

Fresh Herbs are Good for Us!

Herbs can magically flavor up dishes without resorting to loads of salt, butter, and cheese. Adding a little green to a meal not only makes it prettier and tastier, but can pack some awesome health benefits, too.

Chives: This herb, which looks a lot



like the grass in your front lawn, is filled with antioxidants, vitamins A and C, and phytochemicals (which have antioxidant-like benefits).

Parsley: This powerful little green gets some brain-boosting clout from quercetin, a chemical found in the herb that helps protect brain cells from free radical damage. Added bonus: Parsley's polyphenols and carotenoids may help protect skin from sun damage. Find it in curly or flat-leaved varieties.

Mint: Mint comes in many varieties, but the two most common are peppermint and spearmint. Spearmint is lighter, sweeter, and more palatable, while peppermint has a stronger bite from the menthol in its leaves. These bright green little leaves can aid digestion, and mint tea has been known to soothe upset stomach.

Dill: Known as the classic flavoring for pickles (and as Tommy's younger brother on *Rugrats*), dill is a wispy little herb traditionally used to treat insomnia. Dill may also help protect against age-related cognitive impairment. It's also a staple to flavor classic chicken noodle soup.

Sage: Behind its soft, fuzzy leaves, sage hides hordes of antioxidants, including flavonoids and phenolic

acids, which can help lower risk for cardiovascular disease. Sage is also on our list of foods that fight pain!

Fun Fact

While adding herbs — dried or fresh — to any dish can add healthy vitamins and antioxidants, they may lose nutritional value during the drying process, so stick with fresh if available.

Preparation - How To's

Store Fresh. Rinse herbs with cool water to remove dirt, gently shake off excess moisture, and pat dry with paper towels or a clean dishcloth. Find a medium-sized jar and fill with a few inches of water. Trim the ends of the herb stems so that the bunch fits with the leaves above the jar's edge. Leave them on the counter, or store in the refrigerator, covered loosely with a plastic bag.

Deep Freeze. Chop up fresh herbs and pop them into an ice cube tray to freeze for later use.

Grow your own. Try growing your own herbs in an indoor herb garden or use a few small planters and an empty windowsill. Then you'll have a fresh, healthy way to give flavor to dishes right at your fingertips.



chives



mint



dill



parsley



sage