



# Savor the Flavor of Eating Right!

What is the main reason people choose the foods they do? Are you thinking about nutrition, food safety or cost? All of these play a role, but “taste” or “flavor” is the top reason.

Flavorful food can be healthful, budget friendly and, of course, safe to consume. During March, which is National Nutrition Month, add extra flavor with herbs and spices when you cook. When you use spices and herbs, you can leave out the salt to cut the sodium.

## Herb or Spice: What's the Difference?

Herbs are leaves from low-growing shrubs. Herbs include parsley, chives, thyme, basil, dill, rosemary and sage. Spices are from plant material other than leaves. Spices may be from bark (cinnamon), buds (cloves), roots (ginger, onion, garlic) and seeds (mustard).

## Send Your Taste Buds on an Adventure

Most cookbooks have lots of ways to use spices. If you are not sure where to use the herbs or spices in your cupboard, try a sprinkle to add flavor to veggies:

- **Basil:** tomatoes
- **Curry powder:** cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower
- **Dill:** green beans, peas

For a wide variety of ideas, visit [www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov) and search for recipes by spice.

## How to Substitute

Use this general rule when substituting dried herbs for fresh:

*½ teaspoon dried herbs = ¼ teaspoon ground herbs =  
2 to 3 teaspoons freshly minced herbs*

## Enhance Natural Sweetness

You can enhance naturally sweet-flavored foods such as fruit by adding cinnamon, cloves, ginger or nutmeg. Try a sprinkle of one or more of these spices on baked apples or a mixed fruit salad.

## Keep the Flavor

Store spices in a tightly covered container in a cool, dry place. Keep them away from heat sources such as a dishwasher or stove.

*“Savor the Flavor of Eating Right” is the 2016 theme of National Nutrition Month® sponsored by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.*

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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# Slow Cooker Chicken Tortilla Soup

- 1 (16-ounce) jar chunky salsa (mild or medium)
- 3 c. chicken broth, reduced sodium
- 2 Tbsp. Mexican Blend Seasoning (see recipe)\*
- 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (16-ounce) bag frozen corn
- 1 pound chicken breast (boneless, skinless)
- Optional toppings (shredded cheese, yogurt)

## Menu idea:

Slow Cooker Chicken Tortilla Soup

Whole-wheat breadsticks

Apple slices with cinnamon

Low-fat or fat-free milk

Slice the chicken into strips and place in slow cooker (at least 3-quart size). After canned items are drained and rinsed (except salsa), place all the remaining ingredients in the slow cooker. Cook on low for six to seven hours or high for four hours. Shred the chicken with two forks until bite-sized. If desired, top individual servings with a pinch of shredded cheese and a dollop of yogurt.

\* You can substitute low-sodium taco seasoning to taste.

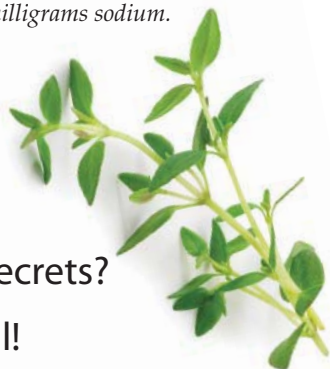
Makes about 10 servings (1 cup per serving).

Each serving has 210 calories, 2.5 grams (g) fat, 19 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 8 g fiber and 530 milligrams sodium.

## Just for fun

Which spice is the worst at keeping secrets?

Only thyme will tell!



I noticed that my microwave oven and refrigerator are in need of a good cleaning. Do you have any tips?

- Microwaves often get overlooked in day-to-day cleaning, but you can get your microwave clean with just a few steps. Heat a microwave-safe bowl filled with water on high for approximately four minutes. Remove bowl and use hot water and dish soap to wipe down the microwave interior. Dry with a fresh paper towel.
- Clean the inside surfaces of your refrigerator with hot water and soap (such as mild dish detergent). Rinse with a damp cloth and wipe dry with a clean cloth. Do not use chlorine bleach, strong cleaners or abrasives (such as Comet) near the refrigerator gaskets and seals.
- See [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) for more tips on cleaning other areas of your kitchen, such as your sink drains and countertops.

## FoodWi\$e Tip of the Month

Make your own spice blends to reduce sodium in recipes. Add this spice to leftover chicken to make fajitas or to lean ground beef for tacos. The spice blend is featured in this month's recipe.

### Make Your Own Mexican Blend Seasoning

- 1½ tsp. dried parsley
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 1½ tsp. cumin

Mix and store in a tightly closed container in a cool dry place.

Yields about 3½ tablespoons of mix.

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Contact the local office of the NDSU Extension Service for more information on food and nutrition or managing your food dollar.

