

Maintenance of your Brain - Nootropic Herbs & Spices

Herb/Spice	Brain Benefits	Culinary Use
Black Pepper	Helps overall brain functioning and clear thinking. Mild antidepressant. The active compound in black pepper, piperidine, can also amplify the absorption of other nootropics.	Savory foods, salads, fresh fruit
Chamomile	Highly calming. May improve sleep quality and reduce anxiety and depression.	Tea, desserts
Cinnamon	Can enhance cognition, learning potential, and recognition-oriented memory. Has shown beneficial effects on neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.	Fruits, grains, winter squash, desserts
Cloves	Naturally high in manganese (an essential mineral for brain function). May decrease oxidative stress in the brain.	Baked goods, cooked fruits, sweet vegetables
Fenugreek	Packed with choline (an essential brain nutrient); can help with brain development, memory, nerve-cell signaling, and mood disorders.	Cooked vegetables, legumes, rice
Garlic	Overall neural protectant. May help shield the brain from neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Huntington's diseases.	Savory meals & snacks of all kinds
Ginger	Contains a special compound called zerumbone, which may help prevent brain tumors, inhibit inflammatory responses, and improve reaction time and working memory.	Roots & tubers, fruits, creamy foods
Lavender	Induces calm and promotes relaxation.	Tea, nuts, summer fruits, desserts
Lemon Balm	May help modulate mood and cognitive function. Helps fight stress, promotes calm focus, and aids with information processing.	Tea, light salads, berries
Licorice	In small quantities, licorice may be neuroprotective and improve sleep.	Tea, desserts
Peppermint	May increase cognitive performance and mood, as well as enhance brain alertness and quicken reflexes.	Tea, smoothies, desserts, fruits, salads
Rosemary	May promote mild memory improvement, through consumption and aroma.	Beans & legumes, Mediterranean vegetables, nuts & seeds
Sage	Can help improve memory and overall cognitive performance.	Beans, grains & pasta, soups, winter squash
Vanilla	Mild antidepressive effects. Aroma can positively affect electrical activity of the brain.	Smoothies, baked goods, desserts, fruits

Handout Provided by: Chef Kathryn Bari-Petrakis
Kathryn @ thehealthchef.com.

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My**FOOD** My**HEALTH**

My Herbs and Spices

Great Herbs and Spices to Create Flavorful and Healthy Meals

Basil

Basil is a source of beta-carotene, an antioxidant that combats free radicals in the body, keeping blood vessels in good shape. Free radical activity may also contribute to asthma and osteoporosis. Eugenol, also found in basil, is found to be effective in blocking the inflammation associated with arthritis.

Cayenne

The pepper spice that puts the zing in chili and other dishes, cayenne's claim to fame comes from its compound capsaicin, a popular ingredient in pain-relieving creams. Cayenne may also have additional health benefits. One study found that a diet rich in cayenne spiced chili protected against the formation of LDL ("bad") cholesterol, while another demonstrated that chili helped keep insulin levels low after meals.

Chives

A member of the allium (onion) family, chives contain iron and high levels of vitamins C, vitamin A and essential minerals such as potassium and calcium. It is said to aid digestion. It is an antifungal and aids candida, diabetes, and helps lower cholesterol.

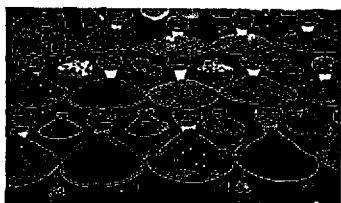
Cinnamon

One of the most versatile spices, cinnamon can be used to flavor everything from cookies to soups. Using cinnamon in cooking is a wise choice because cinnamon has plenty to offer. Not only does it ease common tummy troubles such as gas and bloating, but in a recent clinical trial, cinnamon significantly lowered fasting blood glucose, triglycerides and cholesterol levels in diabetics. Worried about E.coli? New research shows that cinnamon can wipe out bacteria. When a teaspoon of cinnamon was added to highly contaminated apple juice, the E. coli was reduced by 99.5 percent after three days.

