

An herb guide to keep at hand

A large bouquet of herbs is usually a bargain, but what to do with the rest of the bunch? You can store herbs for several days by immersing the stems in 1 inch of water in a tall glass. Cover with a plastic bag and refrigerate; replace water when cloudy. You can also freeze herbs by removing the leaves from the stems, rinsing and drying the leaves, and then placing them in a heavy-duty sealed plastic bag for up to six months. (Frozen herbs darken but retain much of their flavor.) Or, use the extras in a recipe—check out our chart for flavor traits and food pairings.

HERB	FLAVOR	GREAT WITH	NOTES
BASIL	Fragrant and spicy—almost peppery	Tomatoes, vegetables, poultry, grilled pizzas, salads	It's best used as whole leaves or torn. Smaller leaves at top of bunch are the sweetest.
CHIVES	Subtle onion with grasslike leaves	Egg dishes, soups, sauces, baked potatoes, fish	Snip with scissors for best results. Chive flowers make a pretty garnish.
CILANTRO	A lively flavor; soapy, some say; looks similar to flat-leaf parsley	Asian, Mexican, and Indian dishes; mix in salsas and chutneys	Leaves become bitter after plant flowers. Dried seeds are the spice coriander.
DILL	Fresh and grassy; feathery leaves used in pickle brine	Tuna salad; omelets, vegetables, seafood dishes, yogurt dressing for cucumbers, herb vinegars	Use dill fresh or add to hot food just before serving.
MINT	Cool; brightens up both savory and sweet dishes	Beverages, jellies, sauces, marinades for meat and vegetables; often tossed with buttered peas	The most popular variety is spearmint. To dry, hang in a dark place with low humidity.
OREGANO	Earthy; balances acidic tomatoes—hence common on pizza	Lamb, beef, eggs, beans, eggplant	It's closely related to marjoram (but more pungent), so they aren't classified separately.
PARSLEY	Peppery and fresh; curly parsley is milder than flat-leaf Italian	Salads, vegetables (especially potatoes), pasta	Either variety is a breath freshener.
ROSEMARY	Pungent aroma and pine flavor	Mediterranean dishes, lamb, poultry, fish, breads; add sprigs or finely chopped leaves to long-cooking stews	When grilling, sturdier stems make good skewers; branches can be a basting brush.
SAGE	Very aromatic and woody	Fresh sausage, holiday stuffing for turkey, rich meats like pork, goose, and duck	Deep-fried sage is a lovely garnish.
TARRAGON	Reminiscent of licorice	Poultry, fish, shellfish, vegetables, vinegar, and eggs; indispensable in the French béarnaise sauce	Two types; French is preferred over the more bitter Russian.
THYME	Minty and citrusy	Mediterranean dishes, stews, eggs, seafood, poultry; toss sprigs into boiling water to flavor steamed rice	Strip leaves from stems by pulling through fork tines.