

## Subtle Use Of Herbs Aids Flavor

By ELLY

Behind all truly great flavors you will always find there are herbs. Used with a heavy hand they can give a bitterness, an off-flavor. But subtle use will enhance and improve the flavor of our daily foods.

The advice given to cooks, who are using an herb for the first time, is experiment cautiously.

As a start try to become acquainted with the nine basic ones: bay leaves, thyme, basil, marjoram, mint, sage, summer savory, parsley and chives.

**BAY LEAVES** are solid dried and should be judged by their color, the greener the better. Bay leaves are safe to use, when in doubt. Their flavor pleases everyone.

When baking chicken in the oven, or cooking chicken parts slowly in butter, try adding a bay leaf or two with a few thin slices of unpeeled lemon.

**THYME** is one of the oldest herbs in use but because of its sweet, penetrating scent, it must be used with discretion.

It may be used with parsley in a bread stuffing for chicken or fish. A small pinch will give all types of meats, vegetables and soups an added flavor.

A good combination for flavoring: cooked greens, a salad or a sauce is one quarter teaspoon of thyme to each teaspoon of grated lemon peel. A touch of thyme may be added to clam chowder or to the flour used to roll fish filets before frying.

**PARSLEY** is a pleasantly scented and lively herb with a good many uses. It is used with tomato dishes, potatoes, cornucopias, sea food and is popular in Italian cuisine.

Suggested uses are: added to mushrooms fried with green onions with salt and pepper to butter; added to scrambled eggs (just a pinch); or sprinkled on sliced tomatoes with a dash of sugar and plenty of freshly ground pepper.

**MARJORAM** is a member of the mint family. Oregano is frequently called wild marjoram and their similarity in flavor makes them interchangeable. A pinch of marjoram and basil added to canned spaghetti sauce with a bit of lemon peel will give it a whole new flavor. Marjoram enhances the flavor of meats, soups, stews, and many vegetables.

**MINT** goes well with fresh fruit. Mix one half cup of sugar with finely chopped mint to taste, and sprinkle over fresh cantaloupe, blueberries or raspberries.

To make a fresh mint chutney as it is made in India to serve with curry, combine two cups chopped mint leaves, two chopped green onions, three tablespoons fresh lemon juice, one half teaspoon salt, one tablespoon sugar and one eighth teaspoon cayenne.

**SAGE** is a powerful assertive herb so some tact is needed in its use. Fresh sage is less powerful than the dried sage. It has an affinity for all game birds as well as pork and veal. As a stuffing for wild or domestic ducks, combine two cups of fresh bread crumbs, one cup of sausage meat, one cup of grated, unpeeled apples, a bit of chopped onion and a half teaspoon of sage.

**SAVORY** is aromatic but is not as powerful as sage. Most dried savory available in the markets is the summer type, an annual that is much milder than winter savory which is a perennial.

If you had to be limited to two herbs, you could get along with just savory and bay leaf because they can flavor almost any food you cook.

Savory may be used in hash, in split pea soup, with fresh green or wax beans.

**PARSLEY** is most frequently chopped to flavor and color sauces or to sprinkle on potatoes.

It is good used in larger quantities. A half cup of chopped fresh parsley may be added to a meat loaf. Try rolling boiled beets in butter and lots of chopped parsley. With butter and chopped chives it makes a perfect spread for hot breads and rolls.

**CHIVES** may not always be available unless you grow them close to your garden or a window box. This most delicate member of the onion family is a happy addition to creamed cheese, an omelet, deviled eggs or any green salad.

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