Potatoes Sweet Potatoes Carrots Onions Peppers Eggplant Zucchini Squash Acorn Squash Cauliflower	Chili powder Ginger Rosemary Cumin Garlic Curry powder Tarragon Italian seasoning Sage Parsley Cinnamon Oregano	Olive oil Canola oil Corn oil

Directions:

1. Select one or a combination of vegetables and toss with one tablespoon of oil, 2-3 teaspoons of one or more spices/herbs.
2. Place on a non-stick cooking pan and roast at 375 degrees for approximately 40 minutes or 425 degrees for 20-25 minutes. You may want to place foil on the pan for easier clean up.

Suggested Combinations

- Sweet potatoes: cinnamon, ginger, or chili powder
- Red potatoes: garlic, rosemary
- Eggplant, oregano or Italian seasoning, garlic
- Carrots: rosemary or ginger, cinnamon, parsley
- Acorn squash: cinnamon, chili powder, sage

Basic Herb Marinades

Vegetable Marinade

4 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 tsp thyme or tarragon

4 tbsp olive oil

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl or sealable plastic bag.
2. Add vegetables and marinate in the refrigerator. Makes enough for 3-4 cups of cut vegetables.

Beef Marinade

4 tbsp red wine vinegar

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

4 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp oregano

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl or sealable plastic bag.
2. Add beef and marinate in the refrigerator. Makes enough for 1-1/2 pounds of beef.

Pork, Tofu, Salmon or Tuna Marinade

½ cup soy sauce, reduced-sodium

1 tbsp ginger, grated

1 tbsp sesame oil

crushed red pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl or sealable plastic bag.
2. Add pork, tofu, salmon, or tuna, and marinate in the refrigerator. Makes enough for 1-1-1/2 pounds.

Basil

(source: Cooking Light retrieved online May 13, 2014)

There are more than 60 types of basil, all members of the mint family. Here are three you're most likely to see at gourmet groceries, farmers' markets, and nurseries.

- Purple Opal: Its large, dark purple leaves offer mildly spicy hints of clove, licorice, mint, and cinnamon. Best uses: Its complexity shines in salads, baked goods, and beverages.
- Thai: Small, pointed leaves with serrated edges have peppery anise flavor. Best uses: A hint of spicy heat makes this basil at home in Asian dishes.
- Sweet Italian: This selection (aka Sweet Genovese) is the most common variety of basil, known for its licorice-clove flavor. Best uses: Its clean, bright flavor makes it an ideal match for fresh tomatoes, or use it in Italian or Thai dishes

Parts Used

Fresh leaves; add buds from flower spikes to salads or use as garnish

Buying and Storing

- Most basil leaves bruise and wilt easily, so avoid bunches with drooping or blackened leaves.
- Store for 2-3 days in a damp paper towel or plastic bag in refrigerator vegetable crisper. Thai basil is sturdier and will keep for 5-6 days.
- Basil leaves freeze well; freeze up to 3 months for best flavor.

Culinary Uses

- Natural companion of tomato-based dishes
- Works well with poultry, fish, and seafood
- Make a sandwich with low-fat mozzarella cheese, sliced tomatoes, and fresh basil leaves; add fresh leaves to green salads.

Basil Vinaigrette

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

2 cups fresh basil	½ shallot, coarsely chopped
1 garlic clove, coarsely chopped	2 tbsp dijon mustard
3 tbsp red wine vinegar	½ cup extra virgin olive oil
black pepper, to taste	

Directions:

1. Combine basil, shallot, garlic, mustard, vinegar, and oil in a blender.
2. Process in blender at high speed until vinaigrette is emulsified.
3. If mixture is too thick, add more vinegar, 1 tablespoon at a time.
4. Season with black pepper, to taste.

Tomato-Basil-Mozzarella Kabobs

2 tbsp olive oil	2 tbsp balsamic vinegar (white or dark)
¼ tsp dried oregano (or ½ tsp fresh)	¼ tsp black pepper
20 mini fresh mozzarella balls	10 grape or cherry tomatoes
40 basil leaves	

Directions:

1. In large bowl, whisk oil, vinegar, oregano and black pepper; add mozzarella balls, toss to coat.
2. Thread skewers, alternating mozzarella balls, grape tomatoes and basil leaves.

Classic Fresh Basil Pesto

3 c. loosely-packed basil leaves washed and drained	1 tsp. fresh or ½ tsp. dried oregano
½ c. fresh parsley	½ tsp. black pepper
3 large cloves garlic	1/2 - 2/3 c. olive oil
½ c. pine nuts or pecans	
1 c. grated Parmesan or Romano cheese	

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender, adding enough olive oil to make a thick, smooth sauce.
2. Add to fresh cooked pasta and serve right away with garlic bread and crisp salad.

Couscous with Herbs and Lemon

(Submitted by Kim Williams)

1 medium onion, finely chopped	2 tbsp. olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced	¾ c. water
1-¼ c. low-sodium chicken broth	1 (10-oz) box couscous
½ c. finely chopped fresh parsley	½ c. finely chopped fresh basil
⅓ c. finely chopped fresh mint	1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, or to taste
black pepper, to taste	

Directions:

1. Cook onion in 1 tablespoon olive in a 2- to 3-quart saucepan over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook and stir, for about 30 seconds.
2. Add water and broth. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in couscous, then cover and remove from heat. Let couscous stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and stir in herbs, lemon juice, remaining olive oil. Add black pepper, to taste.

Linguine with Tomato-Almond Pesto

3/4 cup slivered almonds

1 to 2 large garlic cloves

1/2 c. grated parmesan cheese

1 pound linguine

1 large handful fresh basil leaves

6 ripe plum tomatoes, quartered

1/4 c. to 1/3 c. olive oil

1. In a large skillet, sauté the almonds in a little olive oil until toasted. Let cool, then blend them in a food processor or blender until they are in coarse pieces. Scoop them out of the processor and set them aside.
2. Put the basil and garlic in the food processor and chop. Add the almonds back to the food processor (keeping them separate will keep them from getting too finely chopped as you get the basil and garlic to the right texture) with the tomatoes, cheese and olive oil and whirl briefly. Season it with freshly ground black pepper.
3. Cook your linguine until it is al dente and could use another minute of cooking time. Reserve one cup of pasta cooking water and drain the rest. Immediately toss the hot linguine with the pesto and mix quickly so that it drinks the sauce up a bit. Add more pasta water if needed.

