

ALEX CRAMER

# COOKING with *SPICE MIXES* *PASTES* *SAUCES*

*Part I*



16+



Alex Cramer

**Cooking with spice  
mixes, pastes and sauces**

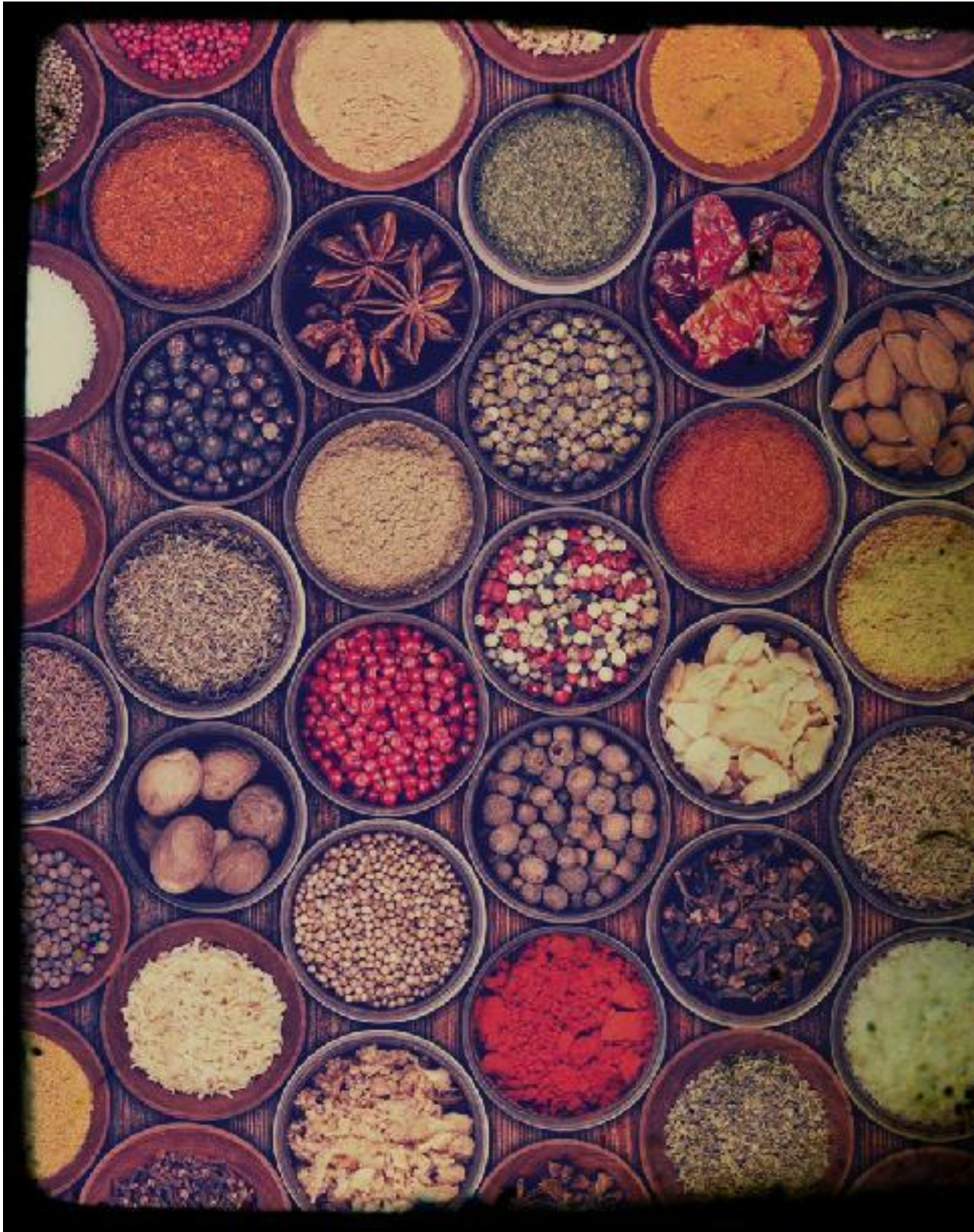
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This cookbook is about the art of mixing herbs and spices.- You will get acquainted with the main theory of mixing the spices and herbs.- You will discover the 35 most popular spices and herbs.- You will find out a description of the 35 most popular varieties of chili peppers.- You will learn many more useful information.And finally you will plunge into the world of spicy combinations and get acquainted with the recipes of more than 300 dry spice mixes, pastes and sauces, as well as their variations.Step by step you will learn the art of fragrant spice balance and the taste's magic of spicy combinations!



## INTRODUCTION

Combined with one another, spices can turn into delicious and mouth-watering dish any food, even the simplest food. And the opposite is true: even the high cuisine dishes can be easily ruined by wrong spices combination.

Spice blends or seasonings are undoubtedly the most important ingredients for creating delicious dishes. They are able to turn ordinary food into an incredibly tasty masterpiece.

