



Did You Know vegetables can be big on flavor, not salt?

Did you know that most Americans eat less than half the amount of recommended vegetable servings? That's according to a recent report from the CDC and it's spurring doctors to urge us all to jump on the veggie bandwagon!



If you're already a veggie lover, come up with creative ways to win others over. If you're a bit ho-hum yourself, then add some zip to your recipes. Roasted, grilled, steamed, sautéed, blanched or fresh-cut—there are a variety of ways to prepare vegetables and many more ways to season them. Just go easy on the salt. According to the National Kidney Foundation, Americans now consume 50% more than the recommended daily quantities of sodium. Diets high in sodium increase blood pressure levels, which places a person at greater risk of stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure. That's why, when it comes to salt, it's best to stick to the one-teaspoon-a-day recommendation.

Does the idea of more vegetables and less salt sound a bit dullsville? Don't despair; there are countless ways to liven up veggie dishes. Herbs and spices can enhance flavor five-fold while reducing the need for added salt. Dress up your vegetables with garlic and seasonings; toss salads with your own vinaigrette to control salt levels and customize flavor.

Recommended Spices and Dried Herbs for Vegetables

<http://www.diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/tips/2013-05/less-sodium-just-as-much-2013-5.html#sthash.XFfB3m6n.dpuf>

Ingredients and cooking methods that lend big flavors to food can please the palate without the need for heavy salting. You can transform an everyday meal from ordinary to extraordinary through savvy seasoning with herbs, spices, citrus, vinegars or salt-free seasoning blends. Before reaching for the salt shaker, try one of these fresh ideas.

Salt-free Seasoning Tips

- Grate citrus zest (the outer colorful layer of the rind) for true citrus flavor
- Squeeze in some juice from a lemon, lime or orange to brighten a dish



- Fresh herbs add lively flavors
- Get bright, fresh flavor from basil, oregano, parsley, marjoram, tarragon, thyme and chives
- Add heartiness to cooked dishes with rosemary, thyme, and sage
- Use bay leaf in soup to add subtle depth of flavor
- Dry herbs lend deep, complex flavor to dishes
- Try parsley, oregano, thyme, basil, rubbed sage, and rosemary
- Saffron contributes earthy flavor and a warm yellow color

The American Diabetes Association recommends you keep a few commonly used spices and dried herbs on hand:

- Dried basil is great for adding flavor to a low-sodium pasta sauce. You can also use it to season vegetables, fish, chicken or lean meats.
- Dried or fresh thyme is especially tasty when used to season fish filets but it also goes great with any meat, poultry, bean, or egg dish. You can sprinkle it (along with a little bit of olive oil) over vegetables or potatoes before roasting them in the oven.
- Cumin is a common spice used in many different cuisines. Use it along with some chili powder and garlic powder to season chicken, ground meat, or vegetables for fajitas or tacos. It can also be added to chilis, curries, or stews.
- Chili powder will add a kick to any dish. It's actually a seasoning blend that includes dried chilis, garlic, oregano, and cumin. Add to it stews and chilis or use it in meat and veggies for fajitas.
- Dried or fresh rosemary is a strong herb that can be sprinkled on fish, chicken, or meats before grilling or roasting. It is also tasty on roasted potatoes.
- Crushed red pepper flakes or ground red pepper such as cayenne will add heat to any dish. You don't need a lot to add a kick. Use this in rubs, sauces, stews, and more.
- Cinnamon compliments both sweet and savory dishes. Simply use it to top your toast or light yogurt, or stir it into your oatmeal with some toasted nuts. It can also be added to stews and chilis in combination with other spices.
- Dried oregano is especially good in tomato-based dishes and is common in Italian cuisine. You can use it in soups or sprinkle it over vegetables before cooking. Try sprinkling it over pizza, pasta dishes, or garlic bread. -

Cinnamon is not just for snickerdoodles.

Sprinkle cinnamon over baked sweet potatoes and add some melted butter or coconut oil for a healthy holiday treat. Add cinnamon to melting butter, ghee or coconut oil and pour over fresh or cooked butternut or acorn squashes. The aroma alone will bring even the most reticent vegetable eaters to the table. Studies suggest that cinnamon can help



control blood sugar, lower bad cholesterol, treat arthritis, improve memory and slow cancer growth.

Cooking Tips That Enhance Flavor

Roast vegetables at a high heat (450 F) until browned to bring out the sweet, deep, concentrated flavors in the food. Some vegetables especially benefit from roasting, such as onions, potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables, Tossing the vegetables with a seasoned oil mixture keeps them from drying out and helps to flavor the vegetables. In a small bowl combine olive oil with lemon juice, salt, and ground black pepper and other seasonings.

Toss in a bay leaf and a clove of garlic when cooking dry beans and grains

Grill vegetables and fruit until caramelized to add a hint of sweet smokiness

Caramelize onions and other aromatic vegetables as a first step before adding the liquid in soup and stew recipes

Reduce (cook down) broths and sauces to concentrate flavors

Note: Lower fat foods tend to need less salt than fatty or fried foods.

Spice Powders

Many different spice powders work well with roasted vegetables. Cayenne, cumin, curry or serranos are good choices. Toss vegetables in olive oil and then into a powder mix of the spices. The spices will be absorbed into the vegetable during roasting.

Sources:

Salt

https://www.kidney.org/news/ekidney/june10/Salt_june10