Blueberry, Cucumber & Basil Salad

(Source: online - Lindsey Johnson)

Salad Ingredients:

2-3 c. fresh basil leaves

1 c. blueberries, washed

1 cucumber, thinly sliced (peel if waxed)

1/4 to 1/2 c. pumpkin seeds, pecans (or other seed/nut)

Dressing Ingredients:

1/4 to 1/2 vanilla bean, scraped

4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

1/2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper (or to taste)

2 tbsp. white balsamic vinegar

1 tsp. honey

Directions:

1. Whisk vinaigrette ingredients together or shake in a small jar. Taste and adjust to taste by adding more honey or salt and pepper. Set aside until ready to serve.
2. Arrange the basil leaves, sliced cucumber and blueberries on plates. Sprinkle with the nuts/seeds and drizzle with a little of the vinaigrette. Serve immediately.

Caprese Salad

(source: EatingWell - July/August 2008)

2 medium red tomatoes, cut into wedges

3/4 c. diced fresh mozzarella cheese

2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil

2 medium yellow tomatoes, cut into wedges

1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley

freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Gently toss tomatoes, mozzarella, parsley, and basil together in a large bowl.
2. Season with pepper. (Makes ~ 4 servings.)

Salsa Fresca

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

3 ripe tomatoes, diced	1 jalapeno pepper, minced
1 large bunch fresh cilantro, chopped	juice of 2 limes
1 small white onion, minced	1 tsp. olive oil
Black pepper, to taste	

Directions:

1. Combine tomatoes, jalapeno pepper, cilantro, lime juice, onion, olive oil, and black pepper; mix well.

Hint: For less spice, remove seeds and membrane from jalapeno pepper before mincing.

Strawberry-Basil Muffins

(Makes 1 dozen)

Topping:

3 tbsp. almonds	2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
2 tbsp. brown sugar	2 tbsp. canola oil

Muffins:

1-3/4 c. all-purpose flour	2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda	1/2 c. brown sugar
1/4 c. canola oil	1 c. nonfat or low-fat buttermilk
1 large egg	1 tsp. vanilla extract
1-1/2 c. chopped strawberries (fresh or frozen, not thawed)	1/4 c. fresh basil, chopped

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray.
2. Prepare muffin topping: Process 3 tbsp almonds, 2 tbsp flour, and 2 tbsp brown sugar until finely ground.
3. Transfer to small bowl, drizzle with 2 tbsp oil and stir to combine.
4. Whisk 1-3/4 cup flour, 2 tsp baking powder and 1 tsp baking soda in large bowl.
5. Whisk 1/2 cup brown sugar and 1/4 cup oil in medium bowl with buttermilk, egg, and vanilla extract until well combined. Make a well in center of dry ingredients and pour into wet ingredients; stir until just combined.
6. Add strawberries and basil; stir just to combine. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups.
7. Sprinkle with the almond topping, gently pressing into batter.
8. Bake muffins until golden brown and a wooden skewer inserted in center comes out clean, about 18 to 20 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes; then transfer to wire rack to cool for at least 5 minutes before serving.

Cilantro

Key flavor ingredient to salsa, guacamole, and stir-fries. Cilantro is sometimes called Chinese parsley, while the seeds of the plant are called coriander. Helpful hint: Cilantro and coriander are not interchangeable in recipes.

Parts Used

- Leaves and sprigs; roots are used in Thai cooking
- Seeds (known as coriander) used in Middle East and India cooking

Buying and Storing

- Choose fresh cilantro, since dried cilantro has very little flavor.
- Refrigerate cilantro unwashed for up to 5 days. Either wrap it in paper towels kept slightly damp inside a plastic bag or place it in a cup of water, stems down, with a plastic bag covering the leaves to keep in moisture.
- Frozen cilantro retains its flavor fairly well.

How to Prepare Cilantro

Just before using cilantro, dunk and swish it in a bowl of water, holding it by the stems; shake it to remove excess water, then pat dry with paper towels. Cut off only as much as you need (the rest will last longer uncut). The stems are tender enough to cook with. Don't over chop or the cilantro will turn black, as the leaves are very tender and bruise easily.

Culinary Uses

Cilantro is commonly used in spicy dishes as a garnish (for chili, for instance) or mixed into yogurt, sour cream, salsa, or guacamole. It gives a clean, fresh edge to dishes that contain ginger or garlic.

Jalapeño Black Bean Salad

This yummy black bean salsa is great served as a dip with tortilla chips. Or, try as a vegetarian filling for burritos. Makes 3 ½ cups

1 can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed	1 can (14 ½ oz.) diced tomatoes, well drained
1 can (8 oz.) whole kernel corn, well drained	1/4 c. chopped red onion
2 tbsp. jalapeño peppers, diced	2 tbsp. vinegar (i.e., apple cider)
1 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro	1 tbsp. olive oil
Lime juice, to taste	

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover.
2. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes or until ready to serve.

Spicy Cilantro Sour Cream Dressing

1 c. loosely packed cilantro	1 c. reduced-fat sour cream
2 jalapeno peppers, seeded	2 tbsp. lime juice
4 tsp. dry ranch dressing mix	1/4 tsp. paprika
1/4 tsp. black pepper	

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Use dressing immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Shake well before serving.