Nowadays, there are thousands of different books written about spices, however spice blends are hardly mentioned in those books. My book is devoted to different aspects, fine points and nuances of making spice combinations. I will not get into much details with spices, I will just mention them. Instead, I am going to pay full attention to spice blends and combinations.

Many of the culinary amateurs and enthusiasts are familiar with the situation when they follow the recipe, use fresh products and quality ingredients, but the dish they cook does not turn out well. Do you know what I am talking about? Why do we often stick to the exact recipe accurately, strictly follow the cooking time but still the dish turns out to be flavourless? We try to analyze the whole process and understand that we did everything right. So why did the food we cooked turn out to be different from what we have expected it to be?

The answer is simple: we are afraid to use and absolutely do not know how to use seasonings and spices in our daily cooking. I'm sure that you have some, maybe even dozens of spices and seasonings hidden in your kitchen. So why do not you use these gifts of nature to cook a truly delicious and healthy dish and enjoy it?

In this book, you will find solutions to the problems of many cooks. You will find specific directions to learning the art of mixing spices and creating unique aromatic spice combinations that can improve, emphasize and give an incredible taste to any dish.

This book will also be useful for those who masterfully mix spices and know how to use their unique purpose. You will definitely discover a new mixture and combination of spices that you will certainly add to your favorite dishes.

## **PART I. BASIC KNOWLEDGE.**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Basically, all spices originate from plants. Some of them include the whole plant, and some include only spare parts such as flowers, roots, bark, leaves, stalk or seeds. This is where all flavoring and aromatic components of spices are hidden.

Freshly made spices – slightly roasted in a frying pan, crushed in a mortar or ground in a coffee grinder into a powder – display an incredible aroma both individually and combined with other spices.

Skillful cooks never buy spices and seasonings in a store. They prepare spices by themselves in the kitchen. And it is irrelevant whether it is a simple mix for marinating meat and *pilaf* flavouring or a deeply-rooted all-purpose regional mix such as *garam masala* and *ras-el-hanout* – home-made combinations are much cheaper, more aromatic and, most importantly, much healthier than those you can find in stores.

Another, by no means unimportant, advantage of home-made mixes is the fact that you can make a small amount of mix at a time rather than buying a whole package of seasonings that will be stored for a long time which can lead to flavor and aroma fading.

In this book, you will learn recipes of blends from all over the world. You will know how to create truly incredible culinary delights filled with an abundance of flavors and aromas from different world cuisines.

There are so many different ways to mix spices together and an abundance of flavors and aromas of each mix you have prepared will allow you to improve up same dish an infinite number of times. You will get familiar with a huge variety of dry mixes, spicy pastes and sauces based on those mixes, from the most popular to very rare combinations. On learning this material, you will be able to play with flavors and tastes of dishes like never before.



If you have all the necessary herbs and spices stored in your kitchen, you can easily make any of the spice blend described here. Nowadays, you can easily find some spices in any store, though you might have to look up in specialized shops for some other spices.

I personally recommend using the whole spices only. In most cases, it is necessary to warm up seeds or grains before grinding. It will help to release essential oils which leads to intensification of flavor and aroma.

### **A LIST OF EQUIPMENT FOR WORKING WITH MIXES**

Making of a perfect spice blend is not a hard task to do. And I am going to describe devices you will need to make it easier for you to create different combinations.

#### **Mortar and pestle**



A mortar is perfect for mixes that require coarse or medium grinding. Simply crush the seeds with a pestle until the desired grinding and combine them with other components of the mix. Also, you can use a mortar to make spices of fine grinding or powder. First, you need to crush the whole spices, for example, star anise or cinnamon in a mortar and then put them in a coffee grinder. This will help you to prevent incomplete grinding in a coffee grinder since not every device is able to cope with this task and create a fine powder. There can be pieces of whole spices remaining in a coffee grinder if made without preliminary preparation. Also, mortar is hard to replace when it comes to fresh ingredients such as chili, ginger, garlic, lemongrass and many other ingredients for spicy pastes. You should avoid poor-quality and wooden mortars. You should purchase a wide stone mortar that will serve you for many years.

#### **Coffee grinder (mill, food processor, blender)**



These kitchen appliances are hard to replace when the mix requires fine grinding or powder. Besides, blender is useful when you need to grind fresh ingredients for mixing them with dry ingredients for making paste. All you need to do is put the spice you need into a blender and grind it to the required substance. Use a particular blender designed only for grinding spices. By no means use the same appliance to grind coffee, spices and other products. I recommend that you use a blender or grinder for fine grinding of spices with a flat double blade made of stainless steel. Do not grind the whole spices with nozzles consisting of several blades, especially those located at different angles. If you try to use this kind of nozzle you will not be able to get fine powder and just get exhausted with attempts instead.

