



## Do-it-Yourself Mixes

### Potato Soup Mix

**Yield: Makes approximately 3½ cups mix**

- 1¾ cups instant mashed potato flakes
- 1½ cups dry milk
- 2 tablespoons chicken-flavored instant bouillon
- 2 teaspoons dried minced onion
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- ⅛ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon seasoning salt

Add all ingredients to bowl and mix well. Store in airtight container, 1-quart canning jar, or vacuum seal bag.

For each serving, place ½ cup mix in soup bowl and add 1 cup boiling water. Stir until smooth.

Source: [budget101.com](http://budget101.com)

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### Creamy Tomato and Basil Soup Mix

**Yield: 1-2 Servings**

- ¼ cup tomato powder
- ⅓ cup instant dried milk powder
- 2 tablespoons powdered chicken-flavored instant bouillon
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅛ teaspoon onion powder
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- salt to taste

1. Add dry ingredients to bowl that holds at least two cups.
2. Pour in 1 cup boiling water and stir well to break up any lumps.
3. Add ¾ cup more boiling water and stir.
4. Cover and let rest for 9 to 10 minutes.

Source: *The Yummy Life*

**Homemade Cream Style Soup Mix****Yield: 3 cups (8 batches of soup)****Ingredients:**

2 cups powdered non-fat dry milk	1 teaspoon onion powder
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons cornstarch	½ teaspoon dried marjoram
½ cup mashed potato flakes	¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ cup instant chicken bouillon (regular or low sodium)	⅛ teaspoon white pepper
2 tablespoons dried vegetable flakes	

**Directions:** (*Homemade Cream Style Soup Mix*)

1. In a food processor, combine all of the ingredients; cover and process until the vegetable flakes are finely chopped.
2. Store in airtight container in a cool, dry place.

**To prepare one batch of soup:**

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, whisk 1⅓ cups of water and 6 tablespoons of soup mix.
2. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 2 to 2 ½ minutes whisking occasionally.

*Source: Taste of Home***Alphabet Soup Mix****Yield: 1 Jar of Mix****Ingredients:**

1¾ cups uncooked alphabet pasta	⅛ teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons dried vegetable flakes	½ cup small fish shaped or cheese crackers
1 teaspoon sodium free chicken bouillon granules	

**Directions:**

1. Divide pasta and layer half of the pasta, vegetable flakes, bouillon granules, pepper and remaining pasta into a pint or quart wide mouth jar.
2. Place crackers in a small food storage bag and squeeze out air and seal.
3. Add bag of crackers to the jar and cover with an airtight lid.
4. Attach a tag with these instructions

**To make the soup:****Ingredients:**

1 jar of Alphabet Soup Mix  
4 cups of water  
¼ cup tomato sauce

**Directions:**

1. Remove the crackers from the jar and set aside
2. Place water, tomato sauce and contents of jar into a large saucepan.
3. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes uncovered or until pasta is tender.
4. Serve with crackers.

**Copycat “Jiffy” Cornbread Mix****Yield: 6 muffins (equal to 1 box of mix)****Ingredients:**

- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

**Preparation:**

- Sift all ingredients together and store in airtight container

**To make muffins:**

- Add 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil or melted butter,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup milk and 1 egg. Mix well
- Spoon into 6 cup muffin tin and bake for 15-20 minutes at 400 degrees.

**To make 2 mini loaves:**

- Split batter between 2 5x3 inch loaf pans, sprayed with non-stick spray. Bake for 20 minutes at 400 degrees

**Variations:**

Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup shredded cheddar cheese and  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup chopped onion or corn, green chiles, bacon or chopped tomatoes.

This recipe is easily doubled or tripled if you want to give as gifts or freeze for later use.

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**Homemade Bisquick****Yield: 7 cups****Ingredients:**

- |                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 6 cups all-purpose flour    | 1 tablespoon salt |
| 3 tablespoons baking powder | 1 cup shortening  |

**Instructions:**

1. Add the flour, baking powder and salt to bowl of food processor. Pulse for 15 seconds
2. Add in the vegetable shortening and pulse until the mixture resembles cornmeal
3. Place into an airtight container and store in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer

**To make biscuits:**

Mix 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of bisquick mix and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk until soft dough forms. Knead 10 times. Roll out dough to  $\frac{1}{2}$  thick and cut into circles. Bake for 7-9 minutes at 450 degrees.

