

Cooking Without Salt

Flavour meals without salt

Your meals can be tasty without using salt. By using herbs, spices and marinades instead, you can enjoy the flavours of food with less salt. This could help you reduce your salt intake. Over time, your taste buds will get used to new flavours.

In the kitchen

Try these tips to decrease salt in cooking:



- Add dry or fresh herbs and spices in place of ingredients high in salt. For example, use garlic, celery, and onion powder instead of garlic salt, celery salt, and onion salt.
- Use ingredients such as homemade stock, low sodium bouillon (liquid, cubes, or powder), and salt-free seasonings.
- If using canned vegetables with salt, drain the liquid then rinse with water to reduce the salt.
- Cook potatoes, rice, pasta, and hot cereals without adding salt to the water. Use herbs and spices instead.

How to use herbs and spices

Spice it up! Spices and herbs can make the natural flavour of foods even better.

- When trying a new herb, crush a small amount in the palm of your hand to let it warm. Then sniff and taste it. This gives you an idea of whether you will like it in your food.
- Start with ¼ tsp (1 mL) dry or ¾ tsp (4 mL) of fresh herb or spice for each pound (454 g) of meat, or 2 cups (500 mL) of sauce or soup. Add more herbs to your taste.
- Use 3 times more fresh herbs in place of dry herbs in a recipe.
- Cook whole spices; like peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, or cloves, for at least 1 hour to bring out the flavours.
- For hot foods, add crushed herbs or spices near the end of cooking to get the most flavour.

- For cold dishes, like salads or dressings, add herbs and ground spices at the start. Let the food stand in the fridge for a few hours. This lets flavours from the herbs and spices grow stronger.
- Prepare your own combination of herbs and spices in a shaker to add flavour to any dish.

Flavour with homemade marinade

Marinades add flavours to meats, fish and vegetables. Store bought marinades can be high in salt. Try these suggestions for marinating:

- Vinegars, such as balsamic, fruit flavoured or red wine, mixed with oil and spices make tasty marinades.
- The juice and grated rind of lemons, oranges, and limes add zest and intense flavour to any dish.
- Marinate foods for 3–24 hours in the fridge before cooking.
- Throw out the marinade used for raw meat. The bacteria in the raw marinade can make you sick. Make a fresh batch for basting during cooking.

What flavours do you like?

If you like	Try one or more of these
Hot	cayenne pepper, chili (fresh, oil, powder or low sodium sauce), ginger, hot dry mustard, red pepper flakes, wasabi
Sour	lemon, lime, vinegar (balsamic, cider, rice, white, wine)
Peppery	pepper (black, brown, pink, white), or peppercorns
Sweet	cranberry sauce, fresh fruit, fruit juice, honey, molasses
Citrus	lemon, lemongrass, lime
Tomato	tomato (fresh or low sodium canned)
Other	anise, coriander, cumin, curry powder, dill, dry mustard, garlic, onion, paprika

Other ideas for flavouring

Try adding one or more of the suggested flavourings instead of salt.



Vegetables

Asparagus: garlic, lemon juice, onion, vinegar

Cauliflower: cayenne, chili, curry, garlic, nutmeg, onion, paprika, star anise

Corn: cilantro, peppers, pimento, tomato

Cucumbers: chives, dill, garlic, pepper, vinegar

Green beans: chili oil, dill, lemon juice, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, pimento, shallot, thyme

Peas: garlic, ginger, mint, mushrooms (fresh or dried), onion, parsley, peppers

Potatoes: chives, dill, garlic, mace, onion, oregano, paprika, parsley, peppers, sour cream, turmeric

Squash: allspice, brown sugar, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, mace, nutmeg, onion, sage, thyme

Tomatoes: basil, marjoram, onion, oregano

Grain Products

Pasta: basil, caraway seeds, dill, garlic, mushrooms, olive oil, onion, peppers, poppy seeds, tomato

Rice: cardamom, cumin, dill, mushrooms, onion, peppers, pimento, saffron, thyme, turmeric

Meat and Alternatives

Beans, lentils, or tofu: basil, cayenne, chili, curry, garlic, ginger, lemon juice, lemongrass, mushrooms, onion, oregano, sesame oil, sesame seeds

Beef: bay leaf, chili, cumin, dry mustard, garlic, green or red peppers, marjoram, mushrooms, nutmeg, onion, paprika, parsley, pepper, sage, sumac, thyme

Chicken or turkey: bay leaf, cranberry sauce, garam masala, ginger, Italian herbs, lemon juice, lemongrass, onion, paprika, peppers, sage, thyme

Eggs: basil, chervil, chives, cilantro, curry, green or red peppers, mushrooms, paprika, pepper, thyme, turmeric

Fish: basil, bay leaf, cayenne, curry, dill, dry mustard, fennel, garlic, ginger, green onions, lemon juice, mushrooms, parsley, rosemary, tomato, turmeric

Lamb: allspice, curry, garlic, marjoram, mint, mint sauce, oregano, pineapple, rosemary, tarragon

Pork: apple, coriander, cumin, curry, garlic, ginger, marjoram, onion, rosemary, sage, thyme

For more ideas

Many websites have healthy recipe and menu ideas. Check your library or bookstore for cookbooks with healthy recipes or try these websites:

[Healthy Eating Starts Here website](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) (www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) has information on nutrition and [Inspiring Recipes](#).

[Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](http://www.heartandstroke.com) (www.heartandstroke.com) has information on healthy lifestyle, nutrition, physical activity and [recipes](#).

[Dietitians of Canada](http://www.dietitians.ca), (www.dietitians.ca and click on *Your Health*) has information on nutrition and healthy eating. The [eaTracker/recipe](#) tool can help to analyze your recipes and provide information on the sodium content per serving.

[Canadian Diabetes Association](http://www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/recipes) (www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/recipes) has a wide selection of [healthy recipes](#).

[Kidney Community Kitchen](http://www.kidneycommunitykitchen.ca) (www.kidneycommunitykitchen.ca and click on *Kidney Kitchen cookbook*) has a selection of [recipes](#) helpful for those following a kidney diet.