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## Spice it up

Do you want to add more flavor to your food? If you are one of many people who like different flavorful foods, but are not sure how to make them yourself, this article should help. There are many ways you can add more flavor to your favorite foods. One of the quickest and easiest ways it to change the spices you put in the meal. For example, if your French Toast is becoming too routine, try adding some cinnamon or nutmeg to the batter.



### *Best way to buy*

There are many ways you can use spices to make your food taste great and be even healthier for you. At the same time, you need to watch for sodium on the label of spices. A general rule for purchasing spices is cheap spices are cheap for a reason. Frequently cheaper spices have other ingredients in them. Salt is the biggest offender. To get the most out of your spices, purchase the whole spice whenever possible and grind it yourself. This may seem expensive and a lot of work, but the spice flavor is more potent so you use less. Plus, purchasing whole spice makes it last longer. In the end, it is all worth it.

### *Where to get better spices?*

The best places to get good quality spices is to go to a local spice merchant, ethnic market, or purchase them online from a reliable company. From personal use and a quick search on the internet, some of the frequently recommended online markets are [Penzeys](#), [Worldspice](#), [Spicetrekks](#). When purchasing spices, even high-quality spices, it is important to buy them in smaller amounts. After a while, spices get stale and you will need to add more spice to get the same flavor.

### *Spices to keep on hand*

Spices are like any cooking ingredient. There are certain spices you should have on hand. Since they are in many frequently made dishes, some experts recommend you keep the following spices in your kitchen; black peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, chili flakes, chili powder, cumin, ginger, nutmeg, paprika or smoked paprika, oregano, and bay leaves. In addition to these spices, I would add mint, parsley, rosemary, and thyme.

### *Storing spice*

There are some tips to helping your spices last longer. In addition to purchasing whole spices, the way you store your spices is another key to how long they will last. Depending on the spice and its freshness the storage may change. For example, if you have living spices, like parsley sprigs, you should keep them where they will continue to grow and thrive. For most of your dry spices, store them in a glass jar with a well fitted lid. Place the jar in a dry, cool, dark place.

### *Testing Spices*

If you have stored spices for a while and are not sure if they are still good, you can always 'test' them. The easiest way to see if a spice is still good is to smell it. The fresher the spice the more intense the smell. If a spice does not smell very good it is probably too old. If it smells musty, you should consider throwing it out.

**Please contact me to schedule an appointment** or for more information, contact Tyler Johnson, [tajohnson120@ksu.edu](mailto:tajohnson120@ksu.edu), or by calling 620-232-1930.

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