



Seasoning with herbs, spices, and vinegars is a healthy way to enjoy great taste without salt.

Would you like to reduce the sodium in your diet without giving up flavor? You're not alone! Many of us will need to make some changes to meet the lower sodium recommendations of the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines.

You should limit your sodium to less than 1500 mg daily if you:

- Are African American (of any age)
- Are 51 or older
- Have hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, heart failure, or chronic kidney disease

For all others, less than 2300 mg of sodium each day is recommended.

Seasoning with herbs, spices, and vinegars is a healthy way to enjoy great flavor with less sodium. Experiment, taste, and let your taste buds be your guide.

Almost all spices, herbs, and vinegars are low in sodium or are used in such tiny amounts that they don't add a significant amount of salt to your food.

### Strength of herbs

**Strong or dominant flavors:** These should be used with care since their flavors stand out. Use approximately one teaspoon for six servings. They include bay, cardamom, curry, ginger, mustard, pepper (black), rosemary, and sage.

**Medium flavors:** A moderate amount of these herbs is recommended. Try one to two teaspoons for six servings. Herbs in this category include basil, celery seed and leaves, cumin, dill, fennel, tarragon, garlic, marjoram, mint, oregano, savory, thyme, and turmeric.

**Delicate flavors:** These herbs may be used in large quantities and combine well with most other herbs and spices. This group includes chervil, chives, parsley, and burnet.

### Herbs and wine vinegar

**Wine vinegars:** These are excellent flavor boosters. Try them as a seasoning for vegetables such as cabbage, green beans, cauliflower, and broccoli. A dash will do wonders for steaks, chops, and fish. They are also excellent in homemade salad dressings.

**Herb vinegars:** Heat vinegar in an enamel pan, then pour it into a vinegar bottle and add one or several culinary herbs (to taste). Any type of vinegar may be used, depending on personal preference. Do not let the vinegar boil. Let the mixture rest for two weeks before using.

### Herb blends to replace salt

Many salt-free seasoning mixtures are available in your supermarket. It's also very simple to make your own, using the recipes provided on the back of this page. These can be placed in shakers and used instead of salt. Store in air-tight glass containers. Label well. Add some uncooked rice grains to prevent caking.

Potassium-based "salt substitutes" provide a "salty" taste to foods with less sodium than table salt. However, these may not be appropriate for people with certain health conditions such as diabetes, heart or kidney disease, or those taking certain blood pressure medications. Check with your doctor or registered dietitian to determine if these products are right for you.

### What goes with what

**Soup:** Bay leaf, chervil, tarragon, marjoram, parsley, savory, rosemary.

**Poultry:** Garlic, oregano, rosemary, savory, sage.

**Beef:** Bay leaf, chives, cloves, cumin, garlic, hot pepper, marjoram, rosemary, savory.

**Lamb:** Garlic, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, thyme.  
(Before roasting, make little slits in lamb and insert herbs.)

**Pork:** Coriander, cumin, garlic, ginger, hot pepper, pepper, sage, savory, thyme.

### SALTLESS SURPRISE

- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. basil
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. powdered lemon rind or dehydrated lemon juice

Put the ingredients into a blender and mix well.

### PUNGENT SALT SUBSTITUTE

- 3 tsp. basil
- 2 tsp. savory (summer savory is best)
- 2 tsp. ground cumin seed
- 2 tsp. celery seed
- 2 tsp. sage
- 2 tsp. marjoram
- 1 tsp. lemon thyme

Mix well and then crush to a fine powder with a mortar and pestle.

### SPICY SALTLESS SEASONING

- 1 tsp. pepper
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 Tbsp. rosemary

Mix ingredients in a blender.

The above recipes use *dried* herbs. If you use fresh herbs, more will be needed; adjust quantities to taste.

**Cheese:** basil, chervil, chives, curry, dill, fennel, garlic chives, marjoram, oregano, parsley, sage, thyme.

**Fish:** chervil, dill, fennel, tarragon, garlic, parsley, thyme.

**Fruit:** anise, cinnamon, coriander, cloves, ginger, mint.

**Bread:** caraway, marjoram, oregano, poppy seed, rosemary, thyme.

**Vegetables:** basil, chervil, chives, dill, tarragon, marjoram, mint, parsley, pepper, thyme.

**Salads:** basil, chives, tarragon, garlic chives, parsley, sorrel.  
(These are best used fresh or added to salad dressing. Otherwise, use herb vinegars for extra flavor.)

### Herb combinations

Herbs can be combined to enhance specific foods. Having the combinations on hand will speed cooking and boost your reputation as a gourmet. They can be added loosely or wrapped in cheesecloth and removed before serving. Try the following herb combinations for:

**Eggs**  
basil, dill, parsley

**Fish**  
basil, bay leaf (crumbled), tarragon, lemon, thyme, parsley

**Poultry**  
marjoram (two parts), sage (three parts)

**Salads**  
basil, parsley, tarragon

**Tomato sauce**  
basil, bay leaf, marjoram, oregano, parsley

**Vegetables**  
basil, parsley, savory

### Italian seasoning

basil, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, savory, thyme

### Barbeque seasoning

cumin, garlic, hot pepper, oregano

### French herbal combinations

**Fine Herbs:** Parsley, chervil, chives, tarragon (sometimes adding a small amount of basil, fennel, oregano, sage, or saffron).

**Bouquet Garni Mixtures:** Bay, parsley (two parts), thyme. The herbs may be wrapped in cheesecloth. Or you can wrap fresh parsley around fresh thyme and bay leaf.

### Other resources

- Connect to our Web site at [kp.org](http://kp.org) to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, health classes, and more.
- Contact your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.