### **Thick-walled frying pan**



Many recipes in this book require preheating, and even roasting grains and seeds sometimes. As I mentioned before, warming up helps to effuse aroma and to release essential oils from spices. This process brightens the taste of spices as well as the whole dish. In some cases, it is allowed to heat several ingredients at once, in other cases, the spices should be heated one by one. It is necessary to keep in mind that after heating the seeds and grains should be put into a separate bowl, otherwise the spices will simply burn, since the frying pan, as you understand, retains heat for a while even after you have removed it from the fire. Therefore, as soon as you sense the aroma rising you should immediately put spices into a bowl and cool them down. If there are many different kinds of whole species in a recipe that require preheating, then you need to sort them by size and warm them up separately. Do not warm up the seeds and grains of different sizes together as there is a chance to overdevelop smaller ones or not to activate essential oils that will, in its turn, not let the flavor open at its fullest. Also, the frying pan will help you to roast fresh ingredients for adding them into a spicy paste or sauce later.

### **Containers for storing**



The best container for storing spices, spicy pastes and mixes is a glass jar with a locking lid. You can buy as a whole set of these jars or buy them separately of different sizes.

### **Nutmeg grater**





A special miniature grater designed for grating a specific quantity of nutmeg. If you don't have an opportunity to purchase nutmeg grater, you can take usual grater for this purpose. Nutmeg grater is also useful when you need to grate lemon peel, ginger, garlic and even chili.

### **Knife and cutting board**



A knife for cutting fresh ingredients should always be well sharpened. I recommend two knives for such purposes: one small to easily peel ginger, garlic and onions; and wide chef's knife of high quality to easily shred fresh ingredients and chop different herbs. You might also want to get a sharpener to take care of your knife sharpness any time you need it. The cutting board is necessary for any manipulations with the knife.

### **Garlic press**



It will help you to quickly crush garlic cloves and sometimes ginger, if necessary.

### **Kitchen Scales**



I strongly recommend that you get a small, and yet, ultra-accurate kitchen scales. They are irreplaceable in those cases when it is required to add an exact amount of ingredient.

### **PREPARATION OF INGREDIENTS FOR SPICE BLENDS**

There are several methods of preparing spices and fresh ingredients for making dry mixes or pastes. The choice depends on particular component, however, no matter what method you would choose, you should keep in mind only one goal – preserving flavor and taste of the ingredient as well as of the whole spicy combination you made.



### **Roasting.**



This process involves warming the whole species up which leads to releasing and intensifying their flavor and aroma. You need to place frying pan on medium heat, warm it up and pour the spices in. Depending on spices size, the warm-up process lasts from one to three, and in some cases up to 5-10 minutes. Do not forget to stir the spices and shake the frying pan constantly to prevent burning the spices. When spices become a bit darker and get to smoking point and you sense a pleasant aroma, that means that spices warmed up enough and essential oils came into effect. After that you should lay the spices out into a plate or a bowl and let them cool down. Once they are cool, you should put them into a mortar or a coffee grinder and bring them to the desired grinding. In most cases, spices are warmed up in a dry frying pan. However, some recipes require roasting spices in hot oil. Usually, this should be done before adding fresh ingredients or for flavoring the oil.

### **Crushing in a mortar or blender.**



Most cooks store their spices as whole spices as this is how they retain their flavour and aroma for a long time, unlike ground spices. When adding spices to a spice blend you certainly need to grind them. Soft spices should be ground in stone mortars while being added little by little – 2 tablespoons per grind. For effective grinding, move the pestil along the seeds in a circular motion. A coffee grinder or blender in turn is very useful for grinding more solid types of spices and giving a powder thickness to the mix. Fresh ingredients such as ginger, garlic, chili and herbs can easily ground in the same mortar. For a more homogeneous paste, use a blender when grinding fresh ingredients. The smaller the pieces you put in the device, the more uniform the paste will be. To combine all the ingredients into a homogeneous paste, you need to add a little of vegetable oil.

### **Grating.**





Sometimes, fresh ingredients such as garlic, ginger, galangal and chili pepper are grated in a grater before being added to the paste. Grater is also very useful for grinding nutmeg and removing the peel from citrus fruits.

### **Pounding.**



Fresh ingredients with a soft texture, such as lemongrass, ginger, galangal and some others are often pounded with the back of the knife (spine) before cooking to release their aroma. Such a technique is used saturate a certain spicy combination with the aroma and flavors of the ingredients listed above just before removing them.

### **Cutting fresh ingredients.**



This method is used for preparing fresh ingredients for making paste out of them. It consists in slicing spices into sticks or small cubes to intensify an aroma of fresh spices such as lime leaves, ginger, chili and lemongrass. Lime leaves are cut into small strips; the chili pepper is cut along into two parts and, after removing the seeds, it can be cut in any form; the white part of the lemongrass after, cutting the outer layer, is cut into rings. A large root of ginger or galangal is cut in following way: cut off a piece of necessary size, peel and cut across the fibers (in a form of thin slices, strips or small cubes). In addition to these ingredients, this method is used to prepare various herbs for paste preparation.

### **Fresh herbs processing.**



After purchase, fresh herbs should be thoroughly rinsed off dust and dirt under running cold water and then dried. Then it's time for their further processing. Usually, only leaves and small stalks of herbs are used for pastes and sauces. Large stalks are usually removed but not disposed as they can be used for aromatization of various other dishes to avoid a great deal of waste in kitchen. These large stalks can be added to salads or cold dishes and snacks. Wood stalks of rosemary, thyme, tarragon, oregano or marjoram can be used as skewers or for flavoring, for example, they can be added into a stew, soup, on grill coal or barbecue.

