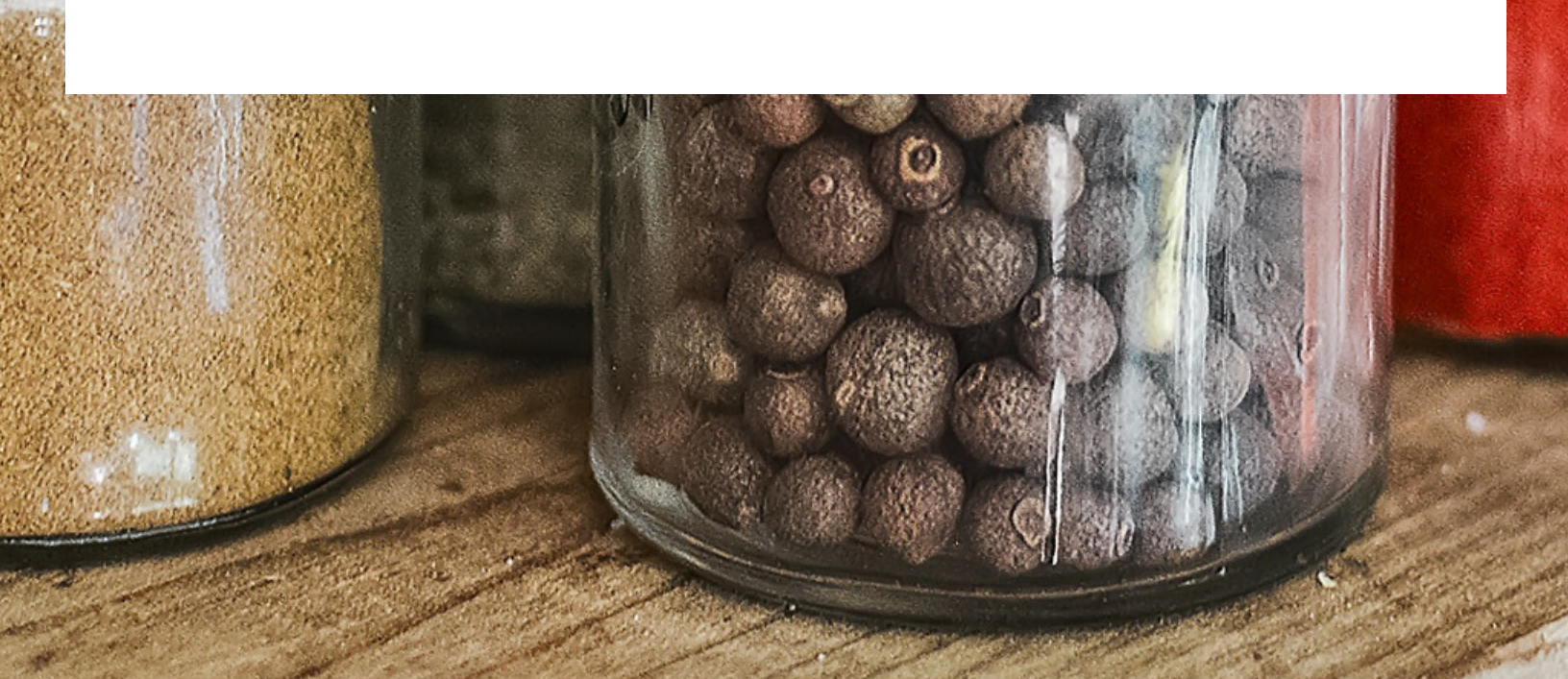


HERBS & SPICES

A comprehensive guide to
using herbs & spices from 6
different cuisines

By Aprylle Deasey, MS, RD



General Tips

HERBS

DRIED

- Add dried herbs to the beginning of cooking to release flavors
- When swapping dried for fresh, use less (ex. if a recipe calls for 1 Tablespoon of fresh herbs, use 1 teaspoon of dried herbs)

FRESH

- Fresh herbs are added at the end of cooking
- Woody herbs (ie: rosemary, thyme) can be added at the beginning
- To keep herbs fresh, only wash what you'll be using and wrap leftovers in a damp paper towel and place in a zip lock bag in the fridge

General Tips

SPICES

WHOLE

- Can be toasted to add more flavor by placing whole spices in a pan on medium heat until they smell, remove from heat, and grind them
- Grind whole spices by placing in a bowl and using the back of a spoon to break them up
- Whole spices keep their flavor longer than ground

GROUND

- Typically cheaper, faster to use, and more convenient
- Replace every 6 months

Italian Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Oregano - use fresh or dried; good with tomatoes, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beef
- Bay Leaf - use dried; use in stock and sauces
- Fennel Seeds - use dried; use in Italian sausage, pork
- Basil - best fresh; use in tomato sauce, beef, chicken, eggs, fish, and seafood
- Nutmeg - use dried; use in baking and cream based sauces
- Parsley - use fresh or dried; use in soups and sauces

Italian Cuisine

COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Start sauces by sauteing onions, carrots, and celery to give flavor. If using dried or woody herbs, add these in now.
- Roasting is a common way to slow cook meat which involves dry heat around 300* F
- Braising is also commonly used which involves slowly cooking tougher/cheaper cuts of meet like chuck, shank, and round in a small amount of cooking liquid (ie: tomatoes, wine, stock/broth) to tenderize

French Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Nutmeg - use dried; use in baking and cream based sauces
- Oregano - use fresh or dried; good with tomatoes, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beef
- Herb de Provence - mixture of herbs like lavender, thyme, rosemary, tarragon, savory, and oregano; use with lamb, chicken, fish, and vegetables
- Thyme - use fresh or dried; use with poultry, stuffing, fish, chowders, soups, sauces, lamb, veal
- Rosemary - use fresh or dried; use in breads, lamb, pork, chicken, and pasta
- Sage - use fresh or dried; use with apples, citrus, poultry, soups, stews, bread, rice and pork

