

COOKING WITH HERBS



"Create tasty and
healthy foods
using nature's
flavor enhancers"

By Simone McGrath



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Cooking with Herbs

Cooking with herbs is like an adventure: you have a vague idea of what to expect, but even so, the final outcome will blow you away. Herbs are fascinating. They have the magical power to transform any bland, boring and routine recipe into a culinary masterpiece.

In this e-book, I've put together a few interesting recipes using herbs, some unique herb and spice blends and some tips on how to enhance your cooking experience using these herbs.

Go ahead, unleash your creativity!

Popular Herb and Spice Blends



Create your very own herb and spice blends and use them in a variety of combinations and ways. Add herb and spice blends to meats and vegetables before grilling or roasting, to liven up and add flavor to your meal! Remember – a little bit goes a long way!

Seasoned Salt

- 1/4 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon ground Black Pepper
- 1 tablespoon ground Paprika
- 1 teaspoon dry Mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried Oregano

- 1 teaspoon dehydrated Garlic (minced or powdered)
- 1 teaspoon dehydrated Onion (minced or powdered)
- 1/2 teaspoon Thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed or ground Rosemary
- 1/4 teaspoon ground White Pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered Coriander

Mix all ingredients and store in an airtight jar. Use in pastas, stir-fries, salads or as a rub for poultry or meat-based dishes.

Za'atar (Middle Eastern Spice Mix)

- 1 cup Sumac
- 2 cups roasted, ground Sesame Seeds
- 1/2 cup dried ground Thyme
- 2 tablespoons dried leaf Oregano
- 2 tablespoons dried leaf Marjoram
- 2 tablespoons dried leaf Savory

Mix all the ingredients together. Keep the spice mix in an air tight jar and store it in the refrigerator or freezer so that it can last longer. The Sesame Seeds do not have a long shelf life and may get rancid within 6 months. Use on vegetables, curries, soups or salads.

Pickling Spice Blend

- 2 tablespoons Mustard seeds
- 1 tablespoon whole Allspice
- 2 teaspoons whole Black Peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons whole Cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground Ginger
- 1 teaspoon hot Red Pepper flakes (optional)
- 1 large or two small Bay Leaves, broken up
- 2 inch piece of Cinnamon stick, cracked into small pieces
- 1 teaspoon Cardamom

Mix and store in an air tight jar. Use to pickle cauliflower, gherkins, cucumbers, carrots and to flavor hearty stews.

Herb seasoning blend

- 1 tablespoon dried Thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried Oregano

- 2 teaspoons rubbed Sage
- 1 teaspoon dried Rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried Marjoram
- 1 teaspoon dried Basil
- 1 teaspoon dried Parsley flakes

Combine all ingredients; store in an airtight container. Use in omelettes and to season fish, vegetables or poultry.

Masala Chai Mix

- 7-10 Cardamom pods
- 4 Black Peppercorns
- 4 teaspoons Fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon Ginger powder
- 8 Cloves
- 2 Cinnamon sticks

Grind all the spices in a coffee or spice grinder to a fairly coarse consistency. Store it in an airtight jar.

To make your own Masala Chai for two, mix 1 cup of water and 1 cup whole milk or soy milk in a saucepan and heat it on a stove top. When it comes to the boil, add sugar or honey to sweeten (as per taste), 1/2 teaspoon of Masala Chai mix and 1 tablespoon of black tea. Let it boil for a couple of minutes, then take it off the stove. Strain the Chai and serve hot.

Recipes

For centuries, herbs and spices have been an integral part of most cuisines. When used right, herbs and spices can transform a simple dish into a delicious meal. Don't be heavy handed when seasoning with spices and herbs. A pinch of spice and a dash of herbs - a whiff of the heady aroma is enough to set your taste buds tingling.

Pasta with Capers, Olives, Fresh Herbs and Walnuts

A great way to use your kitchen garden's bounty! Olives and capers bring a Mediterranean flavor to your dinner table.



Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 fluid ounces olive oil
- 3 cloves Garlic, minced
- 3 ounces walnuts
- 15 ounces pitted and sliced black olives
- 3 tablespoons Capers, rinsed and minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh Basil, chopped
- 1 teaspoon fresh Oregano, minced
- 1 teaspoon Flat-Leaf Parsley, minced
- 1 pound pasta, any shape
- Salt, to taste
- Black Pepper, ground, to taste
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated

Instructions

- Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water as per the instruction on the package. Drain well.

When boiling water for pasta, rice or potatoes, drop in a few Bay Leaves for flavor.

- While the pasta is cooking, combine butter and olive oil and heat over medium heat in a large sauté pan.
- Stir in Garlic and walnuts and cook until the nuts are just beginning to change color and are fragrant.
- Add the olives, Capers and all the herbs. Toss until the ingredients are blended and are heated thoroughly. Ensure that you don't overcook the mixture as it will compromise the delicate flavor of the herbs.

- Mix in the drained pasta and toss it together.
- Season with Salt and Pepper.
- Set aside individual portions on serving plates. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese and serve.

Marinated Grilled Leg of Lamb with Rosemary

Easy, outdoorsy, and smells like heaven on a plate!



Ingredients

- 6 cloves Garlic, chopped
- 6 tablespoons fresh Rosemary
- Salt, as per taste
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 7-8 pound leg of spring lamb, de-boned and butterflied
- Juice of 1 1/2 lemons
- Freshly ground Pepper

Instructions

- Mix together Garlic, Rosemary, Salt and Pepper to taste and olive oil.

For a delicate, yet pungent salad dressing, add two tablespoons of chopped fresh Chervil to a basic vinaigrette recipe.

- Place the de-boned lamb in a roasting pan and rub all over with the prepared marinade.
- Drizzle lemon juice over the lamb. Let it sit for at least one hour in the refrigerator. You can also let the lamb marinate overnight. If you decide to marinate overnight, take it out of the fridge about 30 minutes before cooking it.
- Pre-heat a grill to high heat. Place the lamb on the hot grill and sear on each side for 5-7 minutes. Turn the heat down to medium and cook, turning frequently, for another 35-40 minutes. If your grill has a lid, close it during cooking so that the meat is thoroughly cooked from the inside.
- Check it's cooked by cutting into the thickest part of the meat. For medium, the lamb should be pink in the centre. Return it to the grill if necessary.
- When done to your liking, remove from grill and let it stand for 10 minutes before carving. Carve into thin slices and serve immediately.

Sauté boneless chicken breasts with walnuts and toss in fresh Chives and Tarragon about 5 minutes before the chicken is done.

Hearty Chicken Stew with Fennel & Saffron

For those chilly winter nights...saffron and fennel have an ethereal aroma that takes this recipe to a whole new level. This one-pot meal can be planned in advance for dinner, just put it on the stove for 30 minutes and voila!



Ingredients

- 4 tomatoes, peeled, cored, seeded and chopped (or canned tomatoes)
- 2 large onions, quartered
- 4 Garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 4 large Fennel bulbs with leaves attached, coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup Pernod (liqueur flavoured with Anise)
- 2 pinches Saffron
- 1/3 cup fresh Thyme
- 4 Bay Leaves
- Salt, as per taste
- Black Pepper
- 4 chicken legs with thighs attached, skin removed
- 1 pound potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 2 cups chicken stock

Instructions

- The day before: in a large covered casserole dish, mix together the tomatoes, onions, Garlic, Fennel, olive oil, Pernod, Saffron, herbs and seasonings. Add the chicken, stir so that the mixture coats the chicken evenly.

Use a sprig of Rosemary as a stirrer for bloody marys or fresh tomato juice.

- Cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours to let it marinate.

- At least 1 hour before you begin to prepare the dish, remove the chicken from the refrigerator.
- Stew the chicken in its marinade, covered, over medium heat, stirring from time to time, for about 30 minutes.
- Add the potatoes and chicken stock. Simmer until the potatoes are cooked (30 to 45 minutes).
- Taste for seasoning and serve immediately.