**To make pancakes:**

Combine 1 cup milk with 2 eggs and mix until well blended. Add 2 cups bisquick mix and stir until just combined. Pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of batter onto a hot griddle. Cook pancakes until start to bubble and edges are slightly dry. Flip and cook until golden.

**Instant Oatmeal Packets****Yield: 20 packets**

10 cups instant “quick” oats  
1 cup powdered milk  
½ cup brown sugar

2 teaspoons salt  
1 tablespoon cinnamon - optional

**Directions:**

1. In a large bowl add 6 cups of instant oats
2. In a blender, place the remaining 4 cups of instant oats and blend until powdery
3. Add the blended oats to the bowl along with the powdered milk, sugar, salt and cinnamon, if using. Stir to combine and divide into ½ cup servings and put into snack size plastic bags.
4. Store in the pantry for up to 2 months

**To Serve:** pour 1 packet of oats into a bowl with 1 cup hot water. Stir to combine and microwave on high for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Time will vary depending on the microwave.  
Stir and enjoy.

**Add-in options:**

Nuts, dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, apple

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**Ty’s Herbed Beer Bread Mix****Yield: 1 quart of mix****Ingredients:**

3 cups all-purpose flour  
3 tablespoons granulated sugar  
1½ tablespoons baking powder  
1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes  
1 tablespoon dried sage  
1 tablespoon dried rosemary  
1 tablespoon dried thyme  
1½ teaspoons salt

1. Combine all dry ingredients in a medium bowl and gently whisk to combine.
2. Pour mix into a clean 1-quart jar. Store in airtight container in cool, dry place until ready to use or give as a gift.

**To use the mix:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Butter a 9x5” loaf pan
3. In a medium bowl combine the bread mix with 12 ounces of warm beer and stir until just combined (a few lumps are ok).
4. Pour into prepared pan and dot with 2 tablespoons butter (cut into small pieces).
5. Bake for 45-50 minutes, until crust is golden brown.

**Suggestion:** Top the batter with about 1 tablespoon of parmesan cheese.

*Source: Food in Jars by Marisa McClellan*

**Seasoned Couscous****Yield: approx. 4 packets**

2 cups uncooked couscous	½ teaspoon dried marjoram
1 tablespoon chicken-flavored instant bouillon	½ teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon dried parsley	¼ teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon dried onion flakes	
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed	

In medium bowl, combine couscous, bouillon, dried parsley, onion flakes, rosemary, marjoram, garlic powder, and pepper. Mix well. Store in airtight container.

1. For two servings of cooked couscous, use ½ cup of the mix (stir before measuring).
2. In a small saucepan, bring ¾ cup water to a boil; stir in couscous mix.
3. Remove from heat; cover and let stand five minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving.

Source: *budget101.com*

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**Rice-a-Roni Mix****Yield: 3 cups of dry mix**

2 cups uncooked rice	2 tablespoons chicken bouillon powder
1 cup broken angel hair, vermicelli or thin spaghetti (½-inch pieces)	2 teaspoons onion powder
¼ cup dried parsley	½ teaspoon garlic powder
	¼ teaspoon dried thyme

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Store in airtight container.

**To make rice-a-roni**

1. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a 12-inch skillet.
2. Add 1 cup of rice mix and stir. Sauté for about 1 minute or until pasta starts to turn golden brown.
3. Add 2¼ cups water and bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until all water is absorbed.

Note: reduce amount of bouillon powder if too strong or salty.