Blueberry Salsa Salad

1 large fresh orange	2 c. fresh blueberries
2 c. medium-sized green or red apples, diced	1/2 c. chopped sweet onion
2 tbsp. chopped cilantro	1/3 c. red wine vinegar
3 tbsp. apple juice or orange juice	2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. granulated sugar	1 bag (5 oz.) spring mix greens
4-oz crumbled gorgonzola cheese	

Directions:

1. Peel and section orange then cut sections into small pieces; place in large bowl.
2. Stir in blueberries, apples, onion and cilantro.
3. In small bowl, whisk vinegar, apple juice, oil, and sugar. Pour dressing over blueberry mixture, stirring gently to coat; let stand ten minutes.
4. Arrange spring mix salad on six salad plates. Spoon blueberry mixture over salad greens. Evenly spoon remaining dressing over salads. Top each salad with cheese.

Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Lime and Cilantro

Serves 8 (source: www.realsimple.com)

4 sweet potatoes (about 3 pounds), cut into thin wedges	2 tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro	1/2 tsp. lime zest, plus 2 tbsp. lime juice black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss potatoes, oil, lime zest, and black pepper on a baking sheet.
2. Roast, tossing once, until golden brown, 15 to 18 minutes.
3. Drizzle with lime juice and sprinkle with cilantro. Serve warm.

Cinnamon Tips

Parts Used

Quills of dried bark, ground cinnamon.

Buying and Storing

Ground cinnamon – the paler its color, the finer its quality.

- When purchasing ground cinnamon, purchase small quantities since it loses its flavor quickly.
- Sticks (also referred to as quills) can keep their aroma for 2-3 years if stored in an airtight container.

Culinary uses

Ground cinnamon is great for baking as well as adding an earthiness to stews, chili dishes, and curries. Cinnamon sticks have a smooth, earthy, and sweet flavor. (The redder they are, generally, the stronger they'll taste.) Steep them in warm beverages, like mulled wine and apple cider, or use them to season stews and curries.

How to Choose Cinnamon (taken from RealSimple.com)

Cinnamon is harvested from tropical trees during the rainy season and is generally identified as Ceylon and cassia. Cassia cinnamon is a species cultivated in China and Indonesia and often found in American supermarkets; it has a slightly bittersweet flavor. Ceylon cinnamon, which originates from Sri Lanka, has a mild, sweet flavor and is more commonly used throughout the rest of the world.

Here are some easy ways you can enjoy more antioxidant-rich cinnamon:

- Pick up your morning coffee or tea with ground cinnamon.
- Add ground cinnamon to French toast, pancakes, waffles or muffin batter.
- Add a sprinkle of ground cinnamon to peanut butter and jelly (or banana) sandwiches.
- Add to prepared oatmeal, yogurt, or frozen yogurt or ice cream.
- Top a fat-free latte or hot cocoa with ground cinnamon.

Cinnamon Roasted Pineapple

(source: www.realsimple.com)

1 pineapple cut into 1-inch pieces
1 tbsp. canola oil

2 tbsp. light brown sugar
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Toss together pineapple, sugar, oil, and cinnamon on a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Roast until golden, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Serve warm or at room temperature over ice cream, cake, waffles, etc.

Slow-Cooker Vegetarian Chili with Sweet Potatoes

(source: www.realsimple.com)

1 medium red onion, chopped	1 green bell pepper, chopped
4 garlic cloves, chopped	1 tbsp. chili powder
1 tbsp. ground cumin	2 tsp. unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon	1/4 tsp. black pepper
1 can (28-oz) fire-roasted diced tomatoes	1 can (15.5-oz) black beans, rinsed
1 can (15.5-oz) kidney beans, rinsed	1 medium (~ 1/2 lb) sweet potato, peeled and cut into half-inch pieces
1 cup water	

Directions:

1. In a 4-to 6-quart slow cooker, combine onion, bell pepper, garlic, chili powder, cumin, cocoa, and cinnamon. Add tomatoes (and their liquid), beans, sweet potato, and water.
2. Cover and cook until sweet potatoes are tender and chili has thickened, on low for 7 to 8 hours or on high for 4 to 5 hours.

Microwaved Baked Apples

(adapted from Cook Smart, Eat Smart)

2 apples	1 tsp. ground nutmeg
2 tbsp. brown sugar	1 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 tsp. raisins or dried cranberries	2 tsp. margarine

Directions:

1. Core apple leaving bottom intact.
2. In a bowl, mix brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and raisins (or dried cranberries). Spoon sugar mixture into apples and set a teaspoon of butter on top of each apple.
3. Place apples in a deep casserole dish and cover with lid.
4. Microwave for 3-1/2 to 4 minutes or until fork tender. Let apples sit for 2 minutes before serving.

Dill

Parts Used

Fresh and dried leave; seeds.

Buying and Storing

- Choose a bunch that looks crisp and fresh. If you have a large quantity, use it quickly; after 2-3 days kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator it will droop.
- Freezing preserves the flavor of dill better than drying. Freeze stems whole in a plastic bag and cut off sprigs when needed. Add dill leaves at the end of cooking because they lose their flavor if overheated.
Dried dill stored in an airtight container will keep its flavor for up to a year.

- Stored dill seed can keep its flavor for up to 2 years; ground dill seeds do not keep.

Culinary Uses

Popular addition to summer herb gardens, dill lends a distinctive flavor to everything from eggs to pickles. In seed form, dill is used as a pickling spice and to flavor breads and vegetables. The feathery leaves enhance seafood sauces, salad dressings, chicken and soups...and even make an attractive garnish.

Pointers for Seasoning with Dill:

- Dill seeds have a robust flavor, so use them sparingly.
- Dill leaves can be dried or frozen. Simply snip off some with a kitchen scissors as needed.
- One tablespoon chopped fresh dill = 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
1/2 ounce fresh dill yields about 1/2 cup leaves.

Enhance Your Meals with Dill

- For a quick side dish, finely chop some dill leaves into plain yogurt. Pour over fresh cucumber slices and toss.
- Make an easy dill butter by combining minced fresh dill with half a cup of softened butter. Chill for at least 2 hours to allow flavors to blend. Use on bread or broiled seafood.
- Use dill seeds to season vegetables like carrots and pumpkin while cooking. Or stir them with butter into the veggies after cooking.
- Dill seeds taste similar to caraway, so you can substitute them for caraway in breads.
- Dill also complements sour cream, cream cheese, cottage cheese, dips and spreads, meats, eggs and potato salad.