Cloves

Cloves contain a significant amount of eugenol, which is found to be effective in blocking the inflammation associated with osteoporosis, arthritis and IBS. Cloves are also a significant source of manganese, dietary fiber, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Coriander



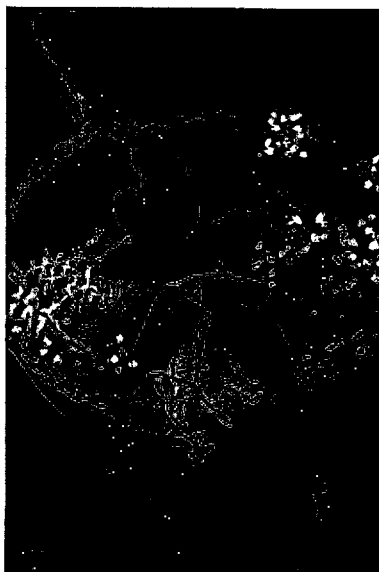
For hundreds of years, coriander has been a favorite remedy for anxiety and insomnia. Now research has confirmed its tension-taming properties. Like cinnamon, coriander aids digestion. It has also shown promise in reducing blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It is also a chelator of heavy metals such as mercury stored in the liver. It is also effective when combating stress.

Dill

Dill is rich in mineral salts and may be used in a salt free diet to enhance flavor. This is very effective for people with high blood pressure. It has a calming effect on the digestive system and relieves gas. It contains an oil which relaxes muscles. It contains vitamin C, flavanoids and is rich in calcium. One tablespoon of dill seed contains as much calcium as a 1/3 cup of milk.

Fenugreek

Fenugreek is an ancient spice that has been grown as a medicinal plant in Europe during the Middle Ages. It contains phytoestrogens and has been used to fight bronchitis, fevers, sore throat, coughing, and diarrhea. It's also proven useful for swollen glands, skin irritations, ulcers and has been utilized for diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.



Garlic

Research shows that garlic has a powerful antioxidant effect helping to protect the body against damaging "free radicals". It lowers [high cholesterol](#) and is used to prevent plaque build up in the arteries, improve [high blood pressure](#), reduce colds, coughs, and bronchitis.

Ginger

A common ingredient in Ayurvedic and traditional Chinese medicines, ginger boasts an antioxidant power equal to vitamin C. Among the spice's reported health benefits: easing [arthritis](#) pains, improving digestion, and treating colds, coughs and flu. In addition, research has shown that ginger is more effective at combating motion sickness than Dramamine. It is also very useful for arthritis and IBS.

Licorice

Licorice is used in Ayurvedic medicine and is a great source of magnesium, silicon and thiamine. It is used to alleviate a variety of health conditions such as digestive problems, constipation, [depression](#), [fatigue](#), [arthritis](#), [asthma](#), and sore throats. It is used as a cough remedy and relieves respiratory ailments, stomach problems, inflammatory disorders, [skin diseases](#), and liver problems.

Marjoram

A bush, native to the Mediterranean region (particularly Sicily). Its healing properties include: fighting [asthma](#), soothing [headaches](#), healing with anxiety/[stress](#) and soothing the stomach and digestive track. It is good with chicken and turkey, vegetables, and eggs.

Mint

Mint/Peppermint has a long history of uses in medicine and is one of the most effective measures in relieving indigestions, nausea and heartburn. It soothes diverticulitis, IBS, and other digestive disorders. It also has great anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic properties. It relaxes the muscles of the digestive tract and stimulates the flow of natural digestive juices and bile. Its properties are known to soothe symptoms of [candidiasis](#), [headaches](#), [stress](#), and [fatigue](#).

Nutmeg

Nutmeg is known to lower [blood pressure](#), soothe digestive upset, [arthritis](#), and help detoxify the body. The anti-inflammatory properties can be used to treat joint and muscle pain.

Oregano

Oregano is a favorite culinary spice that aides in reducing inflammation and battling bacteria and viruses. Scientists recently may have discovered why the spice is so effective. In a study examining the antioxidant activity of nearly 40 different herbs and spices, oregano won the highest scores, beating out apples, oranges and blueberries. It is helpful in soothing the symptoms of [Candida](#).

Parsley

Parsley is loaded with dietary calcium, iron, riboflavin, thiamine, carotenes, ascorbic acid, and vitamins A and C. Parsley is great for [high blood pressure](#), [arthritis](#), [acne](#), [asthma](#), [eczema](#), and [diabetes](#). It is the most commonly mentioned herb in recipes all over the world.

Rosemary

A staple in Mediterranean cuisine, rosemary fights the formation of blood clots and reduces inflammation, making it a powerful ally against [heart disease](#). Even the fragrance of this powerful antioxidant has healing properties. Aromatherapy research has shown that inhaling essential oils of several spices, including rosemary, eased depression and pain in arthritis patients. A 2004 study found that rosemary's phytochemicals may even be useful in treating Alzheimer's disease. It is soothing to the symptoms of [candida](#), [arthritis](#), and [depression](#).