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**Homemade Ketchup****Ingredients:**

6 tablespoons tomato powder	⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
1¼ teaspoon salt	¼ cup honey
¼ teaspoon onion powder	⅓ cup white vinegar

**Directions:**

Combine all ingredients and simmer for 20 minutes

**Tomato powder equivalents:**

Tomato Paste – 1 cup dried tomato powder plus 1 ¾ cups water, ½ teaspoon sugar

Tomato Sauce – 1 cup dried tomato powder plus 3 cups water, ½ teaspoon sugar

Source: *Stonefamilyfarmstead.com*

**Ranch Dressing Mix****Yield: 1 cup of mix****Ingredients:**

¾ cup dry buttermilk powder	1 tablespoon dried minced onion
2 tablespoons dried parsley	½ teaspoon ground pepper
2 teaspoons dried dill weed	¼ teaspoon salt or salt substitute
1 tablespoon onion powder	2 teaspoons freeze dried chives (optional)
1 tablespoon garlic powder	

Put all ingredients in a blender or coffee grinder and blend until it is a fine powder.  
Store in a sealed container, jar or bag in a cool, dark place.

**Ingredients to make the dressing:**

½ cup mayonnaise	¼ cup milk or buttermilk
½ cup sour cream	1 to 2 tablespoons of mix (depending on strength wanted)

Combine mayonnaise, sour cream and mix until blended. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to let flavors blend.

For a thinner dip, add more milk to desired consistency.

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**Salt-free Seasoning Blend**

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper	1 teaspoon ground thyme	1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon garlic powder	1 teaspoon ground parsley	1 teaspoon ground sage
1 teaspoon ground basil	1 teaspoon ground mace	
1 teaspoon ground marjoram	1 teaspoon onion powder	

**Procedure/Storage:** Mix thoroughly and fill shakers. A little goes a long way.

*Source: Cooks.com*

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**Herbs de Provence Seasoning****Yield: 11 tablespoons****Ingredients:**

3 tablespoons dried thyme	1 tablespoon dried marjoram
2 tablespoons dried savory	2 tablespoons dried parsley
2 tablespoons oregano	1 tablespoon dried lavender flowers, (optional)
1 tablespoon dried rosemary	

**Instructions:**

Mix all ingredients together and store in airtight container

For a finer blend use a spice grinder or mortar and pestle.

*Source: rachelcooks.com*

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## Recipe using Herbes de Provence Seasoning

### Herbs de Provence Red Potato Oven Fries

**Yield: 4 servings**

2 to 2½ pounds red potatoes, washed  
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons Herbes de Provence seasoning

#### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with foil for easy clean up.
2. Cut potatoes into wedges and drop onto cookie sheet.
3. Coat potatoes with oil.
4. Season with Herbes de Provence seasoning.
5. Roast for 25 minutes, turning once.

Source: *foodnetwork.com*, Rachel Ray

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## Everything Bagel Seasoning (Copycat Trader Joe's)

**Yield: approx. ¼ cup**

#### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon white sesame seeds	1 heaping tablespoon dried minced garlic
1 tablespoon black sesame seeds	1 heaping tablespoon dried minced onion
2 teaspoons flaked or coarse salt	2 tablespoons poppy seeds

#### Directions:

In a bowl, mix-together all ingredients and store in an airtight container away from direct heat or light.

To give as gifts just multiply the ingredients to make a larger quantity

#### Uses for everything bagel seasoning:

Add to mac and cheese, grain bowls, soup, dips, breading, roasted vegetables, ramen, compound butters, salads and anything else you want.

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## Cheryl's Cajun Spice Mix

#### Ingredients:

5 ground bay leaves	⅓ cup Hungarian paprika
½ teaspoon dried oregano	1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon onion powder	1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon black pepper	½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme	1½ teaspoon celery seed
1 teaspoon cumin seed	

1. Pulse bay leaves in coffee grinder until pulverized.
2. Add dried oregano, dried thyme, celery seed, and cumin seed. Pulse together until pulverized.
3. Mix all ingredients well in small bowl and store in airtight container.

Source: *UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County*

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## Onion Soup Mix

(Think Lipton Onion Soup mix)

**Yield: 4 batches of mix**  
Approximately 20 tablespoons

### Ingredients:

¾ cup dried minced onions	¼ teaspoon granulated sugar
⅓ cup beef bouillon powder	¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon onion powder	⅛ teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon celery seeds	¼ teaspoon parsley flakes (optional)

### Instructions:

1. Chop or grind the celery seeds to break them up.
2. Mix all ingredients together until well blended.
3. Store in airtight container in cool, dark space.

