Herbs & Spices

Herbs and spices work magic in the kitchen, transforming a meal from undistinguished to unforgettable. Small amounts of these plants can unlock subtle flavors in food, decrease the need for salt, and please the palate. What’s more, some herbs have been known for their healing properties since ancient times.

# Helpful higher plants

An herb is any plant or plant part that is valued for its medicinal, savory, or aromatic qualities. Although spices do not add nutritional value to food, they add color, flavor, aroma, and interest. Among the 380,000 species of identified plants about 260,000 are classified as higher plants.

Some plants are vascular, meaning they contain chlorophyll and perform photosynthesis—the process in which plants use the energy from the sun to manufacture carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and water. Oxygen is a byproduct of this process.

All members of this “higher” plant group have the potential to offer medical benefits. Many herbs are rich in compounds that exert a profound effect on certain animal tissues and organs. Therefore, these herbs can be used medicinally in treating, curing or preventing disease.

# Herb safety

Though herbs are natural substances, they must be used carefully. Herbs can be strong medicine. It is important to know what an herb does, how to use it, what the proper dosage is, and any possible side effects. It’s best to take only one or two herbal combinations at the same time; choose elements that address the most significant problem first. Pregnant women and children should not take herbs unless advised by a knowledgeable health practitioner.

# Culinary herbs and spices

The road to becoming an excellent cook begins with excellent ingredients. Quite simply, we procure top-quality herbs and spices, aiming for freshness, potency, and rich flavor. Some of our herbs and spices are organically grown, our first choice whenever possible. Some are “wildcrafted,” a process during which herbs are sought and harvested as they grow wildly in their remote natural surroundings. All of our selections are guaranteed to be non-irradiated.

# Learning more about herbs and spices

At Nature, many of our foods are prepared with fresh herbs and spices. Feel free to ask our chefs about their choices in herbs and spices and the way they marry the subtle flavors in exciting recipes.

In addition, Nature has a complete resource library, which offers books, brochures, and references about the subject. Our customer service representatives will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the culinary or medicinal properties of our wide assortment of fresh and dried spices and healing herbs.

# How to shop for herbs and spices

Herb quality is very important. It is critical to effective herbal therapy that the proper plants are picked in season and are used or processed when fresh. Fresh or freeze-dried herbs preserve more of the herb’s active ingredients. Again, whenever possible, plants should be organically grown.

Herbs should be bought in small amounts for maximum potency. All healing herb formulas should be kept away from light and heat in a dark-colored sealed container. Price reflects quality; top-quality plants cost more, but are worth it in terms of healing value.

# Healing benefits of herbs

More and more health practitioners today are investigating anew the ancient remedies and folklore cures of herbs and reconsidering the wisdom of primitive healers. In the search for gentler, alternative healing treatments, herbs have moved to the forefront as a natural solution. If you’re interested in herbal medical practices, consult a knowledgeable herbalist; “all-natural” doesn’t necessarily mean “safe in any amount.” Some plants have a powerful effect on the body. Therefore, if you’re told to take just a little, it doesn’t mean a lot is better.

With that gentle warning, delight in the fact that there are many, many ways to use herbs for both culinary pleasure and physical well-being. Wild By Nature offers an exceptional selection of prepared liquid herbal extracts, capsules, and, of course, fresh and dried herbs and spices.

Some of the most widely used herbs and spices have powerful health-promoting properties. Here’s just a sampling of the way nature takes care of our needs:

Garlic: Often believed to prevent or reduce symptoms of cold and flu. Garlic also has been shown to decrease blood cholesterol and lower blood pressure.

Ginger: Believed to relieve motion sickness and morning sickness.

Hot pepper: We’ve all had the experience of clearing our sinuses by eating hot peppers! Researchers believe this family of plants may have more health benefits.