

## Guide to Common Herbs

### Storing Fresh Herbs

**In the refrigerator:** Wrap in a damp paper towel and place in a plastic bag, or trim the ends and place in a glass with about one inch of water, covered loosely with a plastic bag. Herbs will last for about a week in the refrigerator.

**In the freezer:** Delicate leafy herbs can be chopped and put in ice cube trays. Top off with water and freeze. Frozen herbs are best used in cooked dishes, such as soups, as they will lose color and crispness when thawed.

### Basil



A close relative to mint, basil has a floral anise and clove-like flavor and aroma. There are two main types of basil: Sweet (or Genovese) basil and Asian basil. In Western cuisine, basil is most often associated with Mediterranean foods like pesto and tomato sauce. Sweet basil pairs naturally with tomatoes, but it can be used with almost every type of meat or seafood. Asian basil has a more distinct anise flavor and is often used in soups, stews, stir fries, and curry pastes.

### Bay Leaves



The smell of bay leaves includes aromas of balsam, clove, mint, and some say honey. Well known for use in hearty stews and other long-simmering dishes with its slightly sharp, peppery, almost bitter taste. Add whole bay leaves at the beginning of the cooking process and remember to remove them before serving. Sweet bay is native to the Mediterranean.

### Chervil



Chervil has lacy, light-green leaves with a hint of anise and enhances the flavor of chicken, fish, vegetables, eggs, and salads. It's an heirloom herb that was likely introduced to European herb gardening by the Romans. Closely related to parsley, chervil has become an indispensable herb plant in the kitchen, and a classic among herbs in French cuisine.

### Chives



Chives add a flavor like onion without the bite. They are native to Asia and have been used in cooking for almost 5,000 years. Chives work well with eggs, fish, potatoes, salads, shellfish, and soups. They are a good source of beta carotene and Vitamin C. Add chives at the very end of cooking to maintain their color and flavor. Purple chive blossoms are more pungent than the stems and are a beautiful addition to salads.

# farm to TABLE

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## Cilantro

Cilantro, also called coriander, has a flavor that some people find “soapy,” but it is still one of the world’s most popular herbs. Many people love its bright, refreshing flavor, and it’s a staple of Latin and Asian cooking. The mild-tasting stems and leaves are usually eaten raw, added after a dish has been cooked. The roots are used to make Thai curry pastes. The seeds of cilantro are known as coriander.



## Dill

The feathery leaves, or fronds, of the dill plant add a bright, anise-like flavor to seafood, soups, salads, and sauces. It is an excellent complement to foods with delicate flavors like fish and shellfish, and it is commonly used in cuisines across Europe and the Middle East. Fresh dill should have a strong scent.



## Fennel

Fennel is native to the Mediterranean region and traditionally grew in dry soils near the ocean or riverbanks. Fennel leaves and bulbs have a licorice flavor. The leaves (or fronds) are similar in shape to dill and can be added to salads, dressings, or used in stock. The bulbs can be sautéed, roasted, or eaten raw in salads.



## Lemongrass

Lemongrass has a strong lemony flavor. It can be brewed into tea or used as a seasoning in foods. Lemongrass is featured in Indonesian, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, and Indian cooking and is widely used in savory dishes and curries. When cooking with fresh lemongrass, use only the lower bulbous portion of the stem, whole or cut in slices. If using ground powder (sereh), one teaspoon is equal to one fresh stalk. Lemongrass can last 2-3 weeks in the refrigerator in a paper bag, or it can be frozen for several months.



## Lovage

Lovage belongs to the parsley family, and its seeds, leaves, and roots are used in cooking and for their medicinal properties. It has a concentrated celery flavor with undertones of parsley and anise, and it can be used cooked or raw. Use lovage in place of parsley in chicken and tuna salads or add to soups and stocks.



## Mint

Although it is commonly associated with sweet treats, mint lends its cooling peppery flavor to many savory dishes, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. Fresh mint is perfect for summer salads, to liven up sauces, or to brew fragrant teas. Mint’s fresh flavor is also used to temper spicy curries.

# farm to TABLE

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## Oregano

Oregano is a pungent herb found primarily in Mediterranean and Mexican cuisines. It is one of the few herbs that dries well, so it's often easier to find dried oregano than fresh. Dried oregano can be used in place of fresh oregano, but use half as much since the flavor is more concentrated. Oregano can also be used as a substitute for its close cousin, marjoram.



## Parsley

One of the most common and versatile herbs in Western cooking, parsley has a mild peppery flavor that complements other seasonings. It is often used in sauces, salads, and sprinkled over dishes at the end of cooking for a flash of green and a fresh taste. Flat leaf or Italian parsley has the best texture and flavor for cooking. Curly parsley is best used as a garnish.



## Rosemary

A woody herb with a pungent, savory flavor, rosemary's spiky leaves can be used fresh or dried in long-cooking soups, meats, stews, and sauces. Because its flavor is strong, it is best to add rosemary sparingly at first and more later if needed.



## Sage

Many people use sage in their Thanksgiving stuffing, but there are many other delicious uses for this herb, particularly in dishes with pork, beans, poultry, squash, or potatoes. Dried sage has a strong flavor, so start with a small amount. Fresh sage is more vibrant in flavor and is often used in marinades, sauces, and savory breads.



## Thyme

One of the most popular herbs in American and European cooking, thyme can be paired with nearly any kind of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable. To use fresh thyme, peel the leaves off the woody stem by running your fingers along the stem, or use whole stems in soups and stews. With younger thyme, some of the main stem or little offshoot stems will come off with the leaves, which is fine.



## Winter Savory

Winter savory is a shrubby herb with flavors of sage and pine. It gives food an earthiness and pairs well with pork, beef, chicken, and root vegetables in long-cooking dishes. It is often used with dried beans and is an important ingredient in the dried herb mixture called Herbes de Provence. In addition to its culinary uses, winter savory is used medicinally for its antibacterial and antifungal properties.