### To make dip:

Combine ¼ cup of mix with 2 cups of sour cream. Blend well and chill.

### To make roasted potatoes:

**Yields 6 servings**

2 pounds of potatoes, cut up into ½ cubes	¼ cup onion soup mix
⅓ cup olive or canola oil	

Toss all ingredients and transfer to baking sheet and bake at 450 degrees for 35-40 minutes, stirring occasionally.

## Italian Seasoning Blend:

### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon dried oregano	2 teaspoons dried rosemary	1 teaspoon dried mint
1 tablespoon dried marjoram	1 teaspoon dried fennel leaves	
1 tablespoon dried chives	1 teaspoon dried sage	

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Store in airtight container

## Taco Seasoning

**Yield: Equal to 6 packets**

### Ingredients:

¼ cup chili powder	1 tablespoon crushed red pepper	1½ teaspoons onion powder
3 tablespoons ground cumin	1 tablespoon salt	1½ teaspoons dried oregano
1 tablespoon paprika	1½ teaspoons garlic powder	1½ teaspoons black pepper

### Preparation:

Measure out all ingredients into a small bowl. Mix well. Taste and adjust the salt or spices to your taste. Store in an airtight container until ready to use.

To prepare tacos use 1 tablespoon of mix to 1 pound of ground beef. Adjust seasoning mix to taste.

Source: *The Pioneer Woman*



**“Southwestern” Fiesta Dry Dip Mix****Yield: 2 cups mix****Ingredients:**

½ cup dried parsley  
⅓ cup dried onion, minced  
¼ cup dried chives

⅓ cup chili powder  
¼ cup ground cumin  
¼ cup salt (optional)

Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl.  
Store in airtight container.

**Dip Recipe:**

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 tablespoons fiesta dip mix
- Whisk the mixture together until smooth. Check to see if you like the taste or want more mix.
- Refrigerator for 2-4 hours or overnight.
- Serve with tortilla chips or fresh veggies.

**Basic BBQ Rub****Yield: 2 ¼ cups****Ingredients:**

1 cup turbinado sugar  
½ cup granulated sugar  
½ cup kosher salt  
1 tablespoon onion powder  
2 tablespoons granulated garlic  
1½ teaspoons cayenne

1 teaspoon finely ground black pepper  
2 teaspoons dry mustard  
¼ cup light chili powder  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons paprika

**Preparation:**

1. Place the turbinado sugar in a coffee grinder and pulse until lightly powdered. Transfer to a small mixing bowl and add all remaining ingredients.
2. Stir until well incorporated.
3. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 month.

Note: Could easily make half (or even a quarter of) the recipe depending on how often you would use it.

*Source: Smokin' in the Boys' Room by Melissa Cookston*

**Double Chocolate Hot Cocoa Mix****Yield: 6 cups****Ingredients:**

2 cups powdered sugar  
1 cup unsweetened cocoa (Dutch process preferred)  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons cornstarch

1 pinch cayenne pepper  
3 cups nonfat dry powdered milk  
1 cup mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

**Directions:**

Add sugar and cocoa to food processor. Pulse until well mixed. Add salt, cornstarch and cayenne pepper, pulse until mixed. Add powdered milk, process for 20-30 seconds until well mixed. Transfer to bowl and stir in chocolate chips. Store in airtight container.

**To make 1 cup of cocoa:**

Fill  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of mug with cocoa mix. Add hot water or milk and stir until mix is dissolved.

**Add-ons:**

Marshmallows, whipped cream, sprinkle of cinnamon, shaved chocolate or crushed candy canes.