How to Prepare Dill

Just before using, wash the dill and blot it dry with a paper towel. The herb loses its flavor when heated, so either add it at the very end of cooking or use it as a garnish.

Creamy Dill Potato Salad

(Source: www.realsimple.com)

3-lbs new potatoes, halved

1/2 c. reduced fat sour cream (or plain Greek yogurt)

1/3 c. mayonnaise

1/4 c. fresh dill, chopped

2 tbsp. lemon juice

6 scallions, thinly sliced

black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Fill large saucepan with water and cook potatoes until tender; let cool.
2. Toss potatoes with remaining ingredients. Refrigerate for up to 8 hours.

Cucumber Dill Salsa

2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped	3 plum tomatoes, chopped
1/4 c. chopped chives or green onions	1-2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 tbsp. fresh dill, chopped	1 tbsp. lemon or lime juice
Black pepper, to taste	

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients. Chill and serving. Tastes great with pita bread, hummus, etc.

Salmon with Yogurt Dill Sauce

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

2 tbsp. olive oil	2 wild salmon fillets, 6-oz each
pinch of black pepper	1 c. plain Greek yogurt
2 tbsp. minced fresh dill	1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat until just before it smokes.
2. Season salmon fillets with pepper. Lay flesh side down in pan.
3. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes on one side; then flip fillets and cook an additional 2 minutes. Transfer salmon to an ovenproof plate and plate in a 175°F oven to keep warm
4. For the sauce: Combine yogurt with dill and lemon juice in a bowl. Whisk together to mix well.
5. Serve fish with 1 to 2 tablespoons of sauce.

Helpful hint: any firm-flesh fish, such as halibut, mahi mahi, or grouper, can be used.

Herbed Tuna Salad

8-oz tuna, canned, drained	2 tbsp. mayonnaise
2 tbsp. plain yogurt	1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. minced onion	1 tsp. capers
2 tsp. toasted pine nuts (or almonds), chopped	1/4 c. chopped cucumber
2 tbsp. minced celery	2 tsp. chopped fresh dill
	1 tsp. chopped fresh lemon thyme

Directions:

1. Blend all ingredients together. Chill for flavors to blend.

Garlic

How to Store Garlic

- Garlic will remain fresh for up to two months when kept in a cool, dry place away from sunlight. (A wire basket or a bowl in a cabinet is fine.)
- Don't put garlic in the refrigerator; humidity can shorten its life span.

How to Prepare Garlic

- Remove the outer, papery layer of skin and pull off individual cloves. If they're tight and can't easily be pulled free, use the ball of your hand to press and roll the head against your cutting board to loosen the cloves. To remove the skin of an individual one, crush the clove lightly and swiftly with the side of a broad knife, use a paring knife to cut each end off, and then peel away the skin.
- When sautéing garlic, do so briefly and over low heat under close monitoring; burned garlic is bitter.

Add fresh chopped or minced garlic to pasta dishes, stir-fry dishes, pizza, fresh tomato sauce, and meat and poultry recipes.

Chili-Garlic Roasted Broccoli

(taken from Cook Smart, Eat Smart)

2 tbsp. olive oil	1 lrg head broccoli, cut into long thin spears
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped	1 tbsp. chili powder

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F
2. Place olive oil, garlic, chili powder in bottom of large bowl and add broccoli spears. Toss to coat broccoli.
3. Spray baking sheet with non-sticking cooking spray. Place broccoli on baking sheet and roast at 425°F until ends are crisp and brown and stalks are tender, 17-20 minutes.

Herb Potato Soup

4 potatoes, peeled	1 tbsp. margarine, melted
½ c. chives, chopped finely	1-1/2 c. parsley, chopped
1 red onion, chopped	1 red pepper, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced	5 to 6 c. chicken broth, reduced-sodium

Directions:

1. Boil potatoes in water until they are soft enough to be mashed. Drain off the water and mash in pot.
2. In a skillet, melt margarine and sauté chives, parsley, onion, red pepper and garlic in the margarine. Add cooked mixture to mashed potatoes in pot.
3. Add chicken broth to the pot. Mix well and heat on medium heat until simmer.

Rigatoni with Fresh Tomato Sauce

10 fresh plum tomatoes, diced	4 garlic cloves, minced
4 tbsp balsamic vinegar	1 ball fresh mozzarella cheese, cubed
10 large basil leaves, chopped	3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 (16-oz) box rigatoni pasta	

Directions:

1. Combine tomatoes, garlic, mozzarella cheese and basil.
2. Add balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Mix thoroughly and refrigerate.
3. Cook pasta according to package directions and drain.
4. Toss hot pasta with tomato mixture. Serve immediately or allow to cool and serve cold.

Sautéed Chicken

(adapted from Cook Smart, Eat Smart)

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts	1 cup chicken broth
1-1/2 tsp. dried herbs de Provence	¼ tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. butter	1-1/2 tbsp. olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced	1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

Directions:

1. Place each chicken breast half between two sheets of plastic wrap. Using a mallet or rolling pin, pound until fillets are ½" thick.
2. Season chicken with black pepper.
3. Heat olive oil in pan over medium heat – you may need to do in two batches if you only have a small pan. Food should not be crowded. You should have a least an inch between each piece.
4. Cook chicken about 6-7 minutes on each side or until done. Don't move around in the pan.
5. Remove chicken and keep warm.
6. Add garlic to pan and cook one minute, stirring constantly.
7. Deglaze pan with broth and then add herbs de Provence. Allow sauce to come to a boil while stirring brown bits from bottom of pan.
8. Cook until mixture is reduced by about half – 2 to 3 minutes.
9. Remove pan from heat and stir in butter and lemon juice. Serve pan juice over chicken.

Ginger Tips

Buying and Storing

- Fresh ginger (aka gingerroot) should have smooth skin (wrinkled skin indicates that the root is old), be plump and hard, and have a spicy scent.
- Fresh ginger will keep in the vegetable crisper for 7-10 days.
- Use a vegetable peeler to remove the skin from however large a section of the root you need.

