

12 Great Ways to Use...

Fresh Herbs

Herbs and spices were added to the updated Mediterranean Diet Pyramid at an Oldways Conference in 2008. The international scientific committee thought it was important to include herbs and spices for reasons of both health and taste. In addition to great flavor attributes and health benefits, herbs and spices contribute to the regional and national identities of delicious dishes from all around the Mediterranean.

1. Finely chop your favorite herbs and add them to a basic vinaigrette.
2. Rub a mixture of olive oil, salt, pepper, and chopped thyme, rosemary, or sage on poultry before roasting to infuse the meat with delicious flavor.
3. Make a fresh pesto! Go the traditional route by combining fresh basil with garlic, salt, pine nuts, parmiggiano-reggiano or pecorino cheese, and olive oil in a blender or food processor. Pour over pasta, spread on toasted bread, slather on chicken or fish.
4. For a bright, fresh taste, add chopped basil and mint to gently sautéed zucchini or summer squash.
5. Make an Italian salsa verde—another delicious and herbaceous sauce that can be served with meat or fish. Combine parsley and other fresh herbs with anchovies, capers, garlic, red pepper flakes, and olive oil with a mortar and pestle (or in a food processor) for a rustic texture.
6. Roughly chop up your favorite tender fresh herbs (such as basil, dill, parsley, or mint) and add them to your salad for an unexpected pop of flavor with each bite.
7. Chop fresh parsley and mint, combine with cooked, drained bulgur wheat (or your favorite whole grain), finely chopped onions, and tomatoes. Dress with olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper to make tabbouleh.
8. Flavor stocks, sauces, braises, and stews with sprigs of fresh rosemary and thyme – just remember to remove the woody stalks once the dish is complete!
9. Prepare a dill sauce for salmon (grilled, baked, roasted, smoked, or cured!) by combining chopped dill, Greek yogurt, a dollop of grainy mustard, finely chopped shallot, and a sprinkle of salt and pepper.
10. While you may think of using herbs in savory dishes, they can also be a fantastic addition to sweet baked goods. Use your imagination and add fresh herbs to delectable treats such as lavender cookies, basil cake, chocolate mint brownies, and more.
11. Explore the cooler side of herbs. Steep a generous handful of your herb of choice in milk or cream, strain, and use to prepare your favorite ice cream base. Or, steep your favorite herb in hot water for home-made herbal tea (hot or cold!)
12. Preserve your fresh herbs so that you can use them throughout the year! Dry them by hanging bundles of sprigs upside down in a dry, sunny place until thoroughly dehydrated. Alternatively, you can freeze washed, chopped herbs by placing them in an ice cube tray and covering with olive oil. The olive oil-herb ice cubes can be placed directly into a simmering pot of soup or a steaming bowl of mashed potatoes. Herbs can also be placed in plastic bags and popped into the freezer for future use.