Source: *The Yummy Life.com*

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**Hot Chocolate Mix for a Crowd****Yield: 24 (8 ounces servings)****Ingredients:**

2 cups granulated sugar	2½ cups semi-sweet chocolate	1 cup Dutch processed cocoa
2 teaspoons vanilla	¾ cup milk chocolate	Pinch of salt, optional

**Directions:**

1. In food processor bowl, combine the sugar and vanilla and pulse for 5-6 seconds until well combined.
2. Coarsely chop the semi-sweet and milk chocolates and add them to the bowl. Pulse in 10 second intervals until finely ground and combined with the vanilla sugar.
3. Add the dry cocoa and salt, pulsing again until everything is well mixed. Note that the mix will be slightly coarse, like brown sugar.
4. Pour into a large glass or plastic jar for storing. Needs to be airtight.

**To make a cup:**

Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of mix with 8 ounces of hot milk. Stir until all of the chocolate is melted. Top with whipped cream, marshmallows or your favorite topping.

Source: *Kingarthurbaking.com*

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**Snickerdoodles in a Jar****Yield: 1 jar of mix****Ingredients:**

1½ cups plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour	1 teaspoon cream of tartar
⅛ teaspoon salt	¾ cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda	

**Instructions:**

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl with a whisk. Pour into pint or quart jar with air-tight lid.

**To make the cookies:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, cream  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of butter and 1 egg. Pour the snickerdoodle mix into the bowl and stir until a dough forms.
3. In a small bowl, combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar and 1 ½ teaspoons of cinnamon
4. Roll the dough into 1-inch balls and then into the sugar/cinnamon mixture.
5. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet.
6. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes in the preheated oven. Cookies should be light brown. Cool on wire racks.,

**Cranberry-Oatmeal Cookie Mix****Yield: 1 quart jar of mix****Ingredients:**

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup rolled oats  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt

¼ cup brown sugar  
¼ cup white granulated sugar  
½ cup dried cranberries  
½ cup white chocolate chips

**Instructions:**

1. Layer the ingredients into a clean quart-sized jar.
2. Cover jar tightly with a lid, decorate, if desired, and attach a copy of the recipe card.

**To make the cookies:****Yield: approximately 18 cookies****Additional ingredients:**

½ cup butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

- In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth.
- Add cookie mix and mix well.
- Place by the spoonful onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for 8-10 minutes until golden brown.

*Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service*

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# Storing Herbs and Spices

Dried herbs and spices add a lot of flavor to our dishes and they're so readily available and convenient to use. When we're able to blend a combination of spices and herbs the end result usually leads to a wonderful meal. Preserving the quality, freshness and flavor of your spices and seasonings will give you great tasting dishes and help to eliminate boring meals.

Spices don't spoil but over time they do lose their strength. When stored properly spices retain their potency longer than you might think. Whole peppercorns, nutmegs, cloves, cinnamon sticks and whole seeds, such as coriander, cumin, and cardamom all last longer than their ground counterparts.

## Proper Storage

There are two critical keys to maintaining the optimum flavor and in getting the greatest value out of your herbs and spices. Store your spices and seasoning blends in air tight containers and keep them in a cool dark place. Keeping containers tightly closed will protect them from moisture and oxidation. Keeping them away from direct light will keep their color from fading. We've also found that when spices are stored in glass jars they tend to retain more of their essential oil content (this is where the flavor is).

Never store your spices above your stove as the additional heat will more quickly lead to degradation of their quality. Also don't store them directly above your dishwasher as the increased humidity will also shorten their shelf life. Stored spices do best in temperatures below 70° and in lower humidity environments. While achieving both of these may be impractical in your kitchen the closer you can get to the ideal storage of them the better off you'll be.

If you have ever heard it's good to freeze spices and herbs forget it! Condensation will be a problem each time the jar or bag of spice comes out of the freezer and is likely to introduce unwanted moisture to the spices. We also do not recommend shaking herbs or spices out of the bottle directly into something you're cooking as any steam/ moisture rising up from the cooking dish will introduce moisture into your jar of spices. Instead it's better to shake the spice into the palm of your hand and then add it to the dish you're cooking.

Some people like to store red spices like chili powder, cayenne pepper and paprika in the refrigerator to prevent loss of color and flavor. As mentioned in the freezer scenario above I think that it does more potential harm than good.