- Ginger in syrup and crystallized ginger will keep for up to 2 years in a cool, dry place.
- Pickled ginger keeps for about 6 months.

Culinary Uses

- Dried ginger is typically used for baking and also an ingredient of some curry powders.
- For a fresh fruit pick-me-up, try a light sprinkling of ground ginger on peaches, pears, cantaloupe, pineapple or honeydew melon.
- Add a hint of spice to frozen yogurt. Stir ½ teaspoon ground ginger into a softened pint of frozen vanilla yogurt. Refreeze for 30 minutes before serving.
- Quench your thirst with ginger lemonade. Add ½ teaspoon ground ginger to one quart fresh squeezed lemonade or lemonade from a mix.
- Grate fresh ginger into quick bread batters and vinaigrette.
- Add chopped ginger to stir-fries. Sprinkle ground ginger on cooked carrots.

Sesame-Ginger Vinaigrette

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

1 garlic clove	3 tbsp. rice vinegar
2 tbsp. freshly squeezed lime juice	2 tbsp. minced fresh ginger
4 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro	3 tbsp. minced shallots
Zest of one lime	5 tbsp. sesame oil
3/4 c. light olive oil	pinch of black pepper

Directions:

1. Combine garlic, vinegar, lime juice, ginger, cilantro, shallots, lime zest, and oils in a blender. Process in blender at high speed until vinaigrette is emulsified.
2. If mixture is too thick, add more vinegar, 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Season to taste with black pepper.

Gingered Butternut Squash Soup

1 tbsp. olive oil	1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped	2 medium carrots, sliced
2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled and cut in small chunks	6 c. vegetable stock
2 whole bay leaves	4 tsp. fresh thyme
	1 (2-inch) piece fresh gingerroot, grated

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil and vegetable oil in a heavy 3-quart sauce pan. Add onions and carrots; cook until onions are translucent.
2. Add squash, vegetable stock, and bay leaves. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Add grated ginger and continue cooking until squash is tender, about 15 minutes.
4. Allow soup to cool slightly, then remove bay leaves. Blenderize soup (with emulsion/hand blender or using food processor) and blend until smooth. Return soup to saucepan and add thyme. Cook over low heat until hot, but not boiling.

Ginger Spiced Mashed Sweet Potatoes

The flavors of antioxidant-rich ginger and pure vanilla extract blend well with sweet potatoes and the thyme rounds out the flavors with a savory note. Makes 4 (2/3-cup) servings.

2 pounds sweet potatoes	2 tbsp. margarine, softened
2 tsp. vanilla extract	1 tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. thyme leaves (or 1/2 to 3/4 tsp. fresh thyme)	

Directions:

1. Pierce each sweet potato twice with fork so excess steam can escape while cooking. Microwave on HIGH 5 to 10 minutes or until tender, turning over halfway through cooking. Let stand 5 minutes or until cool enough to handle. Remove skin from the sweet potatoes.
2. Place sweet potatoes and remaining ingredients in large bowl. Mash until smooth and well blended. Serve immediately.

To Boil Sweet Potatoes: Peel and cut sweet potatoes into 2-inch chunks. Place in large saucepan. Add cold water to cover 1 inch over sweet potatoes. Bring to boil; cover. Cook on medium-low heat 20 to 30 minutes or until tender. Drain.

Crunchy Asian Slaw

This tangy international twist on coleslaw makes a perfect accompaniment to simply grilled chicken or pork. Dressed with a light vinaigrette, this slaw keeps its crunchy texture covered and chilled up to 24 hours.

Makes 6 (1-cup) servings

2 tbsp. canola oil	2 tbsp. orange juice
2 tbsp. rice vinegar	1 tbsp. brown sugar
1-1/2 tsp. ground ginger	6 c. thinly sliced Napa cabbage
1 small red bell pepper, cut into strips (1 cup)	3 ounces snow pea pods, cut into thin thin 2-inch strips
1 unpeeled firm ripe pear, cut into ½-inch cubes	1 tsp. sesame seeds, toasted

Directions

1. Mix oil, orange juice, vinegar, sugar, and ginger in small bowl until well blended.
2. Mix Napa cabbage, bell pepper, snow peas and pear in large bowl. Add dressing mixture (in step 1); toss to coat well. Cover.
3. Refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve. Sprinkle each serving with sesame seed before serving.

To Toast Sesame Seeds: Heat small skillet on medium heat. Add sesame seed; cook and stir 2 minutes or until golden brown and fragrant. Immediately pour out of hot pan to avoid over-toasting.

Oregano

Parts Used

- Leaves, flower knots

Buying and Storing

- In supermarkets, oregano is more easily available dried than fresh. Dried oregano keeps for a year.

Culinary Tips

- For a twist on the typical grilled cheese, prepare sandwich with sliced mozzarella cheese, sliced tomato and ¼ teaspoon Oregano Leaves.
- Sprinkle sautéed cherry or grape tomatoes with Oregano Leaves, Garlic Powder, and pepper to taste.
- Perk up frozen pizza by sprinkling Oregano Leaves over pizza right from the oven.
- Add 1/8 teaspoon dried to scrambled eggs, salad dressings, and store-bought or homemade marinara sauce.
- Sprinkle some on top of pizza, and stir into black bean soup.

Green Tomato Bread

2-1/4 c. all-purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. ground ginger

1 tsp. fresh basil, chopped

1/3 c. honey

2/3 c. apple cider

1-1/2 tsp. baking powder

¼ tsp. grated nutmeg

1 tbsp. fresh oregano, chopped

2 eggs

1/3 c. unsalted butter, melted

2-3 medium green tomatoes, diced

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray a loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. Sift together dry ingredients. Add herbs.
3. In a separate bowl, beat eggs; add honey and beat again. Add butter and cider and continue to beat. Stir in the tomatoes.
4. Fold in dry ingredients until mixed.
5. Pour batter into greased pan and bake for one hour or until top springs back when touched and edges begin to pull away from pan.
6. Cool on rack for ten minutes, then remove from pan and cool completely on rack.