In order to separate leaves from soft stalks herbs such as coriander (cilantro), parsley, dill, fennel or basil, you should hold the solid stalk with one hand while plucking the leaves with the other hand. The leaves on wooden stalks are separated from the base to the top: hold the base of the stalk with one hand, and the fingers of the other hand purge away the leaves from the entire stalk moving towards its tip.

If you are not going to use fresh herbs immediately, you need to prepare them for temporary storage. Take a small container, cover the bottom with a sheet of paper towels, and put herbs leaves into container. Close the container tightly and place it in the refrigerator. Herbs can be stored for 5-7 days in such a way, so they should be used as intended during this time. You can also use freezer bags to store small bunches of herbs. Just place few stalks in a bag and sprinkle slightly with water. Close the bag tightly and place it in the refrigerator. A bunch of fresh herb can be stored by placing its base in a small container of water, and then put in the refrigerator. You can store herbs about 1-2 days in such a way.





**Fresh herbs chopping.** Depending on the purpose, herbs can be fine chopped and large chopped. Finely chopped herbs are well paired and combined with other shredded components. Such a texture is specific for various paste-like sauces and marinades. Take a note that a spice combination of such a texture cannot go through heat treatment as it can cause fading of its flavor and aroma. Largely chopped herbs preserve their flavor, aroma and texture for much longer and are perfect for various types of *salsa* and *chutney*, as well as for other heat treated spice mixes.

After the leaves are separated from stalks, they should be crushed or given a coarse texture. To achieve this, you will need a very sharp knife that will nicely cut tender leaves without turning them into mash. Stack the leaves on a cutting board, press the knife tip against the cutting board with one hand while raising and lowering the knife with swinging movements with another hand and constantly moving herbs to the middle of the blade and chopping them to the desired size. From time

to time, you should sweep the chopped herb into a pile in the middle of the board and repeat the entire cutting process over again. For intense chopping of herbs, you will need to constantly repeat this process for several minutes. All movements should be easy, but at the same time certain. The knife should be held tight so that it does not slip off and injure you. If you need the herbs to be of intense grinding, then you should use a blender for these purposes while adding a little of vegetable oil. To grind the herbs in a blender, it is better to use the slowest speed to avoid rapid aroma fading from already chopped herbs.

Some cooks prefer shredding fresh herbs into thin strips – chiffonade. If you want to do the same, you need to fold leaves of, for example, basil, mint or oregano into a small pile and roll it into a tube as tight as possible. Then place this tube of leaves on a cutting board and cut it across into thin strips firmly holding the tube.





### **Herbs drying.**



This is quite an easy process. Foremost, provide yourself with fresh and healthy herbs in full blossom. You need to rinse them in a cold water and dry with a paper towel. Then tie them up into loose bundles and hang them in a well-ventilated place. On the average, drying process takes seven days. Do not dry herbs under open sun or indoors where there is a lot of heat. This can ruin herbs because excessive heat can cause fading of essential oils. Drying process is over when the herbs become breakable and start chirring. At this point, you will have to separate leaves from stems and put them into container for storing. You can crush the leaves if necessary by rubbing them between your palms or using a rolling pin over foil or parchment.

### **Herbs freezing.**



In case if after drying, adding into a paste or in a sauce you still have some fresh herbs left, then you can freeze them and use them later. Frozen herbs preserve their flavor and aroma for 4-6 months. First of all, rinse them in cold water and dry with a paper towel. After that, cut the herbs and pack small portions of them into plastic containers or ice trays and put them in a freezer. You can also add a small amount of water or oil to the containers with herbs. To freeze whole leaves or even small bunch it is convenient to use bags with zip-lock of various sizes.

Parchment is very good for freezing individual leaves such as basil, oregano, kaffir lime or sage. You need to prepare parchment sheets of needed size by greasing them with vegetable oil and lay fresh herbs leaves over it one at a time. Once parchment is covered, place another layer of parchment and repeat the process until all the herb leaves are laid out. Once the multilayer bag is ready, wrap it in foil and place in freezer. This method is good because the leaves can be removed one by one and used for their intended purpose.

## **OVERALL OVERVIEW ON MIXING SPICES**

There are three main ways of mixing spices:

Simple stirring of ingredients into a uniform mixture using ground or whole spices.

Grinding spices in a mortar, mill or coffee grinder and stirring them afterwards.

Warming spices up in a dry frying pan, grinding and mixing.

Using *Chinese five-spice powder* as an example, I am going to show you how to cook it properly. This algorithm can be used to make any dry spice blend.