Whole spices keep the longest because they have not been cracked or ground which would expose their volatile oils to the air which speeds up the breakdown of their flavor. This is why ground spices have a shorter shelf life than whole spices or seeds.

## **So Many Different Recommendations - Which is Correct?**

The government recommendations for freshness dating is four years for whole spices and two years for ground and you may hear people say that spices should be replaced every six months. But most spices are only harvested once a year, so it certainly doesn't make sense to replace these every six months.

If spices and herbs are kept as we have discussed the shelf life will be as follows:

- Whole spices and dried herbs, leaves and flowers will keep 1 - 2 years.
- Whole chile peppers will keep for a minimum of 12 months, and up to 2 years.
- Seeds will keep 2 - 3 years and whole roots (i.e. ginger root or galangal root) will keep 3 years.
- Ground spices and herb leaves keep 1 year.
- Ground roots will keep for 2 years.

Just because a spice or seasoning blends is outside the date range listed above doesn't mean that the spice needs to be tossed in the trash. To determine if a spice or seasoning is still good you have to remember "appearance" and "aroma". A spice that is no longer acceptable will have lost much of it's vibrant color and will instead appear dull and faded. The bigger key though is smell. To determine whether or not a ground spice is still good gently shake the container with the cap on. Remove the cap and smell the spice to see if the potent aroma of the spice is still present. If it is then your spice is still in good shape.

Spices don't just all of a sudden go from good one day to bad the next. From the time they're harvested they slowly begin to deteriorate and what you want to do is to prolong their optimum flavor for as long as possible with proper grinding and storage.

A good overall practice to follow is to only purchase high quality dried herbs and spices, from reliable suppliers, in small quantities, so that you can easily use them up in reasonable period of time.

# Ratios for Converting Fresh Herbs to Dried

Have you ever wondered how to substitute dried herbs for fresh herbs in recipes? What are the conversion ratios you should use when replacing dried herbs with their fresh counterparts, and vice versa?

The purpose of this article is to provide useful tips for all those who are interested in learning how to convert fresh herbs to dried herbs and spices. At the end of the article, you will find an extensive chart showing the conversion ratios for some of the most common kitchen herbs including thyme, basil, rosemary, garlic, bay leaves, tarragon, ginger, parsley, cilantro and onions.

## The Rule of Thumb

Most healthy recipes you find in cookbooks and on the internet will require that you use some herbs. Each recipe will usually specify whether you should use fresh herbs (measurements typically shown in spoons or sprigs) or dried herbs. Some recipes that call for fresh herbs also specify the equivalent dry amounts, in which case substituting dried herbs for fresh becomes a piece of cake. However, the vast majority of recipes don't do that, and you will have to figure out the corresponding quantities yourself. The chart included later in this article can help you determine the ideal amounts for common kitchen herbs such as rosemary, garlic and basil, but if you cannot check back when you are cooking, the following rule of thumb may be useful:

**3 portions of fresh herb = 1 portion of dried herb**

If you are using U.S. spoons, one tablespoon of chopped fresh herbs will equal approximately one teaspoon of dried herbs.

## When Not to Substitute Dried for Fresh Herbs

In most cases, you can successfully substitute dried herbs in recipes that call for fresh herbs. However, there are some exceptions. If a fresh herb is a focal point of the dish, then it is usually not OK to use the dried version. For example pesto, which requires large amounts of fresh basil leaves, cannot be made with dried basil.

In addition, there are certain herbs that are not well suited for use as dried herbs in cooking. For example, chefs and other foodies generally agree that it is best not to substitute dried dill, curly parsley, flat-leaf parsley, chervil or chives for their fresh counterparts as the flavor of the fresh produce is far superior in these cases.

Use the dehydrated versions of these herbs as seasonings only if you really cannot get the fresh herb and cannot think of an alternative herb that you could use as a substitute in your recipe.

## Conversion Ratios for Common Herbs

Use the conversion ratios shown in the table below as a general guideline when substituting dried herbs for fresh herbs, or vice versa. Be aware, however, that the ideal ratios may be impacted by a number of factors. The ideal substitution amounts can vary drastically depending on what the remaining shelf life of your dried herb is and how long the packet has been open. Furthermore,

there are often significant differences between different brands. Therefore, when seasoning a dish, it is important to use your taste buds and adjust the amounts when necessary.