Crabmeat-stuffed Tomatoes

(adapted from Harvest Eating)

2 large beefsteak tomatoes	2 tbsp. sour cream
2 tbsp. mayonnaise	1 tsp. chopped fresh tarragon
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme	1 tsp. chopped fresh basil
1 tsp. chopped oregano	2 tbsp. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
cheese	1 (16-ounce) can fresh crabmeat
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper	black pepper, to taste
2 drops hot sauce or Tabasco	¼ c. breadcrumbs
½ c. shredded Gruyere cheese	

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut tomatoes in half (cross-wise) and scoop out some seeds and flesh to allow room for the crab stuffing; do not break wall of tomatoes.
3. In a medium bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise, tarragon, thyme, basil, parsley, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, cayenne, crabmeat, hot sauce, and pepper. Mix well.
4. Top each tomato half with Gruyere cheese and breadcrumbs and bake for 25 minutes until bubbly and starting to brown.

Crock Pot Beef Burgundy

2 lbs. stew beef	1 tbsp. oil
1 (10-¾ ounce) can fat-free cream of mushroom soup	½ c. chopped onion
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce	½ c. chopped carrots
⅓ c. beef or vegetable broth	1 (4-oz) can mushrooms
¼ c. all-purpose flour	½ c. water
Black pepper, to taste	½ tsp. oregano (dried) or 2-3 tsp fresh

Directions:

1. Brown meat in large non-stick pan in oil.
2. Place browned meat in a crock pot.
3. In a bowl, mix mushroom soup, Worcestershire sauce, wine, oregano, onions, carrots, and mushrooms. Pour over beef mixture.
4. Cook on low 10-12 hours.
5. In a bowl, combine water and flour, black pepper. Stir into beef mixture.
6. Turn slow cooker on high until thickened and bubbly. Serve over noodles.

Paprika Tips

Parts Used

- Dried fruits; there is no single paprika pepper – it is made from a number of different red capsicums.

Buying and Storing

- Hungarian paprika is somewhat hotter than Spanish. Portuguese and Moroccan paprika tend to resemble Spanish; that from the Balkan states is closer to Hungarian. Paprika from the US is mild.
- All paprika should be kept in an airtight container and away from lighter.

Culinary Tips

- Sweet paprika, most common type, is made from red bell peppers.
- Flavor is released upon heating; when it is sprinkled on cold foods, it is little more than a garnish.
- Sprinkle store-bought or homemade hummus or guacamole with paprika. Or, add a kick by stirring in ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper or crushed red pepper.
- Mix up your own spiced salt by mixing 2 tablespoons Sea Salt, 2 teaspoons paprika, ½ teaspoon ground cumin and a pinch of ground red pepper. Sprinkle over grilled or roasted meat, fish or poultry.
- Serve bread with olive oil like it's done in an Italian restaurant. Mix ¼ cup olive oil, 1 teaspoon grated parmesan cheese, ½ teaspoon garlic powder, 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper and sea salt to taste in small shallow dish.
- Chili peppers: add chopped peppers to chili, burgers, soups, stews, salsa, and egg dishes.

Classic Chicken Paprika

(Makes 4 servings)

1 lb. small boneless skinless chicken breast	2-1/2 tsp. paprika, divided
1/8 tsp. ground black pepper	1 tbsp. olive oil
1 c. chopped onion	1 can (14 ½ oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
1/3 c. light cream	Hot cooked noodles (optional)
Chopped parsley (optional)	

Directions:

1. Season chicken with ½ teaspoon of the paprika and pepper.
2. Heat oil in large nonstick skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook 3 minutes per side or until browned. Remove chicken from skillet. Set aside. Add onion to skillet; cook and stir 3 minutes.
3. Stir in tomatoes and remaining 2 teaspoons paprika. Bring to boil. Return chicken to skillet. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Stir in cream until well blended. Serve over noodles and sprinkle with chopped parsley, if desired.

Oven-Fried Parmesan Chicken

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
cut into strips
1 tsp. paprika
pinch (~ 1/8 tsp) cayenne pepper
4 tbsp. grated parmesan cheese

2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 c. nonfat, plain yogurt
3/4 c. bread crumbs (panko style gives
extra crunch)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425
2. Spray cooking sheet with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Place chicken strips and yogurt in large bowl and refrigerate while preparing rest of ingredients.
4. In a medium bowl, mix rest of ingredients.
5. Coat each piece of chicken well with yogurt and dredge in crumb mixture, pressing down on both sides to get a thick coat of crumbs.
6. Place chicken on cookie sheet and spray top of each strip lightly with non-stick cooking spray.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until chicken is fork tender and juices run clear.

Rosemary Tips

Parts Used

- The small needle-like leaves, sprigs, stems, and flowers.

Buying and Storing

- Typically available all year round; fresh sprigs can be kept for several days in the refrigerator.

Rosemary is one of the exceptions to the idea that dried herbs are less flavorful than fresh. Start with less than you think you may need – you can always add more.

Here are some easy ways you can enjoy more antioxidant-rich rosemary:

- Add ¼ teaspoon each crushed Rosemary Leaves and Garlic Salt to hot cooked peas or green beans.
- Stir ½ teaspoon each crushed Rosemary Leaves and Garlic Powder and ¼ teaspoon Black Pepper into 4 cups hot cooked mashed potatoes.
- Dress up ready-to-bake rolls. Just before baking frozen dinner rolls or ready-to-bake rolls, brush tops with olive oil then sprinkle with crushed Rosemary Leaves and Sea Salt before baking.
- Add dried crushed rosemary to mashed potatoes and vegetable omelets.