First, prepare all the ingredients according to the recipe: cloves, cinnamon, Szechuan pepper, star anise and fennel. Put cloves and star anise into a mortar and crush it slightly. Break a cinnamon stick into 2-3 parts. Heat the frying pan over medium heat and put slightly fragmented star anise and broken cinnamon pieces into frying pan without adding oil. Stir the spices intensively by shaking a frying pan. This is necessary to evenly warm up the spices. As soon as you sense aroma rising, it will mean that the spices are warmed up enough. Then you need to cool them down by removing them into a plate or a bowl. Then put the crushed cloves, fennel seeds and Szechuan pepper into the same frying pan. Repeat the entire warm-up process. Then cool the warmed spices down. Then you will need to bring the spices into necessary texture. Since *Chinese five-spice powder* requires fine grinding, the mortar will not work for this mix. We will use a blender. Put the spices into blender and crush it into a fine powder. Now your task is a proper storage of the mix. You need to put the mix into a container for storage.

Any paste consists of three components: spice blend, fresh ingredients and liquid components (oil, juice, vinegar, water, etc.).

The algorithm for creating spicy pastes is as simple as for spice blends.

First, you should prepare all the fresh ingredients: peel, cut or grind them. And warm up in a frying pan if necessary.

Then combine them with spices in a bowl, mortar or coffee grinder, while adding a small amount of liquid.

And, finally, the last step is to make the paste of right texture.

## **PURCHASE AND STORAGE OF SPICES**

Now I am going to give you some tips on buying and storing spices and mixes.

Unlike ground spices, the whole ones can be stored much longer. Therefore, you should purchase only whole spices. You can always grind them with a coffee grinder, mill or mortar when you need to use them.

Store spices in a fast shut container. That will help to prevent all the flavors from weathering. Try to avoid containers made of paper, cellophane or plastic. As I mentioned before, the best solution in for quality storage of spices is a glass jar with locking lid.

Try to buy spices in small amounts if you are not sure you are going to use them within next six months. It would be much better to buy a fresh spice than to use the one that has been stored in your kitchen for more than a year and has lost all its aroma and flavors.

I highly recommend buying seasonings and spices only in specialty stores and shops, preferably by weight. Nowadays, unfortunately most of the brands represented in supermarkets and hypermarkets are not trustworthy. Most of the spices sold in stores contain various chemical supplements, "glutamates" and other substances that are not beneficial to health and do not make spices any better. And of course, you should not buy spices in markets as the spices are stored in the open air there getting dust and bacteria. On top of everything else, they simply lose their flavor and aroma this way. Therefore, custom shops selling spices and seasonings are the best option for purchasing fresh, aromatic and useful spices.

Although many seasonings and spices can last for years if properly stored, I do not recommend storing them for longer than one year. For such a long time, flavor and aroma most probably will weather, the spices will fade and will not be able to enrich the dish with flavour you would expect. I update my collection of spices twice a year: in the fall and in the spring. It is necessary to do this to supply your shelf with new fragrant spices that will reward you with delicious culinary dishes. And yet I want to emphasize that spices do not spoil for many, many years and they do not cause harm to health, but the value of such spices, regarding its taste and aroma, would be totally useless.

Do not store spices near stove or under direct sunlight. Seasonings and spices should be stored a cool, dry and dark place. Keep that in mind. Keep all your spices at a temperature not exceeding 68 °F (20 °C).

By no means pour the spices into a frying pan or cooking pot from the container in which spices are stored. Steam from the pan will penetrate into the container and worsen the spices quality. Use a dry spoon to scoop up the desired amount of spices.

Make a habit of adding individual spices or their blends several times during the cooking process. Depending on the dish, you need to add the mixture at the very beginning of cooking so that the spices are mixed with oil and with enrich the main components of the future dish. Then add the mixture in the middle of the cooking process. And then you should raise the dish to taste on the last stage of cooking. Accustom yourself to tasting your future fine cuisine over and over. This habit will help you check and evaluate the taste balance of your dish.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SPICES AND HERBS**

Spices can be added as a separate part to the dish as well as an ingredient to the whole mixture, which will play fragrant and flavor compositions along with other ingredients.



Each individual spice modifies the mixture and adds new hints of flavors and aromas. Just one spice can alter the whole mix beyond recognition adding a new color to it and thus diversify your favorite dish.

Hereafter I will briefly describe the 35 most popular herbs and species that are commonly used in blends. You surely are familiar with each of them but you also might find out completely new ones. Having learned different kinds of spices you can buy it and easily prepare favourite mixture from this book or create your own unique combination for your favorite dish.

In addition to a brief overview, you will find out which spice goes together with other and which products it is blended with.

After reading chapter, you will learn the basics of spice blending art and creating seasoning mixes. You will familiarize yourself with dosing and creating your own unique blends for meat or vegetables, for salads or desserts, for shish kebab or grilling, chicken, fish and seafood.

This does not necessarily mean that one particular spice cannot be combined with something else: this is an approximate and simplified list. But it will help you to combine seasonings and spices with one another and create successful, fancy, balanced and aromatic combinations.

