

9.9: Herbs

Herbs tend to be the leaves of fragrant plants that do not have a woody stem. Herbs are available fresh or dried, with fresh herbs having a more subtle flavor than dried. You need to add a larger quantity of fresh herbs (up to 50% more) than dry herbs to get the same desired flavor. Conversely, if a recipe calls for a certain amount of fresh herb, you would use about one-half of that amount of dry herb.

The most common fresh herbs are basil, coriander, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme. Fresh herbs should have a clean, fresh fragrance and be free of wilted or brown leaves. They can be kept for about five days if sealed inside an airtight plastic bag. Fresh herbs are usually added near the completion of the cooking process so flavors are not lost due to heat exposure.

Dried herbs lose their power rather quickly if not properly stored in airtight containers. They can last up to six months if properly stored. Dried herbs are usually added at the start of the cooking process as their flavor takes longer to develop than fresh herbs.

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