



## Herbs and Spices for Good Health

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month. Up to 90 percent of people over age 65 have or will have high blood pressure by the age of 85. One cause for this rise in blood pressure with age is excess sodium in the diet.

Learning to use herbs and spices to add flavor to foods can help reduce the amount of salt/sodium in the diet. Herbs and spices do not add fat or calories to food. Some recipes include herbs and spices and give the amount to use. However, learning to use herbs and spices will allow you to add them to other recipes.

The best way to learn how to use herbs and spices is to experiment with different flavors. Try a different one each week.

### Ten Basic Herbs and Spices

**Basil** has a warm, clove-like flavor. It can be used in tomato based dishes and is good added to mashed potatoes. Basil is very good used fresh.

**Black pepper** adds a lot of flavor to almost any food, especially potatoes, rice, fish, poultry, vegetables, fresh sliced tomatoes and salads.

**Chili pepper** is made from ground chilies. It has a rich aroma and a spicy hot taste. Use it to flavor chili, salsa, rice, soups and beans.

**Cinnamon** is good used in many foods especially oatmeal and sweet potatoes. It can add a sweet taste without added sugar.

**Coriander** has a spicy, fresh lime flavor and works well with rice, grilled chicken or fish.

**Cumin** has an earthy flavor and is very good added to beans and chili.

**Dried dill** leaves have a delicate flavor good with pasta, potatoes, potato salad and fish.

**Garlic powder** is a low-sodium alternative to garlic salt and really adds flavor to rice, soup, chili, salads and mashed potatoes.

**Italian seasoning** is a mixture of oregano, marjoram and basil used to flavor any meat, rice or pasta dish.

**Oregano** is a bold herb that adds flavor to beans, chili, pasta and salads.

## Tips for using Herbs and Spices

- To start use a small amount. You can always add more, but it is impossible to remove excess. Just  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of dried herbs or 1 teaspoon of fresh is good to start for most recipes.
- For short cooking times, less than 15 minutes, add seasonings at the beginning.
- For longer cooking times, add the seasonings during the last 20 to 30 minutes.
- Store dried herbs and spice in tightly sealed containers in a dark, dry place.
- Buy herbs and spices in small quantities and for best flavor use within one year.



Prepared by: Barbara Farner, Extension Educator  
Nutrition and Wellness  
Matteson Center



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## Herbed Rice Pilaf



- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon black pepper

Place all ingredients in large, covered, microwavable container. Microwave on 80% power for 30 minutes. Allow to sit 3 minutes; then fluff with a fork.

To make in a conventional oven – Spread rice in 8-inch square baking pan. Sprinkle with seasonings. Bring water to a boil, when boiling pour over rice. Cover baking pan tightly with double layer of aluminum foil. Bake at 375°F for about 1 hour, until tender.

Makes 4-  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 173 calories, 1 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 7 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrate, 1.5 g fiber, 3.5 g protein.