### ***ALLSPICE***



It is also known as Jamaican pepper or pimento pepper. This Central America native has flavors and aromas of cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and black pepper all in one single spice. An incomparable warm and, at the same time, spicy stream of flavors and aromas explain its name. The spice is quite strong, it gives the dishes powerful aroma and changes their taste. Therefore, you should use it carefully. Despite this, it is very slow in giving its flavor to liquid dishes, therefore, it should be added in the beginning of cooking process. Allspice is an integral part of such mixes as baharat and berbere. Also, it is used in various spicy combinations in Jamaican and Caribbean cuisine.

Allspice pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* pineapple, eggplant, peas green, pear, zucchini, cabbage (including sauerkraut), potatoes, carrots, bell pepper, peach, tomato, turnip, beetroot, currant, pumpkin, apple.

*Protein product:* lamb, beef (stewed, boiled, fried), game (especially quail, rabbit), legumes (peas, buckwheat, rice oats, pearl barley, chickpeas), goat meat, sausages, seafood, nuts, poultry (chicken, turkey), fish (especially fried; herring marinated), pork, eggs.

*Other foods:* pastry, mushrooms, lemon juice, honey, beverages, biscuits, pies, soups and broths, dough, minced meat and meatballs, fruit compotes and jams, chocolate.

*Seasonings and spices:* cloves, mustard, ginger, cardamom, coriander, cinnamon, bay leaf, onion, marjoram, nutmeg, black pepper, chili, rosemary, thyme, caraway, garlic.

*Cuisines and dishes:* English cuisine, Middle Eastern cuisine, *curry* dishes, Indian cuisine, Caribbean cuisine, Mexican cuisine, North American cuisine, Mediterranean cuisine, Jamaican cuisine.

### **ANISE**



Anise seeds give the dish warm sweet and fruity accents. To open up its aroma, it is recommended to warm up seeds in a dry frying pan and crush it into powder after that. Anise is perfect for fish, seafood and poultry when paired with dill, fennel and coriander. It brightens flavor of stew, especially beef stew. Anise is the spice that balances sour sumac in *syrian za'atar* and makes up unsweetened taste in *ras-el-hanout*. Anise in some rare cases is able to replace fennel. It is added in the early stages of cooking process.

Anise pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* apricot, pineapple, watermelon, pomegranate, pear, melon, cabbage (including cauliflower and sauerkraut), potatoes, strawberries, cranberries, root vegetables, carrots, parsnips, peaches, rhubarb, turnips, beets, plums, pumpkin, citrus, apple.

*Protein product:* beef, wild game, legumes (especially beans, lentils, rice), seafood (especially crabs, mussels), nuts (almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts), poultry (especially chicken, duck), fish, pork, cheeses (especially goat cheese, ricotta), eggs.

*Other foods:* baked food and pastry, raisins, vegetable oil (olive oil), butter, honey, beverages (tea), sugar, lemon juice, pickles and marinades, soups and stews (especially fish), dough, dates, bread.

*Seasonings and spices:* star anise, basil, vanilla, cloves, cumin, ginger, cardamom, cilantro, coriander, cinnamon, sesame, turmeric, nutmeg, mint, fenugreek, allspice, black pepper, chili, celery, caraway, dill, fennel, garlic.

*Cuisines and dishes:* Middle Eastern cuisine, German cuisine, Greece cuisine, South American cuisine, Vietnamese cuisine, Indian cuisine, Chinese cuisine, Moroccan cuisine, Portuguese cuisine, Egypt cuisine, Scandinavian cuisine, *sauce mole*, Mediterranean cuisine, French cuisine.

### ***BASIL***



Basil is one of the most commonly used herbs in the culinary world. Its flavour can be described as a mixture of peppery anise with a peculiar astringency of mint, slightly bitter with a sweetish hint, and its aroma is spicy-sweet, with notes of anise and cloves. In most western cuisines basil is an integrated part of many sauces, especially of tomato sauces. Using it as a single spice you should add it in very end of cooking, as the flavour of basil fades away quickly during long heat treatment.

**Basil pairings:**

*Fruits and vegetables:* apricot, pineapple, watermelon, eggplant, broccoli, blueberries, green onions, zucchini, potatoes, corn, leafy vegetables, raspberries, carrots, cucumbers, olives, bell pepper, peach, tomato, beetroot, pumpkin, citrus, chives, spinach.

*Protein product:* lamb, beef and veal, wild game (especially rabbit), legumes (especially beans, rice, peas, wheat), coconut milk, seafood (especially crabs, mussels, scallops, shrimps), nuts (especially pine nut), poultry (especially chicken, duck), fish (especially salmon, sea bass, tuna), pork, by-products (especially liver), cheeses (especially goa cheese, ricotta, mozzarella, feta, parmesan, pecorino), eggs.

*Other foods:* mushrooms, vegetable oil (including olive oil), butter, honey, ice cream, drinks, soy sauce, juice (lemon, lime), tomato sauces, vinegar, bread, chocolate (including white chocolate).

*Seasonings and spices:* vanilla, cloves, mustard, ginger, cilantro, coriander, cinnamon, onion, marjoram, mint, oregano, black and white pepper, chili, parsley, rosemary, thyme, fennel, savory, garlic, tarragon.

