

THINK GREEN WITH HERBS!

Whether you plant your own herb garden or pick them up at the grocery or farmers' market, fresh herbs have the power to transform ORDINARY meals into GREAT meals.

Besides adding flavour and colour to foods – while allowing you to cut back on salt, fat and sugar, herbs have many other benefits. Many herbs (both fresh and dried) are high in antioxidants, which may help protect you against diseases like cancer and heart disease.

Substitute fresh herbs for dried herbs

When cooking with fresh herbs, a general guideline is to use 3 times as much as you would use of a dried herb (1 tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried).

Timing is important

Buy your fresh herbs as close to the time you plan to use them as possible. If the herbs are from your own garden, the ideal time for picking is in the morning after the dew has evaporated, but before the sun gets too hot. This helps to ensure the best flavour and storage quality.



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Use containers for herb planting

If you plant your herbs in containers, you can bring them into the house before the first frost and in this way you can enjoy fresh herbs into the colder months. Try planting herbs among your annuals to create beautiful gardens; you'll also find that mixed herb and flower planters make a very attractive decoration.



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Use baskets or ceramic pots to conceal plastic herb containers

Why buy herbs in plastic bags when you can buy them fresh in pots? Choose a decorative basket or other container and line it with plastic to prevent the water from leaking. Arrange a variety of potted herbs in the basket to create your own mini-herb garden. A few ceramic pots filled with fresh herbs and arranged in a group will make an attractive decoration for your kitchen windowsill.

Pick your fresh herbs as and when you need them, and enjoy a beautiful herbal arrangement for many weeks!

Storing fresh herbs

You can store freshly cut herbs in an open or perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper, where they will stay fresh for several days. Use a knife or scissors to make several small holes in a regular plastic bag, and make sure that the herbs are free of moisture before putting them in the bag. If you buy cilantro, parsley or any herb that has been sprayed with water in the



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grocery store, be sure to dry them using paper towels before putting them in the fridge.

Another method for keeping herbs fresh is to trim the stems and place the herbs in a tall glass filled with about an inch of water. Cover them loosely with a plastic bag to allow for air circulation, put them in the refrigerator and remember to change the water daily. This method works particularly well with parsley.

Herbs can stay fairly fresh for a week or more stored either way but will lose flavour the longer they are stored.

Freezing herbs

Freezing herbs that you use regularly is a great idea.

Wash and dry them before freezing them whole in freezer bags. You can also chop them up, place them in ice cube trays with a little water and freeze. Put the frozen cubes into a labelled freezer bag and simply drop the herb cubes into your favourite recipe when needed. They will keep fresh for up to 6 months in the freezer.

Washing herbs

Always wash your fresh herbs under running water just before you are ready to use them. Then shake off the moisture or spin them dry in a salad spinner. Remove any remaining moisture using a paper towel.

Add herbs as the final touch

Unlike dried herbs, which must be cooked awhile to release their flavours, fresh herbs impart their flavours even when added just before serving. The more delicately flavoured herbs like basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, marjoram and mint can be added to food a minute or two before serving or simply sprinkled on the food just before it's served. You can add less delicate herbs, such as dill seed, oregano, rosemary, tarragon and thyme during the last 20 minutes of cooking.

ENTER THE WORLD KIDNEY DAY 2009 Recipe Contest! Deadline October 1st, 2009

Due to popular demand we have extended the deadline for our contest. We believe that the best ideas come from YOU, the people living with a kidney diet every day! Send us a recipe which is a favourite from your personal renal diet. It can be anything from appetizer, main course or snack, to cake, cookie or dessert. **Our team welcomes all entries and will select six recipes low in phosphorus, potassium and sodium as contest winners.**

If your recipe is one of the six, it will be professionally photographed and published in **Spice it up!** and we will interview you as the chef.

The contest is open to anyone who:

- is a dialysis patient receiving treatment in Canada.
- has an original recipe.

Send your recipe by **mail** to the following address:
World Kidney Day 2009 Recipe Contest
 653 North Sutton Road, Sutton Quebec JOE 2K0
 Or via **e-mail** to: editor@ebmed.ca

Please provide the following:

The Recipe

- Name of recipe
- List of ingredients
- Step-by-step instructions
- Number of servings
- Preparation time
- Nutrient Analysis (only if available)

Your Address

- First and last name
- e-mail address
- Street address
- City, Province, Postal Code
- Phone number
- Name and location of dialysis centre where you receive treatment



We would love to hear what you think about **SPICE IT UP!**

Please send us your comments!

We also welcome recipe suggestions and any tricks and tips related to cooking.

SPICE IT UP! The Editor

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