Saffron

Harvested from crocus blossoms, saffron is one of the world's most cherished spices. It's also a potent antioxidant, packing more punch than vitamin E. On the health front, saffron has been shown to protect against cancer and to treat [depression](#) as well as Prozac.

Sage

Sage is rich in calcium, potassium, and contains vitamins A, B-complex, and C. It is an anti-inflammatory and an excellent antioxidant. It has claimed to be helpful for circulation and digestion.

Thyme

This popular herb relieves [cough](#), [headaches](#) and has a history of use in the treatment of whooping cough. It is also helpful in soothing the symptoms of [candida](#).

Turmeric

A common ingredient in curries, turmeric is a powerful antioxidant that protects against cancer, lowers cholesterol and eases arthritic aches and pains by reducing inflammation, which is extremely helpful with [arthritis](#), and [high cholesterol](#). It has also been shown to increase insulin sensitivity by 300 percent. More good news: Researchers at UCLA found that curcumin, a compound in turmeric, was more effective at preventing the development of brain-damaging plaques seen in Alzheimer's disease than any drug being tested. It is probably no coincidence that India's populace has the lowest rate of Alzheimer's in the world - and a diet rich in turmeric.

Note: Try to keep spices in glass containers. Do not keep them for more than six months and keep them out of direct sunlight and heating elements.

Kitchen Herbs & Spices Usage Guide . . .

"A herb is a friend of physicians and the praise of cooks." ~ Charlemagne

Kitchen herbs and spices are not just great for adding flavor and variety to meals; they're also filled with wonderful medicinal and health promoting properties. Most of them aid digestion. Black pepper, for example, helps in the digestion of dairy. Use the herbs and spices generously with your meals. Select from the chart below. Experiment!

H E R B S						
Meats	Poultry	Seafood	Vegetables	Salads	Soups	Desserts
Anise Basil Caraway Celery Chervil Celery Chervil Dill Fennel Ginger Horseradish Marjoram Mint Onion Oregano Parsley Rosemary Sage Savory Sesame Seed Shallot Tarragon Thyme Watercress	Anise Basil Bay Leaf Caraway Celery Chives Garlic Horseradish Lovage Marjoram Onion Oregano Parsley Rosemary Sage Savory Shallot Tarragon Thyme Watercress	Basil Bay Leaf Celery Chervil Chives Dill Fennel Garlic Horseradish Lovage Marjoram Mint Mustard Onion Oregano Parsley Poppy Seed Rosemary Sage Savory Tarragon Thyme Watercress	Anise Basil Bay Leaf Borage Caraway Celery Dill Fennel Lovage Marjoram Mint Onion Oregano Parsley Poppy Seed Rosemary Sage Savory Sesame Seed Tarragon Thyme	Basil Bay Leaf Borage Caraway Celery Chervil Chives Dill Fennel Garlic Horseradish Lovage Marjoram Mint Mustard Seed Nasturtium Oregano Parsley Poppy Seed Rosemary Savory Scallions Sesame Seed Shallot Tarragon Thyme Watercress	Anise Basil Bay Leaf Caraway Celery Chervil Chives Dill Fennel Garlic Leek Marigold Marjoram Mint Mustard Seed Oregano Parsley Poppy Seed Rosemary Sage Savory Sesame Seed Sorrel Tarragon Thyme Watercress	Anise Basil Bay Leaf Borage Caraway Cassia Fennel Ginger Mint Poppy Seed Rosemary Savory Sesame Seed
S P I C E S						
Meats	Poultry	Seafood	Vegetables	Salads	Soups	Desserts
Allspice Cayenne Chili Powder Cloves Coriander Cumin Seed Curry Powder Mace Nutmeg Paprika Pepper Saffron	Cumin Curry Powder Saffron	Cumin Curry Powder Paprika Pepper Saffron	Cayenne Chili Powder Coriander Cumin Curry Powder Nutmeg Pepper Saffron	Cardamom Chili Powder Coriander Curry Powder Paprika Pepper Saffron	Cardamom Cloves Coriander Cumin Mace Paprika Saffron	Allspice Cardamom Cinnamon Coriander Cumin Mace Nutmeg Saffron

TIP: When you're hot, DO NOT use the following but DO use them when you're cold:
Anise, Basil, Cardamom, Cayenne, Chive, Cinnamon, Clove, Coriander, Dill, Fennel, Garlic, Ginger, Nutmeg, Onion, Rosemary, Turmeric, Vinegar