Herb	Amount of Fresh Herb	Equiv. Quantity of Dried Herb
Basil	2 tsp finely chopped basil (about 5 leaves)	1 tsp dried basil
Bay leaves	1 fresh leaf	2 dried leaves
Chervil	3 tsp fresh cilantro	1 tsp dried cilantro
Chives	1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh chives	1 tsp freeze-dried chives
Cilantro	3 tsp fresh cilantro	1 tsp dried cilantro
Dill	3 tsp fresh dill	1 tsp dried dill
Garlic	1 clove	1/2 tsp garlic powder
Gingerroot	1 tsp grated fresh ginger	1/4 tsp dry ground ginger
Marjoram	3 tsp fresh marjoram	1 tsp dried marjoram
Onions	1 medium onion	1 tsp onion powder
Oregano	1 Tbsp fresh oregano	1 tsp dried oregano
Parsley	2 tsp finely chopped parsley (or 3 sprigs)	1 tsp dried parsley
Rosemary	1 Tbsp fresh rosemary (or 1 small/medium sprig)	1 tsp dried rosemary
Sage	7 leaves (or 2 tsp minced fresh sage)	1 tsp dried sage
Tarragon	3 tsp fresh tarragon	1 tsp dried tarragon
Thyme	1 Tbsp fresh thyme (or 6 sprigs)	3/4 tsp ground thyme

Source: <https://www.healwithfood.org/substitute/convert-fresh-dried-herbs-recipes-chart.php#ixzz7grwm9YLj>



# Spice Rules: The Dos and Don'ts of Cooking with Spices

*October 27, 2020*

*Excerpts from Alton Brown's website*



So, what exactly are spices? Generally, they are the seeds, pods, bark, dried roots, dried berries, and flower parts of various plants that, when utilized wisely, can introduce new and exciting flavors and aromas to foods.

While experimenting with flavor can be exciting, the procurement, placement, and preparation of said spices is crucial to culinary success.

Here are a few rules of thumb to help you get started:

## **Do:**

- Buy whole spices whenever possible.
- If you have to buy ground, purchase small amounts from a reliable source. In the test kitchen, we typically procure ours from [The Spice House](#).
- Buy an inexpensive blade-style electric coffee grinder. I never use these for actually grinding coffee, but rather spices and spice-like things. This is called a xenotasker, or a tool that is really bad at its purported purpose, but really good at something else...in this case, grinding spices.
- Try concocting your own spice blends.
- Store all spices in airtight vessels (glass is best as it won't absorb essential oils) and keep away from light and heat. Don't display them in those

countertop turntables or magnetic storage bins that stick on your fridge. Oh, and make sure you label your glass jars to keep everything straight.

- Gently toast whole spices in a pan over low heat or in the oven just before use...or use another xenotasker, the popcorn popper! Let cool completely before grinding.
- [Build a pepper drill](#): Mount the center grind shaft of a pepper grinder to a battery-powered drill or screwdriver. It's a very effective method for grinding large amounts of spices like juniper berries, cumin, coriander, and, yes, even peppercorns.

### **Don't:**

- Buy spice sets just because you like the packaging...or for any reason, actually.
- Buy spices in grocery stores unless you absolutely have to.
- Think that vanilla beans aren't spices. They are...botanically speaking. Treat them well.
- Buy spices in bulk unless you've got a darned good reason, like you own a restaurant, or you like to barbecue competitively.
- Store spices where you can see them. Basically, just don't buy a spinning countertop spice rack.
- Keep ground spices for longer than six months.
- Assume that spices are always safe to consume raw. They can carry food-borne illness, such as salmonella. Always buy from reliable sources and toast or cook them when you can.
- Forget that the strength of spices, especially whole spices, can increase over time the longer they're left in a dish. Fresh spices also have a much stronger flavor than what you might be used to...especially if you've only ever bought them at the grocery store.