*Cuisines and dishes:* Italian cuisine, Pan-Asian cuisine (especially Thai), pastas and various kinds of sauces, *pesto*, *pizza*, Mediterranean cuisine, French cuisine.



### ***BAY LEAF***



This particular spice gives a unique aroma (sweet, tart, balsamic, with notes of nutmeg) to many broths, soups and sauces, especially tomato ones. Bay leaf contains a balanced flavour of bitterness that is admired by many chefs. Each dish requires individual dosage of this spice, but without doubt it should always be added moderately. Bay leaf is very similar to allspice as both of the spices require a long time to give their flavor. This is why bay leaf is better to be added in a very beginning of cooking process. Marinated vegetables, fruits and mushrooms are hard to imagine without this aromatic leaf. This spice is added to some spice blends, however, it brought the greatest fame to a *bouquet of garnish*. On the top photo – Turkish bay leaf, on the bottom – Californian.

Bay leaf pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* artichoke, cabbage (including cauliflower), potatoes, strawberries, corn, carrots, cucumbers, tomato, beets, pumpkin, citrus, apple.

*Protein product:* lamb, beef and veal, wild game (including venison, feathered game: quail, partridge), legumes (peas, beans, rice, lentils), sausages, seafood (especially crab, oysters, shrimp), poultry (chicken, duck, turkey), fish (especially salmon, tuna), pork, cheese.

*Other foods:* mushrooms, desserts, custard, juice (lemon), soups and broths, tomato sauces, stews, vinegar.

*Seasonings and spices:* basil, vanilla, cloves, onion, marjoram, oregano, paprika, allspice, black pepper, chili, parsley, rosemary, celery, thyme, fennel, savory, garlic, sage.

*Cuisines and dishes:* Moroccan cuisine, *mole sauces*, *polenta*, Mediterranean cuisine, Turkish cuisine, French cuisine.

### ***BLACK PEPPER***



We think we know all about this spice as it can be found in every kitchen in various corners of our planet. Unfortunately, this spice is faked up quite often. The real and quality black pepper is really expensive. Black pepper has a warm tart aroma and flavour. Without the slightest doubt, you should buy only whole peppercorns and grind it before seasoning the dish. This spice is universal and it is easier to list those spice mixes that do not contain this pepper rather than list those that this spice supplements. Freshly ground black pepper is added in the very last minutes of cooking process.

**White pepper.** This kind of pepper is derived by removing its outer shell. In simple phrase, white pepper is a black pepper that was removed from its shell. Its flavor is less spicy while its aroma is stronger than that of black pepper. It well harmonizes with meat, fish (especially white), cloves, ginger, nutmeg, potatoes, various pastas and sauces.

**Green pepper.** These green peppercorns are unripe berries of black pepper. It has a piquant fresh aroma and pleasant pungency. It goes well when added in sauces, marinades, pickles and sausages. It harmonizes well with various kinds of vegetables, bay leaf, avocado, beef and veal, butter, poultry (chicken, duck, turkey), wild game (especially venison), garlic, mustard, parsley, pork, sage, various kinds of salads (as dressing seasoning), fish (especially salmon), seafood (especially prawns).

**Pink pepper.** Unlike black, white and green peppers, pink pepper in fact is not even a pepper. However, it is worth mentioning. Its unique feature is the balance of spicy and sweet. The aroma is fruity, with pine notes, remotely resembling juniper berries. Having a piquant taste, pink pepper has proven itself with delicate products such as fish, seafood, poultry, pork, venison and other wild game. Crushed pink pepper goes as a powder for desserts, for example, ice cream.





Black pepper pairing:

Black pepper pairs and harmonizes with virtually all vegetables, fruits and protein products.

*Seasonings and spices:* basil, cloves, cumin, ginger, cardamom, coriander, cinnamon, turmeric, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, fenugreek, paprika, allspice, chili, parsley, rosemary, thyme, caraway, fennel, savory, garlic, sage.

### **CARAWAY**





Caraway is one of the oldest spices in the world and it plays a significant part in many mixes. It is the caraway that easily binds all the other spices to each other. It has a bitter but warm spicy taste that combines the aromas of dill and anise with piquant nutty note.

There is a common confusion between caraway and cumin, and therefore in many foreign culinary books caraway is often called cumin. That's it, both of the spices are called cumin. You can avoid this misunderstanding by comparing the taste of both spices. You need to buy caraway seeds and cumin seeds and scrunch first the caraway seed, and then cumin seed. You will then realize that caraway seeds are spicier than cumin seeds. Cumin, on the other hand, is more delicate with much brighter aroma.

Caraway helps to ease an immoderate intension of particular spice. Caraway is one of the main components in such mixtures as *ras-el-hanout* and *harissa*. This spice is usually added in the later stages of cooking process.

Caraway pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* cabbage (including sauerkraut), potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, tomato, turnips, beets, apple.

*Protein product:* beef, legumes (wheat, rice), yoghurt, kefir, sausages, seafood, poultry (chicken, duck), fish, pork (including bacon), sour cream, cheeses, cottage cheese, eggs.