Lemon-Rosemary Muffins

(adapted from superfoodista.com)

2/3 c. olive oil

4 eggs, beaten

zest from 1 lemon

2 tbsp. rosemary, finely cut

1 tbsp. baking powder

3/4 c. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

juice of 1/2 lemon (grate off zest first)

1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Prepare muffin pan – spray with cooking spray and then lightly flour.
2. In a medium bowl, mix olive oil, sugar, eggs, vanilla, and lemon zest, lemon juice in a bowl. Mix well.
3. In a large bowl, mix flour and baking powder. Next, add liquid ingredients (in step one) just until blended. Do not over mix.
4. Pour batter into a muffin pan. Bake for about 10-15 minutes (depending on size of muffin pan) until knife inserted in center of muffin comes out clean.
5. Cool for a few minutes on cooling rack and then remove from muffin pan.

Rosemary-Olive Oil Bread

(adapted from www.realsimple.com)

2-1/2 c. all-purpose flour

1/2 c. chopped nuts

2 tsp. dried rosemary (1-1/2 tbsp fresh)

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1/2 c. extra-virgin olive oil

3/4 c. sugar

2 tsp. baking powder

grated zest of 1 lemon (~ 1 tbsp)

3/4 c. apple juice

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350° F. Lightly coat loaf pan with vegetable cooking spray.
2. In a bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, nuts, baking powder, rosemary, and lemon zest.
3. In another bowl, blend eggs, juice, and olive oil; stir into dry ingredients
4. Transfer batter into pan and smooth the surface of batter. Bake 55 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean.

White Bean Spread with Garlic and Rosemary

(adapted from Cook Smart, Eat Smart)

2 tbsp. olive oil

1-2 tsp. dried rosemary

2-4 garlic cloves, peeled and diced

1 (16-ounce) can white beans, drained

Directions:

1. Heat 10" non-stick pan over medium heat. When pan is hot, add olive oil, garlic and rosemary.
2. Add beans and a small amount of water to pan. As beans cook, mash them with a potato masher or wooden spoon.
3. Cook until mixture is a loose spread consistency. (It will thicken as it cools.)
4. Transfer to a serving bowl and allow to cool prior to serving. Serve with vegetable sticks and whole-wheat crackers.

Lemon-Rosemary Green Beans

(adapted from Cook Smart, Eat Smart)

4 c. green beans

1/2 c. sliced green onions

3 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1 tsp. grated lemon rind

3/4 tbsp. crushed, dried rosemary

(or 1-1/2 tbsp fresh rosemary)

1/4 c. chopped nuts

Directions:

1. Wash fresh green beans and remove strings, as needed: pat dry. Arrange green beans in a steamer basket over boiling water.
2. Cover and steam for 8-12 minutes or until crisp-tender.
3. Plunge beans into cold water to stop cooking process; drain.
4. Spray non-stick pan with cooking spray.
5. Over medium heat, add green onions and sauté until tender.
6. Add green beans, nuts, rosemary and lemon juice; cook, stirring constantly, until thoroughly heated.
7. Sprinkle with lemon rind.

Rosemary-Roasted Beets and Carrots

(adapted from www.realsimple.com)

1 lb. beets, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges

1/4 c. red wine vinegar

2 sprigs fresh rosemary

1 lb. carrot, scrubbed, cut into 2-inch lengths, and halved lengthwise if large

3 tbsp. olive oil

1/4 tsp. black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 450° F.
2. Toss beets, carrots, vinegar, oil, rosemary and black pepper on baking sheet.
3. Roast, tossing once, until vegetables are tender, about 30 to 45 minutes.

Tip: Use a peeler to peel beets before roasting. To avoid red hands. Either wear gloves or hold beets with several layers of paper towels.

Rosemary Roasted Potatoes

Wonderfully aromatic rosemary is a match made in heaven for roasted potatoes. Chopping or crushing the rosemary brings out the natural oils and increases the flavor. Makes 4 servings.

4 baking potatoes (about 2 pounds)	2 tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. rosemary Leaves, finely crushed	black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425° F. Cut each potato into 12 wedges. Toss potatoes, oil, rosemary and black pepper in large bowl until well coated.
2. Spread potatoes in single layer on foil-lined 15x10x1 inch baking pan.
3. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

Rosemary Turkey Salad

1 lb. cooked turkey (or chicken) breast	1/4 c. sweet onion, minced
1/4 c. rosemary, finely chopped	2 tsp. curry powder
3 tbsp. mayonnaise	2 tsp. milk

Directions:

1. Thoroughly mix all ingredients and refrigerate for several hours before serving.

Tarragon

Parts Used

- Fresh leaves and sprigs

Buying and Storing

- The Herb Society of America suggests that tarragon is best used fresh.
- Young sprigs grow keep for 4-5 days in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator.
- Dried tarragon loses much of its flavor; freezing fresh leaves, whole or chopped, retains more of the flavor.
- French tarragon is the preferred culinary variety.

Baked Chicken Breast with Tarragon

4 small chicken breasts (boneless)	1 onion, thinly sliced
2 tsp. chopped fresh tarragon leaves	1/3 to 1/2 c. light sour cream or plain yogurt
Pinch of paprika	

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350. Place chicken on a foil-lined baking dish. Cover with thinly sliced onions.
2. Spread tarragon over chicken, then cover with sour cream and sprinkle lightly with paprika.
3. Bake for 20-35 minutes (until juices run clear).

Tarragon Chicken Salad with Mandarin Oranges

2-3 med. chicken breasts	3-4 oz. sliced almonds
1 c. thinly sliced celery	2-3 T. tarragon, chopped
2-3 tbsp. lite mayonnaise	black pepper, to taste
1 (11 oz.) can mandarin oranges, drained	

Directions:

1. Boil or pan-fry chicken breasts. Chop into bite-size pieces and place in mixing bowl.
2. Add almonds, celery, tarragon, mayonnaise, and black pepper to chicken.
3. Gently fold in mandarin oranges to chicken salad.
4. Best if served cold after sitting in refrigerator overnight.

