
Low Sodium Cooking

Here are some tips for adding flavor to your food without adding salt

Using Herbs and Spices

- Add fresh herbs towards the end of cooking so they don't overcook.
- Add dried herbs at the beginning of cooking for the most flavor.
- To save money, grow your own herbs and spices.
- Store dried herbs away from heat and light.
- Fresh herbs can be stored in the refrigerator or can be frozen (with the exception of basil, which will last longer at room temperature).

Common herbs and spices and some foods they go well with:

Basil	pastas, tomatoes, salads
Black pepper	curries, meats, vegetables, beans
Cinnamon	oatmeal, fruit, tea
Cumin	soups, stews, chili, lentils
Curry powder	soups, curries, chicken, beans
Garlic/Garlic powder*	meat, mashed potatoes, soup, pasta, beans
Ginger	stir-fry, ground meats, soup
Green onion	soups, chili, salads, fish, eggs
Lemon pepper*	fish, chicken, baked potatoes, vegetables
Mint	fruit, tea, peas, carrots, water
Onion powder	potatoes, chicken, rice, stews
Oregano	tomatoes, mushrooms, lentils, turkey, pork loin
Parsley	shellfish, pasta, chicken, dips, eggs
Rosemary	chicken, fish, sauce, vegetables
Thyme	chicken, turkey, soups, beans

*make sure to look at the label for "salt-free"

Blends

You can buy herb and spice blends, but make sure that salt is not listed as an ingredient. You can also make your own.

- **Italian blend:** onion powder, garlic powder, oregano, and basil.
- **Stir-fry blend:** onion powder, garlic powder, ground ginger, and black pepper.
- **Seasoning for fish:** lemon pepper and rosemary.
- **All-purpose blend:** garlic powder, onion powder, basil, thyme, parsley, sage, and black pepper.

Salsa

- Salsa is a great topping for eggs, baked potatoes, fish, grilled meats, grilled vegetables, beans, burgers, and meatloaf.
- Try making your own low-sodium salsa by mixing chopped tomatoes, chopped onion, chopped garlic, lime juice, and fresh cilantro.
- Instead of buying the salsa that comes in a jar, buy the fresh salsa that is kept in the refrigerated section. It tends to have less salt added.
- For a sweet flavor, try a fruit-based salsa. These are great on grilled whitefish such as cod or tilapia, or even pork loin. You can make your own by mixing diced pineapple or mango, chopped tomato, chopped onion, and cilantro.

Tips for Cooking Vegetables

- Roasting vegetables enhances their natural flavor. Brush a little olive oil on your vegetables, arrange them in a single layer on an oven safe-pan, and cook at 350°F until the vegetables are cooked to a texture you enjoy (about 15-20 min for smaller cuts or softer vegetables, and about 45 min for larger cut or hard vegetables). Some vegetables that do well in the oven are: asparagus, kale, bok choy, beets, carrots, mushrooms, onion, sweet potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, and Brussels sprouts.
- Try grilling vegetables. Like roasting, this will help bring out the natural flavor. You can use olive oil, vinegar-based salad dressing, or low-sodium marinade. Depending on the vegetable, you can keep them whole, cut them in large slices, use skewers, or use grilling baskets. Some vegetables that do well on the grill are: corn, eggplant, zucchini, onion, peppers, mushrooms, and asparagus.
- Right before eating, sprinkle your favorite cooked green vegetables with a little fresh lemon juice.

Tips for Cooking Entrees

- In most recipes you can omit the salt or at least cut it in half. Recipes that use onion and garlic will especially still have lots of flavor. You can always increase the garlic amount called for in a recipe.
- When grilling meat, choose low-sodium marinade or a dry rub.
- When cooking eggs, try using pepper or salsa.
- When cooking pork loin, try topping with a low-sugar apple or cranberry sauce. You can also try cooking the pork loin with chopped apples.
- When grilling fish, sprinkle with lemon juice and dried rosemary or thyme.
- When cooking beans or soups, avoid cured meats, such as ham, and use liquid smoke flavoring or vinegars instead.

Tips for Cooking Grains and Pasta

- When cooking pasta or noodles, do not add salt to the water. Boil the pasta or noodles without salt, then add your favorite herbs/spices after draining.
- Add minced onion, chopped basil, pepper, cumin, chili powder, curry, or crushed garlic to your rice.
- When cooking rice or noodle dishes, skip the seasoning packets that they usually come with. Instead, add lots of fresh vegetables and your favorite no-sodium herb and spice blend.
- Try adding cinnamon, nutmeg or dried fruit to oatmeal.
- Instead of canned tomato or pasta sauce, add fresh chopped tomatoes, basil, and garlic to your pasta dishes. You can also look for "no salt added" canned sauce.
- Sprinkle your favorite herb blend on some air popped popcorn for a tasty snack.

Tips for Salads and Raw Vegetables

- Look for low sodium salad dressing or make your own salad dressing. Mix together 1 tablespoon of vinegar and 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil, then add lemon juice or any herbs and spices that you enjoy. To make it creamy, add plain Greek yogurt.
- Instead of using salad dressing, try sprinkling flavored vinegars on your salads.
- Sprinkle herbs and spices on your favorite fresh vegetables. For example, sprinkle a little oregano and fresh basil on sliced tomatoes for a quick and refreshing side dish or snack.
- Mix 2 tablespoons of your favorite herbs with ¼ cup of olive oil for a dip.
- Instead of ranch dressing, dip raw vegetables in a homemade yogurt dip. Mix ½ cup plain Greek yogurt with 2-3 tablespoons of your favorite herbs and spices.