



Wellness in the Workplace

Navigating the Spice Aisle

Allspice: Dried berry of the Pimenta dioica tree

Taste: Blend of cinnamon, nutmeg and clove with a hint of juniper berry.

Health Benefits: Blocks glycation, which is connected to aging

Great in: Combine allspice into lean ground turkey for Jamaican style burgers

Anise seed: Seed of the Pimpinella anisum plant

Taste: Licorice-like flavor

Health Benefits: Aids in digestion and bad breath

Great it: Ground anise seed in fish, poultry, soups, curries. Heat whole seeds with honey and drizzle in yogurt or tea

Basil: Leaves of the basil plant

Taste: Gentle blend of licorice and clove

Health Benefits: Shown to provide protection against unwanted bacterial growth

Great in: Tomato dishes. Toss hot pasta with diced fresh tomatoes and torn basil leaves.

Bay Leaf: Leaf of the bay tree

Taste: Robust, fragrant, woody herb

Health Benefits: Great source of vitamin C, folic acid, vitamin A, and B vitamins

Great in: Soups, stews, vegetables— remove the leaves before serving

Cardamom: Ground from seeds of a tropical plant

Taste: Pungent aroma, warm spicy-sweet flavor

Health Benefits: Contains cineole which may lessen asthma symptoms

Great in: Chai tea, sprinkle onto oatmeal

Cayenne: Ground dried cayenne chili pepper

Taste: Smoky, fiery flavor

Health Benefits: Curbs appetite and reduces calorie intake

Great in: Spritz over plain popcorn with olive oil

Coriander: Dried seeds of cilantro

Taste: Mild, lemon flavor

Health Benefits: May have sedative effects

Great in: Add powder to Indian curry, marinades

Cumin: Fruits of a parsley like plant

Taste: Earthy, nutty flavor with peppery kick

Health Benefits: Improve digestion, has iron

Great in: Dust salmon with it. Add seeds to water when steaming or boiling vegetables.

Dill Weed: Available dried or fresh

Taste: Fresh, sweet, slightly licorice flavor

Health Benefits: “Chemoprotective” can help neutralize particular types of carcinogens

Great in: Mix with equal parts sour cream and mayo with 2 Tbsp. horseradish for easy dip

Ground Ginger: Ground from ginger root

Taste: Pungent and spicy

Health Benefits: Contains gingerol, thought to relax blood vessels and relieve pain.

Great in: Soups, curries, meats, gingerbread

Mustard: Ground seed of the mustard plant

Taste: Hot and spicy

Health Benefits: Anti-inflammatory

Great in: Deviled eggs, potato salad, & dressings.

Paprika: Ground sweet red pepper pods

Taste: Ranges from mild to pungent and hot

Health Benefits: May limit growth of Salmonella and E. Coli that are transferred through eating

Great in: Garnish for savory dishes. Try parikash potatoes, Creole dishes, or turkey breast

What's the difference between herbs and spices?

Both spices and herbs are parts of plants that are used to flavor food. Throughout history they have also been used to preserve foods, cure illness and enhance cosmetics.



The difference between the two is where they are obtained from a plant. **Herbs** come from the leafy and green part of the plant. **Spices** are parts of the plant other than the leafy bit such as the root, stem, bulb, bark or seeds.

Examples of *herbs* include basil, oregano, thyme, rosemary, parsley and mint. They are usually grown in more temperate areas than spices and have great medicinal value and are also used in the preparation of cosmetic products.

Spices are usually dried before being used to season foods. Some examples are cinnamon, cloves, ginger and pepper. Unlike herbs, they are grown in more tropical countries. They've also been known to preserve foods and some have medicinal value, such as turmeric with its anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal properties.

Spice Profiling

Cooking with spices is an aspect of cooking that frustrates many people. There tends to be confusion on which spices to buy, how to use them, and how much of them to use. All of those questions can be answered by turning to ethnic profiling. First, don't over-think it. Herbs and spices are best used to accent the natural flavor of a particular ingredient. There is a big difference between "seasoning" and "flavoring". Seasoning is the act of bringing out the natural flavors of the food with herbs and spices. Salt and pepper on a grilled chicken breast will accent the flavor of the chicken, but not change it. Flavoring is changing the flavor profile of the ingredient entirely. This is where ethnic profiling comes in; you can match the seasoning to the ingredient or to a specific style of cooking or ethnicity.

Use the below chart to help guide you.

- **Chinese**: soy sauce, rice wine, ginger, garlic and sesame
- **Eastern/Northern Europe**: dill, caraway, allspice and paprika
- **French**: olive oil, garlic, basil, thyme, rosemary, marjoram, sage
 - **Greece**: olive oil, tomato, lemon, mint, oregano
- **India (general)**: curries, turmeric, cumin, ginger and garlic
- **Southern India**: mustard seed, coconut, tamarind and chilies
- **Italy**: olive oil, garlic and basil, parsley, anchovy and tomato
 - **Japan**: soy sauce, sake, and sugar
- **Mexico**: cumin, Mexican oregano, lime and chili peppers
- **North Africa**: cumin, coriander, cinnamon, ginger, onion
- **Spain**: olive oil, garlic, nuts, onions, peppers and tomato
- **Thailand**: fish sauce, coconut milk, lemon grass, curries and chili peppers
 - **West Africa**: peanut, chilies and tomato