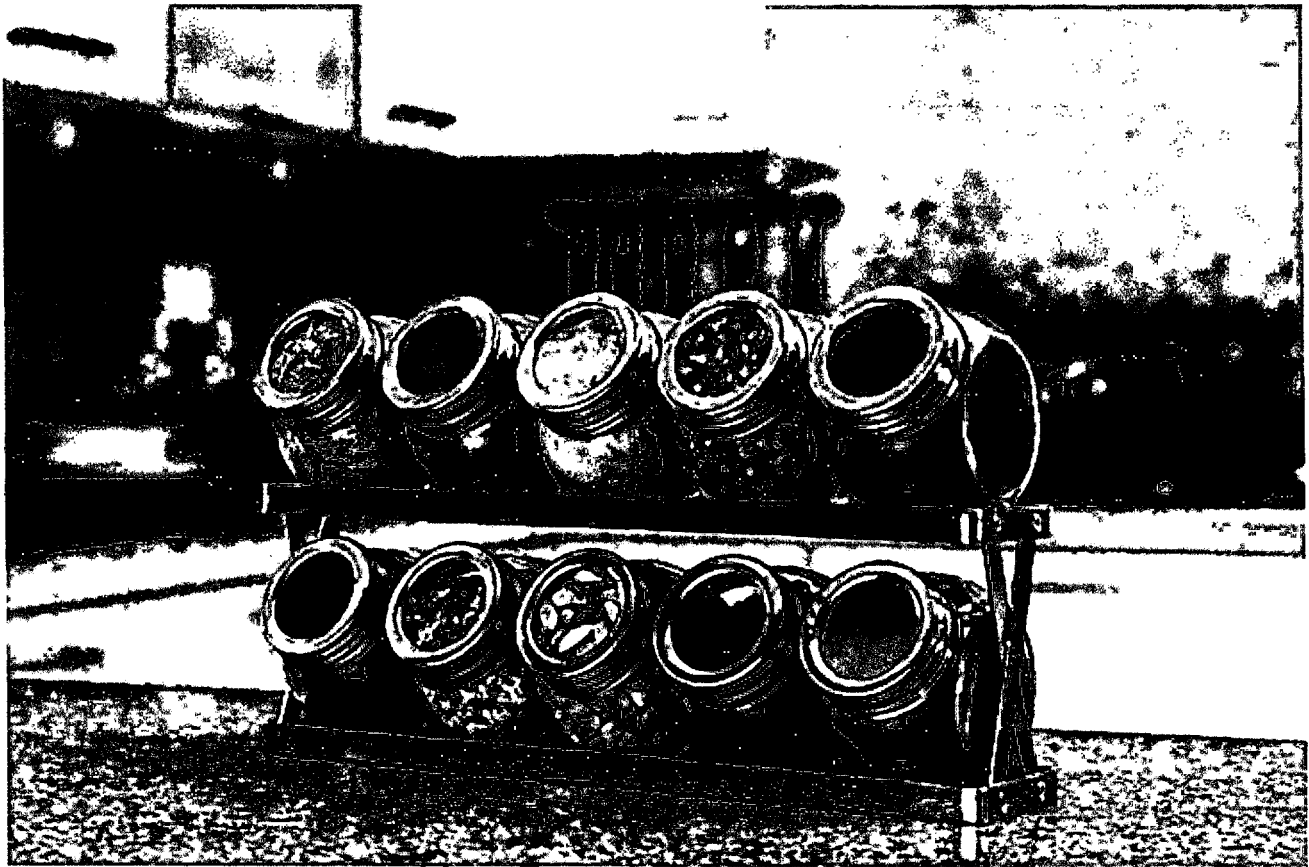
Provided by Chef Kathryn Bari-PETRITIS
 Kathryn @ thehealthchef.com - 516 8180643

Create Homemade Spice Blends With These 10 Herbs & Spices

Dried herbs and spices are essential supplies in any kitchen, but they're also secret weapons for creating your own homemade spice blends without having to buy pricey ones or find premade mixes that you like. In fact, you can customize a variety of herb and spice blends to create whatever flavor your heart desires while also catering to your personal health needs, cooking style and taste preferences.

Don't like spicy foods? Make your spice mixtures with more herbs and aromatic ingredients instead of peppery spices. Eating a low-sodium diet? Don't add sea salt to your blends like many products on the market do. Looking to avoid the additives in common herb and spice blends? No problem, because when you make your own in small batches, you'll have fresh, preservative-free blends anytime you need them.

Here are 10 essential herbs and spices to have on hand so you can mix and match them however you like!



