

## Fresh Herbs: Don't Miss Out on Summer Flavor

Are you excited to eat your favorite summer foods? Sweet corn and tomatoes, anyone? Fresh peas creamed with small red potatoes and pearl onions? Bring them on! How about a simple cucumber sandwich and a cup of brewed iced tea? **Heavenly.**

Well...you may not be getting **all the summer flavor** you deserve. Fresh herbs can make your favorite summer foods taste even better. And, they are good for your health!

Planting herbs in containers will provide a variety of fresh flavors—for little money—throughout the entire summer. Most herbs are perfect container plants and will thrive on your deck, patio,

balcony, fire escape, or front steps, if you offer them the right growing conditions. Fill a container with potting soil and you're ready to go shopping for herbs.

Basil, oregano, sage, cilantro, thyme, and rosemary are among the easiest plants to grow in pots. Here is some "sage" advice to consider if you have never grown herbs.

- One plant of each herb is usually enough. It's okay to plant different types of herbs in one pot.
- Plant what you use most.
- Place container where it can receive plenty of sun.
- Grow indoor herbs in the sunniest location you can find, but don't expect them to perform as well as they do outside.

*Try growing herbs in pots and containers!*





# Herbilicious!

You really can't go wrong cooking with fresh herbs. Smell an herb first then take a small taste. If it is delicious, use a generous amount. If you aren't sure you like it, then just add a little.



**BASIL**

Top sliced tomatoes with basil and a sprinkle of vinegar. Want to get a little fancy with basil? Stack basil leaves, roll them into a cigar shape and slice into strips.



**DILL**

Add dill to plain yogurt for a refreshing dip for a dill-icious snack or toss into a vegetable salad.



**OREGANO**

Sautee zucchini or any summer vegetable with oregano, mushrooms and onions for a scrumptious, healthy side dish. Sprinkle fresh oregano leaves onto homemade garlic bread.

## Why Grow Basil? Why Wouldn't You?

For many patio gardeners, basil is the I-can't-live-without-it herb. Basil's fresh, spicy, clove-scented flavor profile enhances the natural flavor of many foods. Just one well-pruned plant will supply about a half cup's worth of basil each week. Even if you're limited on space, find a sunny windowsill, fill a container with well-drained soil, and you'll have basil for months.

The most common variety of basil is sweet basil or Genovese basil, but other options — such as Thai, lemon, and cinnamon — are also readily available.<sup>1</sup>

**One note of caution: Basil is a tender annual. It is sensitive to the cold, so watch your plants carefully as the weather changes.**



Want more? Try an **herb dipping oil recipe** on page 4!

## Herb Tips

- To make fresh herbs last a week or more, treat them like flowers. Snip stems and place in a glass filled with water.
- If a recipe calls for a dried herb and you want to use the fresh form, use three times the amount.
- To taste a fresh herb you have not used before, mix ½ teaspoon (finely chopped) with 1 tablespoon cream cheese or sweet butter. Let it stand ten to fifteen minutes. Taste on a cracker.



Herb Scramble Answers  
 1. herbs  
 2. basil  
 3. oregano  
 4. dill  
 5. bean sprouts  
 6. sage  
 7. thyme  
 8. rosemary  
 9. push up  
 10. cilantro  
 11. summer meals  
 bonus: container

<sup>1</sup> The Kitchn. "Everything You Need to Know About Growing Basil." Retrieved May 1, 2016. [http://www.thekitchn.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-growing-basil-221272?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=managed](http://www.thekitchn.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-growing-basil-221272?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=managed)

# Summer Meals for Kids Help Spread the Word



Summer is an exciting time for children to enjoy playtime with friends, a week at camp, time with their grandparents, a family vacation, or time at the pool.

However, for many children summer can also mean hunger. Just as learning doesn't end when school lets

out, neither does a child's need for good nutrition. Children need healthy food all year long to flourish and achieve their goals.

The USDA's Summer Food Service Program is designed to help ensure that children can get the nutritious meals and snacks they need during the summer months when they lose access to school breakfast and lunch programs. Healthy summer meals help children to be ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

Many organizations provide healthy free meals to children during the summer as part of the Summer Food Service Program. There are no income requirements or registration. Any child 18 and younger may come to eat.

To find a summer meal site in your community for children you know, call 1-866-3-HUNGRY, text 'Food' to 877-877, or visit [www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks](http://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks).

## Wall Push-Up

These push-ups will strengthen your arms, shoulders, and chest. Try this exercise during a TV commercial break.

1. Face a wall, standing a little farther than arm's length away, feet shoulder-width apart.
  2. Lean your body forward and put your palms flat against the wall at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
  3. Slowly bend your elbows and lower your upper body toward the wall in a slow, controlled motion. Keep your feet flat on the floor.
  4. Hold the position for 1 second.
  5. Slowly push yourself back until your arms are straight.
- Repeat 10-15 times.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Go4Life. "Wall Push Up." Retrieved May 1, 2016. <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises/wall-push>



"I have three daughters that are nurses who keep me informed of nutrition trends" says **Marilyn Sullivan**, a long time participant at the Osage congregate meal site. "I like to try new things, which is why I like *Fresh Conversations!*"

Marilyn is active on social media and challenges her friends to try the nutrition tips and exercises she posts from the newsletter.

Exercising every day for strength and balance is something that Marilyn strongly believes in to maintain her independence. She exercises at the local community recreation facility and uses weight machines along with exercises learned from *Fresh Conversations* in her daily routine.

Marilyn believes that other seniors would benefit from lifting weights and encourages them to add weights to their daily exercise.



## Recipe of the Month

### Herb Dipping Oil

Try a simple herb dipping oil with your favorite bread!

#### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup olive oil (or canola oil)
- 1 teaspoon each chopped fresh rosemary, flat-leaf parsley, and oregano
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Sprinkle salt on top of the oil (kosher salt flakes work well)



Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir to combine. Serve with crusty bread. Some people enjoy adding a few drops of balsamic vinegar.

## A Vegetable You Shouldn't Eat Raw: Bean Sprouts



Experts warn against eating raw bean sprouts. "There have been at least 35 outbreaks from contaminated sprouts since the mid-1990s," says the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food-safety

expert Michelle Smith. The primary culprits: Salmonella and E. coli.

#### What to do?

- Make sure children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems avoid eating raw bean sprouts.
- Cook sprouts thoroughly to reduce the risk of illness. Cooking kills the harmful bacteria.
- Request that raw sprouts not be added to your food. If you purchase a sandwich or salad at a restaurant or delicatessen, check to make sure that raw sprouts have not been added.

**The bottom line:** Make sure sprouts are thoroughly cooked and not added to a dish at the end for crunch.

## Take Action Corner

This month I will...

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## Herb Scramble

Unscramble these key words found in this month's newsletter.

Circled letters can be unscrambled for a bonus word.

- ersbh      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- sailb      \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- greonao      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_
- lild      \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- nabe rusotps      \_ \_ \_ \_   \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- esga      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

- hytem       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- mrsoeray      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_
- shup pu      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- tranolic       \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- mumers leams      \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

BONUS WORD \_\_\_\_\_



Food Assistance can help you buy healthy food in Iowa. Visit <http://dhs.iowa.gov/food-assistance> for more information or contact your local Department of Human Services office. This material was developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health and funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