*Other foods:* mushrooms, desserts, lemon juice, pasta (including spaghetti and noodles), honey, beverages, biscuits, various kinds of marinades, vegetable oil (olive), butter, soups and stews, dough, vinegar, bread.

*Seasonings and spices:* cloves, mustard, cumin, cardamom, coriander, cinnamon, turmeric, onion, nutmeg, oregano, paprika, black pepper, chili, parsley, celery, thyme, dill, fennel, garlic, juniper berries.

*Cuisines and dishes:* Austrian cuisine, British cuisine, Hungarian cuisine, Eastern European cuisine, goulash, Moroccan cuisine, German cuisine, cabbage salads.

### **CARDAMOM**



Cardamom has a strong, but soft warm and sweet flavor and aroma with delicate citrus and floral notes complementing the refreshing hint of eucalyptus. Being one of the most popular spices in

Indian cuisine, and in other world cuisines, cardamom provides aromatization of many dishes. And of course, it is widely used in various mixtures of spices. Cardamom is an important element in *curry*, *garam masala*, *berbere*, *ras-el-hanout*, *baharat* and many others. Cardamom is added in the early stages of cooking process. One pod of cardamom contains an average of 15-20 seeds. On the top photo there are pods with green cardamom, on the bottom photo there are cardamom seeds.

Cardamom pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* apricot, pineapple, banana, grapes/raisins, cherry, pear, zucchini, potatoes and other root vegetables, bell pepper, peach, tomato, radish, plum, currant, pumpkin, date, citrus, apple.

*Protein product:* all types of meat (beef, lamb, pork, chicken stew, roast duck), legumes (wheat, rice, peas, beans, lentils, chickpeas), yoghurt, milk, nuts (pistachios, walnuts), fish (especially grilled), cream, cheese, cottage cheese, eggs.

*Other foods:* custard, gingerbread, sweets, honey, ice cream, drinks (especially coffee, tea, wine), biscuits, cakes, sugar, juice and zest (lemon, lime, orange), dough, bread and pastries, chocolate.

*Seasonings and spices:* anise, star anise, vanilla, cloves, cumin, ginger, coriander, cinnamon, turmeric, bay leaf, nutmeg, mint, paprika, allspice, black pepper, chili, caraway, fennel, saffron.

*Cuisines and dishes:* Asian cuisine (Indian, Indonesian), North African cuisine (including Moroccan), Scandinavian cuisine.

### ***CELERY***



It is often used as supplement for soups and salads. In terms of its gustatory quality and nutrient level it is the most valuable vegetable crop. Its leaves contain ascorbic acid, carotene, vitamins and even antiulcer substances. As a spice, dried leaves and seeds are used. A stalk of celery is used while fresh. Dried celery retains its flavour and has a specific pleasant herbaceous aroma, reminding of parsley, and has a piquant warm, slightly bitter flavor. Celery seeds are often used in spicy combinations for barbecue and roasted meat.

Celery pairing:

*Fruits and vegetables:* green onions, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, tomato, turnips, beets, chives.

*Protein product:* beef, legumes (beans, rice, hummus/chickpeas), seafood (including oysters), nuts (especially peanuts), poultry (especially chicken, turkey), fish, pork, cheeses (especially blue, parmesan, feta, goat cheese, cream cheese), eggs.

*Other foods:* broths (especially chicken, vegetable), mushrooms (especially wild, black truffles), various kinds of minced meat, vegetable oil (olive, peanut), butter, soy sauce, juice (lemon, tomato), vinegar.

*Seasonings and spices:* basil, cloves, mustard, cumin, ginger, cilantro, turmeric, bay leaf, onion, paprika, black and white pepper, parsley, thyme, dill, garlic, tarragon.

*Cuisines and dishes:* curry dishes, stir-fry dishes, *mirepoix* (European vegetable mix for soups and broths).

### ***CILANTRO (CORIANDER GREENS)***



In appearance, cilantro is similar to parsley leaves, and sometimes it is even called "Chinese parsley", but the flavour and aroma of these two herbs are completely different. Interesting fact regarding its flavor – there are two types of people: those who adore this useful and aromatic herb, and those who dislike it comparing the taste of cilantro with soap. Nevertheless, this spice has quite delicate and at the same time a complex taste resembling of a mixture of mint, lemon and pepper. Fresh cilantro leaves are popular throughout Asia and Latin America where they are added to all kinds of curry dishes, curry pastes, sauces, including *chutney* and *salsa*. Dried cilantro is great for adding to a dish in a very last minutes of cooking process.

#### **Cilantro Pairing:**

*Fruits and vegetables:* avocado, eggplant, green onions, potatoes, corn, lemongrass, lettuce, carrots, cucumbers, bell pepper, tomato, citrus, chives.

*Protein product:* lamb, beef, game, legumes (beans, lentils, rice, tamarind), yoghurt, seafood, nuts (including coconut), poultry (chicken, duck, turkey), fish (especially white: cod, halibut), pork, cheese, eggs.



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