Chicken Salad with Tarragon and Shallots

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

5 c. chicken breast, cooked, cooled and shredded	1/4 c. plain Greek yogurt
2 tbsp. minced celery	1 tbsp. fresh tarragon, minced
black pepper, to taste	1 tbsp. minced shallot

Directions:

1. Combine chicken, yogurt, tarragon, celery, shallot, and pepper. Stir until well combined.

Tarragon Mint Potato Salad

3 lbs. red potatoes, unpeeled and diced

1/2 c. green pepper, diced

1/4 c. onion, diced

1 tbsp. fresh tarragon, chopped

1/3 c. mayonnaise (or plain yogurt)

1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice

1 c. celery, diced

1/4 c. cucumbers, seeds removed
and diced

1 tbsp. fresh mint, chopped

2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1 tbsp. honey mustard

1/4 tsp. black pepper

Directions:

1. Wash potatoes and cook in boiling water until tender. Drain and cool slightly.
2. Mix potatoes with celery, green pepper, cucumber, onion, mint, tarragon, and parsley.
3. Blend mayonnaise with mustard, pickle juice, black pepper. Mix gently with potato mixture.
4. Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve. Best if prepared the day before you are going to serve.

Thyme

Parts used:

- Leaves and sprigs; flowers for garnishes

Buying and Storing:

- The basic thyme for cooking is often called garden thyme, and is a cultivated variety of wild Mediterranean thyme.
- Fresh leaves will keep for up to a week stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- Dried thyme will retain its flavor through the winter.

Here are some ways you can enjoy more antioxidant-rich thyme:

- Unlike most herbs, thyme withstands long, slow cooking.
- Good with cabbage, carrots, corn, eggplant, lamb, legumes, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, and wild mushrooms.
- Combines well with allspice, basil, bay, chili, clove, garlic, lavender, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, parsley, rosemary, savory.
- Sprinkle dried thyme onto cooked vegetables in place of butter or margarine.
- Add 1/8 teaspoon dried thyme to two scrambled eggs, and to salad dressings.
- Use it in a rub when cooking salmon.
- Add fresh thyme to chicken salad and chicken soup.
- Dress up seafood or tuna salad by adding Thyme Leaves. Serve as a sandwich filling or on a bed of greens.
- Wake up your taste buds with Herbed Scrambled Eggs. Beat 1/8 teaspoon Thyme Leaves into 2 eggs before scrambling.
- Add hearty flavor to soup. Stir 1/4 teaspoon Thyme Leaves into chicken, beef or vegetable soups.

Lemon-Thyme Vinaigrette

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

1 garlic clove, minced

Juice of 1 lemon

1 tbsp. dijon mustard

2-1/2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves

2 tbsp mild vinegar (such as rice vinegar)

1/2 c. olive oil

black pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Combine garlic, thyme, lemon juice, vinegar, mustard and oils in a blender. Blend until the vinaigrette is emulsified
2. If mixture is too thick, add more vinegar, 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Season with black pepper.

Blueberry Herb Vinaigrette

1/4 c. fresh blueberries

1 tbsp. prepared mustard

1 tbsp. honey

1/2 tsp. dried thyme (or 1 tsp fresh)

1/2 c. olive oil

1/4 c. white wine vinegar

1 tbsp. prepared horseradish

1 shallot, peeled and chopped

1 tbsp. pumpkin seed or walnut oil

1/4 tsp. black pepper

Directions:

1. Combine blueberries, vinegar, mustard, horseradish, honey, shallots, and thyme in a blender. Puree until smooth.
2. With the blender turned on, slowly drizzle in oils. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Cinnamon-Thyme Rub

(adapted from: Harvest Eating)

2 tbsp minced thyme leaves

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 cup olive oil

1 tbsp ground coriander

2 tsp ground cumin

black pepper, to taste

5 chicken breasts or small

Directions:

1. Make a paste by combining thyme, coriander, garlic, cumin, cinnamon, pepper, and oil in a large bowl and stir until smooth.
2. Pour paste over chicken (or pork) in the bowl and mix well. Marinate chicken/pork in the mixture at least 30 minutes.
3. Grill or roast until done.

Herb Butter

3/4 c. butter, softened	1/3 c. cut celery leaves, paced
1 tbsp. fresh sage	1 tbsp. fresh thyme
1/3 c. chopped fresh parsley	1/3 c. green onions, including tops
1 tbsp. fresh marjoram	1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Blend or process all ingredients until well blended. May be stored in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Garden Veggie Bake

2 medium zucchini, sliced	2 yellow summer squash, sliced
1 large onion, sliced	3 large tomatoes, sliced
4-oz goat cheese (or feta)	1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/3 c. sliced black olives, drained	3 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme
1 tbsp. chopped fresh savory	2 tsp. minced fresh rosemary
1/2 c. grated parmesan cheese	3/4 lb. mild Italian sausage, (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375. If using sausage, crumble and cook in a sauté pan.
2. Spray bottom of 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
3. Line pan with sliced squash, half of tomatoes, and half the onions.
4. Add crumbled cheese and sausage (optional). Sprinkle with pepper, half the thyme and rosemary. Spread olives across the dish.
5. Add another layer of tomatoes, onions, black pepper, thyme, and rosemary.
6. Sprinkle parmesan cheese over all.
7. Bake, uncovered, for an hour or so, until vegetables are tender and bubbly. Watch closely the last 15 minutes – if onions begin to burn, reduce heat and cover lightly.

Lime Chicken with Thyme

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts	3 tbsp. flour
1/4 tsp. black pepper	3 tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion, chopped	1 tbsp. butter
1-1/4 c. chicken broth	3 tbsp. fresh lime juice
1 tbsp. fresh lemon thyme	1 pkg (16-oz) angel-hair pasta, cooked

Directions:

1. Combine flour and pepper and dredge chicken in seasoned flour. Reserve remaining flour.
2. Heat olive oil in large skillet and brown chicken until golden (about 5 minutes per side). Remove chicken and set aside.
3. Add butter to skillet and sauté onion until soft and transparent. Stir in reserved flour until well blended.
4. Add chicken broth, lime juice, and thyme. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Return chicken to skillet, cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute (to cook flour and thicken).
5. Serve over angel-hair pasta, spooning sauce over chicken and pasta.