



# The Ultimate Guide to Herbs and How to Pair Them with Produce

By  
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Love the flavor explosion that happens when you pair fresh basil with peak-season [tomatoes](#)? Then you're sure to enjoy all the other herb-and-produce pairings out there. The following guide tells you everything you need to know about adding fresh herb flavor to all your [plant-based](#) dishes—and includes easy recipes from Forks Over Knives to help get you started.

## Basil

**Flavor notes:** Sweet, slightly peppery; best added just before serving

**Commonly used in:** Pesto

**Pair it with:** Tomatoes (of course!), corn, eggplant, potatoes, peaches, summer squash, melons, and berries

**Try this recipe with basil:** [Watermelon-Basil Ice](#)

## Chives

**Flavor notes:** Oniony-garlicky, fresh and mild; best added just before serving

**Commonly used in:** Mashed and baked potatoes

**Pair them with:** All vegetables, but especially potatoes, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, and mushrooms

**Try this recipe with chives:** [Loaded Potato Skins](#)

## Cilantro

**Flavor notes:** Distinctive, bright, and citrusy; best added just before serving

**Commonly used in:** Salsas, Mexican and Thai dishes

**Pair it with:** Avocados, beets, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cucumbers, and tomatoes

**Try this recipe with cilantro:** [Creamy Pasta Primavera](#)

## Dill

**Flavor notes:** Evergreen with hints of celery

**Commonly used in:** Pickles, borscht

**Pair it with:** Asparagus, broccoli, corn, cucumbers, potatoes, tomatoes, beets, spinach, and cabbage

**Try this recipe with dill:** [Potato Salad with Avocado and Dill](#)

## Lemon Verbena

**Flavor notes:** Sweet, floral, and lemony; good for steeping and marinating

**Commonly used in:** Herbal teas

**Pair it with:** Carrots, beets, fennel, corn, tomatoes, and all types of fruits

(continued)

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Try this recipe with lemon verbena: [Nice Cream](#)

## Mint

**Flavor notes:** Pungent and refreshing when raw, mellow and oregano-like when heated

**Commonly used in:** Teas and Middle Eastern salads

**Pair it with:** Beets, carrots, cucumbers, eggplant, leafy greens, peas, squash, tomatoes, and all summer fruits

**Try this recipe with mint:** [Green Pea Hummus with Fresh Mint](#)

## Oregano

**Flavor notes:** Pungent, peppery, spicy; good for grilling, roasting, and simmering

**Commonly used in:** Tomato sauces

**Pair it with:** Eggplant, beans, bell peppers, leafy greens, squash, artichokes, spinach, and citrus

**Try this recipe with oregano:** [Enfrijoladas](#)

## Parsley

**Flavor notes:** Fresh with a hint of bitterness

**Commonly used in:** Potato dishes, grain salads

**Pair it with:** All vegetables but especially salad greens and tomatoes

**Try this recipe with parsley:** [Layered Vegetable Salad](#)

## Sage

**Flavor notes:** Earthy with hints of pine; good for simmering and marinades

**Commonly used in:** Holiday stuffings

**Pair it with:** Beans, apples, squash, tomatoes, potatoes, cauliflower

**Try this recipe with sage:** [Delicata Squash Boats with Cauliflower Bechamel](#)

## Tarragon

**Flavor notes:** Pungent, grassy, and anise-flavored

**Commonly used in:** Tartar sauce, French sauces

**Pair it with:** Asparagus, beans, fennel, potatoes, tomatoes, squash, peaches, pears, melons, and salad greens

**Try this recipe with tarragon:** [Barley and Sweet Potato Pilaf](#)

## Herb-and-Produce Pairings: Basic Rules

Freestyle cooking with fresh herbs can be daunting at first. Here's how to gain confidence in the technique while boosting the flavors of your foods.

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**Start small.** Begin by sprinkling 1 to 2 Tbsp. of a chopped fresh herb over a simple dish (for four people) or a big plate of steamed vegetables. This amount will give you an idea of the flavor an herb imparts without overwhelming the recipe.

**Go bigger and bolder.** Like what you taste? Try upping the herb amounts. Play around with sizes as well. Tear herb leaves instead of chopping them or shower a dish with a fluffy [chiffonade](#).

**Switch things up.** Try new herbs in place of old favorites. Sub basil for mint in a tomato salad, try tarragon in place of dill, and add cilantro in place of parsley. A simple herb switch can totally transform a recipe.