



## Cooking with Herbs

**One** Know your herbs. Learn about the flavor of an herb. The easiest way to taste the flavor a particular herb is to mix 1 tablespoon of chopped herb into a 2 cup of cottage cheese, sour cream, or butter. Let sit for 30 minutes to let the flavors blend. The fat in the dairy product will mix with the volatile oil of the herb. Taste on bread or a cracker. Some herbs are stronger than others: thyme, rosemary, tarragon and sage should be used with discretion. Herbs lighter in flavor are basil, oregano, marjoram, and dill.

**Two** One of the most important rules to remember when cooking with herbs is the translation of fresh herbs to dried. **Remember the 3-1 rule: a teaspoon of dried thyme has the same flavor strength as one tablespoon of fresh thyme.** The moisture has evaporated, but the flavor oil in the herb remains the same. When using herbs, a well written recipe should specify whether it is fresh or dried, however some recipes will merely say 1/3 teaspoon thyme in which case you can assume it means dried. **Cooks Tip:** Follow the saying, *>The woodier the stem, the longer in the pot=.* Herbs such as rosemary, thyme, and sage-woody stemmed herbs-can hold up to longer cooking times (as in soups and stews). Tender herbs such as basil, chives, parsley, marjoram, tarragon and dill should be added at the end of the cooking time to prevent their delicate volatile oils from evaporating.

**Three** Harvest herbs in the morning or later even, never during the midday hot sun if at all possible. (Do not hesitate to harvest herbs for lunch if you want, but do not plan to harvest them for preserving. The flavor is still there, however it is not at its peak flavor). Bring in fresh herbs, rinse in cool water, shake off excess water and lay on a paper towel to dry. If you have harvested herbs in the morning for use that evening, rinse and place in a glass of water like a bouquet of fresh flowers. Let them stand at room temperature until needed.

**Four** In your eagerness to learn to cook with herbs, refrain from using herbs in every dish! Do not serve an intense rosemary-garlic chicken with sage potatoes and minted peas with a salad filled with chopped herbs and an herbal vinaigrette! Herbs should enhance and flavor, never overpower. In some instances, herb combinations are a perfect fit for some dishes, and at other times, a single herb is simple eating pleasure.



## Tarragon Chicken Salad

4 large or 6 small chicken breasts

### **Dressing:**

2 cups Hellman's Mayonnaise	2 tsp. dried tarragon
1 Tbsp. sugar	salt and ¼ tsp. white pepper
1 tsp. dry mustard	dash of cayenne
½ tsp. garlic powder	juice of ½ lemon

Bake boneless skinless chicken breasts in a single layer on a cookie sheet for 20 minutes at 400 degrees (or until no longer pink inside). Do not over bake or chicken will become dry. Cool. Cut into small cubes and mix with dressing.

## Rosemary Walnuts

1 pound of walnuts	1 tsp. each salt and pepper
3 Tbsp. butter and 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil	1 tsp. garlic powder
1 Tbsp. minced fresh rosemary or 1 ½ tsp. <i>crushed</i> dried rosemary	

Melt butter with olive oil. Stir in rosemary, salt, paprika and garlic powder. Mix well and pour over 1-pound walnuts. Toss to coat the walnuts. Roast in 350 degree oven for 10-15 minutes. DO NOT ALLOW TO BROWN. Freezes well.

## Amalfi Coast Lemon, Caper and Tuna Crostini or Pasta

1-6 ounce can albacore tuna in oil or water, drained and chopped	2 Tbsp. capers, drained
1 large clove garlic, finely minced (about 2 tsp.)	¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley,
finely chopped	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
Zest of 1 lemon plus 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice (or more to taste)	

16 thin slices of bread, toasted or grilled on both sides, drizzled with olive oil

Place tuna, garlic, lemon zest and juice, olive oil, capers and parsley in a medium bowl. Stir to combine. Season to taste with kosher salt and fresh pepper. Serve at room temperature with Crostini or warm pasta.

## Summer Spaghetti

6 large ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped	½ cup sliced black olives
½ small onion, minced	2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
2 cloves garlic, minced	4 Tbsp. olive oil
¼ cup basil chiffonade (or more to taste)	1-2 Tbsp. capers (optional)
2 Tbsp. chopped parsley	salt and pepper to taste
8 ounces spaghetti (2 ounces dry per person will make 1 cup cooked)	

Mix all ingredients together and set aside. Boil pasta according to directions. Drain; place warm pasta in a bowl and top with fresh tomatoes. Toss gently. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese, if desired.