1. Oregano

Oregano is quite possibly the most important herb to stock in your pantry. It adds an incredible, satisfying and comforting flavor to anything it's added to, from soups and stews to rice dishes, porridge and even salads. Oregano is a source of vitamin B6, antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents. † This herb pairs well with thyme, basil, rosemary, sage, marjoram, garlic and onion powder and black pepper.

2. Basil

Basil is another must-have herb for making your own blends. It's slightly peppery but also has a delicious herbal flavor. Basil has anti-inflammatory properties, making it an especially healthy choice for a homemade spice mix. † It's fantastic in salads, soups, stews, cooked grains and more. It complements oregano, thyme, sage, lavender, marjoram, garlic and onion powder and tarragon.

3. Rubbed sage

Rubbed sage is full of flavor and has a holiday aroma that many people love, especially in savory recipes. Rubbed sage is a bit less bitter than ground sage, but you should still use just a touch of it in your blends if you want a more subtle flavor. Sage pairs well with oregano, basil, thyme, lavender, black pepper, rosemary, garlic and onion powder and tarragon.

4. Black pepper

Black pepper is nonnegotiable in any kitchen, and it's one of the best and most popular ingredients to add to spice blends. When making customized blends with black pepper, be sure to start small and adjust as needed. You can use ground black pepper or grind your own from fresh peppercorns, if desired. Black pepper can be used in savory blends with pretty much anything you desire. It works great with the herbs above and with lemon and orange peel; it can be mixed with Indian spices for homemade curry blends; and it can even be combined with cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, fennel and/or allspice to make your own **five-spice powder**.

5. Cinnamon

It's safe to say that everyone loves cinnamon, and there are many reasons why. **Cinnamon** is healthy and delicious, and it goes well with a wide variety of dishes. From oatmeal to smoothies to baked goods and more, cinnamon brings a sweet and spicy flavor to anything it's added to. As a bonus, cinnamon may help support healthy blood sugar levels. † This classic spice pairs well with ginger, nutmeg, coriander, allspice, black pepper, turmeric, cloves and cardamom.

6. Turmeric

Turmeric has risen in popularity recently not just because of its incredible flavor but also for its anti-inflammatory benefits. † Turmeric is what gives **curry powder** its bright orange color. It's

versatile and can be used in savory, sweet and even tangy recipes. Try it in soups and stews, with sauerkraut, in smoothies and oatmeal and more. Turmeric pairs well with cinnamon, coriander, ginger, nutmeg, black pepper, cardamom, paprika, cayenne, cloves and garlic.

7. Thyme

Thyme, a classic ingredient in French and Italian recipes, happens to be one of the most popular spices in American dishes as well. From roasted vegetables to soups and pizzas, thyme is a must-have ingredient for homemade spice mixtures. Also offering anti-inflammatory properties, this herb blends well with lemon peel, rosemary, oregano, sage, black pepper, marjoram and tarragon. †

8. Ginger

Ginger is a terrific spice to include in homemade spice blends and can be used in either sweet or savory recipes. Ginger is well known for its ability to soothe digestion. † While fresh ginger is delightful to cook with, ground ginger is a convenient alternative. Pair it with cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, black pepper, cayenne or paprika.

9. Cardamom

Although it's a pricier spice, **ground cardamom** is such a special ingredient that it's worth a spot in your spice rack. Just a pinch adds sweet flavor and can take any dish to the next level. Cardamom's many health benefits include aiding in digestion, relieving gas and supporting mood. Use cardamom with cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves in sweet dishes, such as oatmeal or smoothies. Alternatively, you can pair it with turmeric, black pepper, coriander, garlic and onion powder and a touch of cayenne to make your own curry blend.

10. Smoked paprika

Smoked paprika is one of the best spices to keep on hand because it adds a lot of flavor without too much heat, making it safe for pretty much anyone. Smoked paprika adds a savory, smoky scent with an almost sweet flavor, so it's great in soups, on roasted vegetables, in stews, on potatoes and even on savory breakfast dishes. It works well with turmeric, black pepper, onion and garlic powder, cayenne and other similar spices.

These are 10 of the best ingredients to help you start making your own homemade spice blends, but they definitely aren't the only ones. Cayenne, high-quality sea salt, rosemary, ground cloves, nutmeg, cilantro, parsley and marjoram are great choices as well. Try out different herbs and spices to see which ones you like the best, then mix them together to create your own custom blends.

To store your creations, you can use mason jars or recycled spice jars; just wash and dry them well first. You can also purchase glass or plastic spice jars online or at local craft stores. Simply mix your ingredients in a bowl, use a funnel to strain them into the container, and then use your blends to your heart's content!