











# The added benefits of herbs and spices.

Herbs and spices may not be the center of the plate, but they pack a surprisingly big nutritional punch.



In fact herbs and spices could be regarded as the first real "functional foods" because they have been grown and cultivated for thousands of years—as far back as 5000 BC—and have a long history of medical use. Modern day researchers are beginning to prove that these culinary treasures can help consumers eat healthier diets by adding flavor without calories, fat or sugar and by providing healthy phytonutrient rich antioxidants.

Herb or Spice	Potential health benefits	Suggested uses
Basil 	Antioxidant, inhibits lipid peroxidation, decreases inflammation	Mediterranean or Asian style cuisine: use with tomatoes or as a base for pesto, salads, sauces, marinades, as a drizzle for soups and vegetables and cooked dishes.
Chili Pepper 	Antioxidant, enhances metabolic effects in weight management	Asian, Mediterranean, African and Latin inspired cuisine, meat, poultry, seafood: use in marinades, dipping sauces and curries, soups and stews, pasta sauces, salads, soups, marinades and rubs as well as shellfish.
Cilantro 	Antioxidant, digestive aid	Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin and Mexican style cuisine: use in cooked dishes, dressings, dipping sauces, salads, soups, marinades and rubs as well as shellfish.
Dill 	Antioxidant, antimicrobial	Mediterranean and American style cuisine: use with seafood, dipping sauces, potato salads, vegetables, chicken, soups and marinades.
Garlic 	Antioxidant, lowers cholesterol and blood pressure, raises HDL cholesterol, anti-inflammatory, prevents cerebral aging, anti-clotting, boosts immunity	World cuisine, meat, seafood, poultry, stir-fry: use in marinades, dressings, sauces, salads, rice dishes and casseroles; also use in slow-cooked meals and as a rub for meats, toppings (bruschetta) and dips, vegetables, beans, tofu.
Ginger 	Antioxidant, improves osteoarthritis of the knee, anti-emetic, anti-inflammatory, boosts immunity, antimicrobial	Asian style cuisine, meat, seafood, poultry, stir-fry, curries: use in marinades, chutneys and desserts; also use to flavor fruit smoothies and tea, soups, vegetables, cocoa, fruits.
Italian Herbs 	Antioxidant, antimicrobial	Mediterranean style cuisine: use in soups, casseroles, stuffings, salad dressings and marinades, rubs and vegetables.
Lemon Grass 	Antioxidant, anti-cancer properties, anti-inflammatory	Asian style cuisine, seafood, shrimp, poultry and stir-fry; also use in soups, curries and rice dishes and noodles, tofu and custards.
Oregano 	Antioxidant, antimicrobial	Mediterranean style cuisine, meat, fish, poultry: use with vegetables, breads, salad dressing, pasta, sauces and marinades.
Parsley 	Antioxidant, antimicrobial	World cuisine: use with potato or pasta salads; also use raw or cooked with meats, vegetables, shellfish and seafood.

\*Table 1-The potential health effects of herbs and spices assessed in the scientific literature - note that there are limited human data of variable quality; most studies have been carried out in vitro or in animal models.

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The words “herb” and “spice” are often used interchangeably, but they are botanically very different. Herbs are generally thought of as from leaf, while spices are any other part of the plant, like buds (e.g. cloves), bark (e.g. cinnamon), roots (e.g. ginger), berries (e.g. peppercorns) and aromatic seeds (e.g. cumin).



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## Herbs and spices are a flavourful part of the Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet incorporates the basics of healthy eating—plus a dash of anti-oxidant rich herbs and spices to flavor your meals. Research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean diet reduces the risk of heart disease. For this reason, most major scientific organizations encourage healthy adults to adopt the Mediterranean diet for prevention of major chronic diseases.



Base every meal on these foods
  Often, at least two times a week
  Moderate portions, daily to weekly
  Less often

## Key components of the Mediterranean diet

### The Mediterranean diet emphasizes:

- Getting plenty of exercise
- Eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts
- Replacing butter with healthy fats such as Olive oil and Canola oil
- Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods as they make food tasty and are also rich in health promoting substances.
- Limiting red meat to no more than a few times a month
- Eating fish and poultry at least twice a week
- Drinking red wine in moderation (optional)

This diet also recognizes the importance of enjoying meals with family and friends.

## Fast Facts about herbs & spices

- They are among the richest sources of antioxidants, and on a weight basis, are higher than many fruits and vegetables
- Helps reduce excess fats and sugars in diets by adding flavor without the unwanted calories
- Ancient healers have used herbs and spices since 5000 BC. Even Hippocrates, had over 300 herb and spice remedies for various conditions
- In Ayurvedic medicine, ginger is considered a universal therapeutic
- Fresh herbs are best when added toward the end of cooking; parsley can be added anytime
- Garlic is best when it is chopped or mashed; it will burn and turn bitter if over heated
- Use Gourmet Garden herbs as you would fresh herbs.



Gourmet Garden herbs and spices are picked fresh, washed, chopped and sealed in unique squeezable tubes. Gourmet Garden herbs are not cooked or dried and therefore retain their fresh flavor, texture, color and nutritional value, including powerful antioxidants. Refrigeration extends the shelf life for up to 3 months. They contain no artificial colors or flavors and are gluten free (except Italian Herbs). The antioxidant capacity of Gourmet Garden herbs and spices are generally as good as fresh herbs.<sup>1</sup>

Leach D, Hunter D. Unpublished data on Australian Herbs & Spices analyzed by the Centre of Phytochemistry & Pharmacology, Souther Cross University, Lismore, August 2006.