Long strands of Chive leaves can be used to tie bundles of cooked green beans, roasted asparagus or sautéed bell pepper strips for a beautiful presentation.

Creamy Butternut Pumpkin and Apple Soup

This sweet rich winter soup is easy to make and always impresses friends. It's naturally creamy, so you can leave out the added cream, but a small swirl adds color contrast to the soup.



Ingredients

- 3 pounds butternut pumpkin, peeled and diced
- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 cups yellow onions, chopped
- 1 (1-inch) Cinnamon stick
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 4 tablespoons butter, unsalted
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon Ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon Nutmeg
- 1 pint light cream, hot
- Salt and Pepper, as per taste

Instructions

- Melt the butter over medium heat in a soup pot or Dutch oven.
- Add the onions and cook until they are translucent.

- Mix in the chicken stock, butternut pumpkin, apples, Nutmeg and Cinnamon and bring it to a boil.

Chop and add Garlic Chives to sour cream to top baked potatoes.

- Simmer, partially covered, until the pumpkin and apples are very tender, about 20 minutes.

- Drain about 1/2 the cooking liquid and keep it aside.

- Take out the Cinnamon stick and puree the soup until smooth. Add the maple syrup and stir until the soup is the consistency you like. If necessary, add some more of the reserved cooking liquid.

Use cut sections of Lemongrass as skewers for baking or grilling shrimp, poultry and pork medallions.

- Add the remaining ingredients except cream and simmer for fifteen minutes.
- Add the cream, strain, and serve.

Roast Beef with Lavender and Pepper

This is an unusual recipe that gives out a gentle whiff of lavender along with a potent peppery kick.



Ingredients

- 1 beef tenderloin roast (3-4 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon whole Black Peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon whole White Peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons Fennel seeds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried Thyme
- 2 tablespoons dried Lavender flowers
- Salt, per taste

Instructions

- Bring the beef tenderloin roast to room temperature before cooking. Trim the tenderloin of fat and silver skin (a silvery-white connective tissue).
- Pat the beef dry with paper towels. Brush the roast lightly with olive oil.

Float Nasturtium flowers in punch bowls for a stunning presentation.

- In a small spice or coffee grinder, coarsely grind the Black Peppercorns, White Peppercorns, Fennel seeds, Thyme, Lavender flowers and Salt. Rub this mixture all over the meat. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.
- Preheat oven to 425°F. Unwrap the roast and place onto a rack in a shallow baking pan. Roast for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F and continue to roast until the internal temperature reaches desired temperature on a meat thermometer. The readings should be 120°F for rare, 125°F for medium rare and 130°F for medium.
- Remove from oven and transfer onto a cutting board; let stand for 15 minutes before carving (meat temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees after it is removed from the oven). Transfer onto a serving platter and serve immediately with any accumulated pan juices.

Tarragon Chicken Salad

Sometimes the best approach is the simplest one, as in this mix of chicken, mayonnaise, pine nuts and celery. Use tarragon for an unusual flavor.



Ingredients

- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1 1/2 cups chopped celery
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh Tarragon
- 1 cup chopped fresh Parsley
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup raisins or sultanas
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 1/2 cup dry roasted pine nuts

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Garnish fresh fruit salads, summer berries, and citrus coolers with fresh Mint sprigs.

- Lightly grease a medium baking dish.
- Arrange the chicken in the baking dish, cover, and bake 25 minutes in the preheated oven, until juices run clear. Remove from heat, cool, and shred.
- In a large bowl, mix the shredded chicken, celery, Tarragon, Parsley, mayonnaise, raisins, pine nuts and onion.
- Refrigerate 1 hour, or until chilled, before serving.

Add freshly cut herbs towards the end of the cooking time to preserve the flavors.

Crab Stuffed Mushrooms

A definite crowd pleaser! These little nibblers will vanish in no time!



Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh mushrooms
- 7 ounces crabmeat
- 5 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 small red bell pepper, chopped finely
- 3 cloves fresh Garlic, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon dried Thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon dried Oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon ground Savory
- Ground Black Pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus additional 3 tablespoons
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- In a medium bowl, combine crabmeat, green onions, red bell pepper, Garlic, herbs, and pepper. Mix in mayonnaise and 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese until well combined. Refrigerate filling until ready for use.

Add a few Sage leaves to the pan when frying or sautéing onions to intensify the onion flavor.

- Wipe the mushrooms clean with a damp towel. Remove stems. Spoon out the gills and the base of the stem, making deep cups. Discard gills and stems.

- Fill the mushroom caps with rounded teaspoonfuls of filling, and place them in an un-greased shallow baking dish. Sprinkle tops with Parmesan and Cayenne Pepper.

Mix Dill, sour cream and Horseradish for a great sauce for beef.

- Bake for 15-20 minutes. Broil for 1-3 minutes so that the top is crispy and brown. Remove from the oven, and serve immediately on a bed of romaine lettuce with lemon wedges.

Potato Salad with Mint Basil Pesto

Dress up your basic potato salad by adding a Minty zing to it!



Ingredients

- 1 pound red potatoes
- 1 pound waxy potatoes
- 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons chopped Parsley

For Mint Basil Pesto

- ½ cup Mint leaves
- ½ cup Basil
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts

- 1 clove Garlic, peeled
- 1/4 teaspoon Salt
- 3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup sour cream

Instructions

- Cook the potatoes in their skins in boiling salted water until tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain, rinse and set aside to cool. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut into bite-size chunks.
- Place the Mint leaves, Basil, pine nuts, Garlic, salt, Parmesan and olive oil in a blender or food processor. Process until the ingredients are finely chopped and combined. Add the sour cream and mix to combine.
- While the potatoes are still warm, pour the dressing over the potatoes and mix carefully until well coated.
- Garnish the salad with the toasted pine nuts and chopped Parsley. Serve at room temperature.

Make a delicious spread for crackers or a dip for crudités by combining 1 cup cream cheese, 1 tablespoon minced fresh Anise leaf, ½ teaspoon ground Anise seed and ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard.

Vietnamese Fresh Spring Rolls with Peanut Dipping Sauce

Nifty little self-contained salads-to-go -- crisp raw veggies and minced fresh herbs, along with cooked shrimp, pork, fried tofu or whatever else suits your fancy, all neatly packaged up in a deliciously chewy-soft, pliable rice paper wrapping. They're delicious, refreshingly cool, and fun to make ... and just perfect for a summery meal, or a dinner party hors-d'oeuvre.



Ingredients

For the rolls

- 2 ounces rice vermicelli
- 8 rice paper rounds (8.5 inch diameter)
- 8 large cooked shrimp - peeled, deveined and cut in half
- 1 1/3 tablespoons chopped fresh Thai Basil
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh Mint leaves
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh Cilantro
- 1/2 cup bean sprouts
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1/2 cup cucumber, thinly sliced
- 2 lettuce leaves (preferably romaine), chopped

For the peanut dipping sauce

- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon crunchy peanut butter

Directions

- Bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil. Boil rice vermicelli 3 to 5 minutes, or until al dente, and drain.

Mix Sorrel leaves with Swiss chard or spinach and use it as a vegetable. Steam it lightly and add a little butter, Salt and Pepper to make a delicious side dish.

- Fill a large bowl with warm water. Dip one wrapper into the hot water for 1 second to soften. Lay wrapper flat. In a row across the centre, place 2 shrimp halves, a handful of vermicelli, Basil, Mint, Cilantro,

lettuce, carrots, cucumber and bean sprouts leaving about 2 inches uncovered on each side. Fold uncovered sides inward, and then tightly roll the wrapper, beginning at the end with the lettuce.

- Repeat with remaining ingredients. Do not overstuff the rolls.
- In another small bowl, mix the hoisin sauce and crunchy peanut butter. Whisk over medium heat. Add water to make the sauce thinner.
- Serve Vietnamese spring rolls with the peanut dipping sauce.