

### When to Use Dried Herbs versus fresh

Dried herbs tend to do best if they're added *during* cooking so their flavor has time to infuse the whole dish – add them too late in the game and they just taste dusty. If I'm doing a soup or a braise, I'll stir in the dried herbs right before adding the liquid and then let everything simmer for a while. It also helps an enormous amount to work with good-quality dried herbs. If you open a jar and can't smell that herb-y aroma, it's **time to replace it!**

All this said, some herbs do better than others when dried. Woody herbs like oregano, thyme, and rosemary all tend to dry just fine and retain their flavor, but I find that basil, chives, and other soft, tender herbs tend to lose much of what makes them good once dried. For these, I'd rather buy and use them fresh rather than settle for mediocre flavor.

### When to Use Fresh Herbs

When we use fresh out-of-season herbs in the winter months, we want to make it count. They're best when used *at the end* of cooking, to finish a dish – like adding thyme just before a soup is done or sprinkling ribbons of basil over the top of a pizza. This way the flavors are still fresh and bright when serving. I also like to use fresh herbs in sauces, salad dressings, and other quick dishes since dried herbs don't have enough time to really infuse these kinds of dishes.

I'll also definitely spring for fresh herbs when I'm making special dishes, like Thanksgiving stuffing with fresh sage or rosemary meatballs for a holiday potluck. These are celebrations, and the bright, vibrant flavors of fresh herbs in a dish are part of what makes the gathering feel special and memorable.

### Substituting Fresh and Dried Herbs

If you're making a recipe that calls for fresh and you'd like to use dried – or vice versa – it's no problem. Dried herbs have a concentrated flavor that can tend toward bitterness, so use less of it than you would fresh. And vice versa, fresh herbs tend to have a more delicate flavor than dried, so I tend to use more of it.

My general rule of thumb is to use **1 1/2 times the amount of fresh as I would dry**. Meaning that if the recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of dried thyme, I'd start with 1 1/2 teaspoons of fresh thyme. Remember, you can always add more, but you can't take it away once it's in there!

### Using Both Fresh and Dried Herbs

Most often, I end up using dried herbs and fresh herbs in combination. The dried herbs infuse the dish during cooking and then a sprinkle of the fresh herb at the end perks up the flavors.

What about you? When do you use dried herbs and when do you use them fresh?

Herbs best used fresh:

Parsley/basil/cilantro/chervil/ chives/ dill/sorrel/ French tarragon

Fresh or dried

Oregano/rosemary/ marjoram/ thyme/ sage/ savory/ mint

Dried

bay leaf

A: Because of their more intense concentrated flavor, dried herbs can be substituted for fresh herbs at a ratio of 1 to 3. While dried herbs are convenient and can be great for longer cooking times, they don't generally have the same purity of flavor as fresh herbs and they go stale quickly. Ensure dried herbs are still fresh by checking if they are green and not faded, and by crushing a few leaves to see if the aroma is still strong. Always store them in an air-tight container away from light and heat.