French Cuisine

COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Sauteing is achieved by cooking food in a shallow pan with a small amount of hot fat (ie: butter or oil)
- Poaching is simmering or boiling food in liquid to create a soft texture which is often used for eggs or dessert fruit
- Braising is also commonly used which involves slowly cooking tougher/cheaper cuts of meat like chuck, shank, and round in a small amount of cooking liquid (ie: tomatoes, wine, stock/broth) to tenderize
- French cooking typically uses butter, however vegetable oils (ie: olive oil, canola oil, sunflower oil) can be substituted for a healthier option

Cajun Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Oregano - use fresh or dried; good with tomatoes, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beef
- Bay Leaf - use dried; use in stock and sauces
- Cayenne Pepper/red pepper flakes - used whole, as flakes, or ground; used in rubs, with meats, pickles, and seafood
- Thyme - use fresh or dried; use with poultry, stuffing, fish, chowders, soups, sauces, lamb, veal
- Paprika - use ground; use with eggs, spice rubs, marinades, soups, and rice dishes
- Black pepper - used whole, crushed, or ground; compliments all meats and used in most dishes for flavor

Cajun Cuisine

COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Most Cajun cuisine uses the "holy trinity": bell peppers, onions, and celery to begin cooking
- Uses fresh proteins, well rounded spices, vegetables, and herbs for flavor
- Typically cooked in one pot and use rice, vegetables, meat (shellfish and fish), and spices
- To thicken dishes you can use a traditional roux (flour and butter) or try using cornstarch, or unsaturated fats like olive oil for a healthier substitution

Mexican Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Oregano - use fresh or dried; good with tomatoes, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beef
- Cinnamon - use whole or ground; use as a baking spice, in beverages, savory chicken or lamb dishes
- Coriander - use whole or ground; use for breads, sausage, stews
- Cumin - use whole or ground; use in sauces, stews, curries, rice dishes, poultry, lamb
- Cilantro - leaf similar to parsley; use with poultry, sausage, seafood, tomato dishes
- Chili powder - use ground with cumin, oregano, garlic and salt; use in tomato-based dishes, spice rubs for meats, may be used in desserts

Mexican Cuisine

COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Foods are typically grilled, fried, baked, sauteed, or steamed
- Try cooking foods like traditional quesadillas, taquitos by spraying them with a little oil and baking them instead of frying them for a healthier option

Indian Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Bay Leaf - use dried; use in stock and sauces
- Cardamom - use in sweet and savory dishes, also used in curry
- Cinnamon - use whole or ground; use as a baking spice, in beverages, savory chicken or lamb dishes
- Cumin - use in sauces, stews, curries, rice dishes, poultry, lamb
- Curry powder - a mixture of ground spices; use with all sorts of meats
- Turmeric - use with lentils, meat dishes, mustard, relishes, and essential in curry
- Garam Masala - combination of spices added to curry and other Indian dishes
- Ginger - found dried, ground, or fresh (needs to be peeled if fresh); use with meat, fruits, root vegetables, and teas

Indian Cuisine

COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Sauteing is achieved by cooking food in a shallow pan with a small amount of hot fat (ie: butter or oil)
- Simmering involves gently boiling foods covered in water or liquid
- The Tandoori method of cooking uses a large clay oven that is heated by a charcoal or wood fire within the oven to extremely hot temperatures
- Meats may be marinated in yogurt with spices, opt for low-fat yogurts as a healthier option

Mediterranean Cuisine

HERBS & SPICES

- Oregano - use fresh or dried; good with tomatoes, vegetables, chicken, fish, and beef
- Thyme - use fresh or dried; use with poultry, stuffing, fish, chowders, soups, sauces, lamb, veal
- Bay Leaf - use dried; use in stock and sauces
- Rosemary - use fresh or dried; use in breads, lamb, pork, chicken, and pasta
- Cinnamon - use whole or ground; use as a baking spice, in beverages, savory chicken or lamb dishes
- Basil - best fresh; use in tomato sauce, beef, chicken, eggs, fish, and seafood

Mediterranean Cuisine

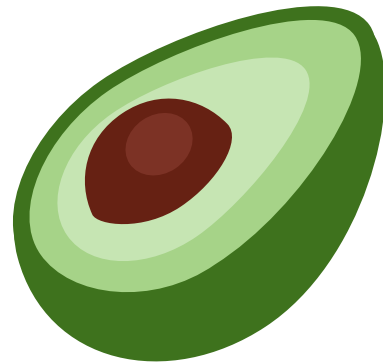
COOKING TECHNIQUES

- Sauteing is achieved by cooking food in a shallow pan with a small amount of hot fat (ie: butter or oil)
- Roasting is a common way to slow cook meat which involves dry heat around 300* F
- Braising is also commonly used which involves slowly cooking tougher/cheaper cuts of meat like chuck, shank, and round in a small amount of cooking liquid (ie: tomatoes, wine, stock/broth) to tenderize
- Mediterranean cuisine is all about light and fresh foods. Oils such as olive oil, grapeseed oil, and canola oil are typically used
- Lemons are also used to enhance dishes

About the Author

Meet Aprylle Deasey, MS, RD

Aprylle is a Registered Dietitian with education, counseling, and clinical nutrition experience. She has spent time working with low-income populations, finding the best ways to make nutrition attainable for all regardless of literacy level or socioeconomic status. While she currently works with patients in the long term care and rehab settings, she also counsels and educates health-seekers at gyms and studios in Rochester, NY.



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