Fresh Herbs: Don't Miss Out on Summer Flavor

Background for Facilitators
The following background information is for facilitators. The information should not be printed and distributed to participants.

Herbs
Everything you needed to know about growing basil
UNL: The Magic of Fresh Herbs

Food Safety
USDA: Grilling Food Safely
CDC: Food Safety at Fairs and Festivals
FDA: Handling Food Safely Outdoors

Handwashing
CDC: Handwashing, the Most Important Food Poisoning Prevention

Iowa Senior Hunger Partnership Campaign
No Senior Should Have to Worry About Running Out of Food

Behavior Goals
Participants will:
1. Become more confident in using a variety of fresh herbs to flavor food.
2. Identify one food safety practice they want to adopt or practice more often.
3. Commit to share the senior hunger campaign message with someone in their family or community.

Meeting Preparation
1. Review newsletter content. Send questions or concerns to your coordinator.
2. Select a tasting from the list of options in this guide and make it at least once before the meeting.
3. Compare local prices for fresh herbs (ready-to-eat packages of cut herbs at grocery store vs. herb plants at a garden center or store).
Conversation

Follow up to last month’s meeting (July 2019)
It was really hot in July. Who made their own flavored water to stay cool and well hydrated?

If you went to a farmer’s market to use your Senior Farmers Market Coupons, what was your favorite purchase? Did anyone buy herbs? I brought some of my favorites along today to share with you.

Physical Activity

Let’s start out our meeting today with a simple stretch. You can stand or sit for this activity. **Lead the group in a very brief stretching activity.**

Introduction

We’re going to explore how to add fresh flavors with fresh herbs. Herbs are green plants and just like other green plants they contain a variety of vitamins, minerals and plant chemicals that are good for you. And they’re low in sodium.

Nutrition Discussion

*Show display of 3 or 4 herb plants.* Provide basic information about each herb you selected. Ask participants to share how they like to use or eat each one.

Touch and smell the plant leaves.
- If you have dried forms of the herbs, pour a small amount in a dish so people can compare the smell and flavor with the fresh versions.
- Share price/cost information.
- Reminder: Senior Farmer’s Market coupons can be used to purchase herbs.

Review “Herb Tips” on page 2 of the newsletter. Pass small samples of herbs to taste. If there is time, demonstrate how to make ribbons from larger leaves (basil, sage or mint) or how to quickly remove small leaves from a stem (thyme).

Q: What’s the difference between herbs and spices?
A: I really didn’t know the answer so I thought you might be curious. Herbs come from the leafy and green part of the plant. Spices are parts of the plant other than the leafy bit such as the root, stem, bulb, bark or seeds.
Tasting Activity

Choose the option that is best for your group.

1. **Tomato and toast salad (panzella).** Refer to the photo. This is a very quick creation made from a leftover piece of toast from breakfast. It's flavored with drizzles of balsamic vinegar and olive oil, and sprinkles of salt and pepper. Add small pieces of cheese for extra flavor and protein.

2. **Watermelon salad with basil** (mint recipes available, too)

3. **Summer succotash**
   [https://www.nutritionaction.com/daily/healthy-recipes/3-summery-recipes-july-4th-cookout/](https://www.nutritionaction.com/daily/healthy-recipes/3-summery-recipes-july-4th-cookout/)

4. **Pesto.** Explain how pesto is made from basil. Taste it on a cracker. It's a good way to use up basil before it gets cold outside. (Basil is very sensitive to the cold.)

5. If you didn't taste **water flavored with herbs** in July—try it now!

6. **Herb dipping oil recipe** in newsletter. Note dipping oil suggestions below.

**Teaching tips:**

- Unless directed otherwise by a recipe, add the more delicate herbs—basil, chives, cilantro, dill leaves, parsley, and mint—a minute or two before the end of cooking or sprinkle them on the food before it's served.
- The less delicate herbs, such as oregano, rosemary, and thyme, can be added about the last 20 minutes of cooking.
- Did you grow or buy more herbs that you can use this week? Mix chopped herbs with olive oil and freeze in ice cube trays. Place herb cubes in a freezer bag and until you need them.
If you use the dipping oil recipe from the newsletter:

*It is not essential to use the exact ingredients from the newsletter’s recipe. Have a little fun and experiment! Use just one fresh herb, if you prefer.*

*Compare dried and fresh. Make a dipping oil with dried herbs and another with chopped fresh herbs.*

*Another option: Allow people at each table to make their own dipping oil, choosing the herbs they want to taste. Salt, garlic and balsamic vinegar could add extra “punch.”*

*Think through the tasting process so no one “double dips” the same piece of bread in a communal dipping bowl.*

**Be Safe This Summer**

*Review a few food safety facts from page 3 of the newsletter. Refer to the handwashing resource for more information.*

**Discuss Handwashing**

What is one of the most important thing you can do to fight food poisoning? Here are a few hints:

- It takes only 20 seconds (if you do it the right way).
- It requires only 3 ingredients.
- Anyone can do it.

*Wash your hands.* Over and over again, studies have shown that handwashing is one of the **most effective** ways to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness—including foodborne illness.

**What about Hand Sanitizers?**

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. But, if soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer.

- Hand sanitizers are **not** effective if your hands are visibly dirty.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs.
- Always use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. **Pass around sample.**

**Activity:** Note the article "When Should You Wash Your Hands" on page 3. **Individuals write down everything they touched since they left their house or apartment.** Play music and at the end of three minutes, find the person with the longest list and ask them to read it. **Give a food thermometer or herb plant as a prize.**
Take Action

Note the article, “Hidden Hunger” on page 4. Show the poster (attached) from Iowa’s Senior Hunger Campaign. Your coordinator may have rack cards to share. Radio and newspaper ads will run throughout Iowa during August and September.

Action step: How can we share this important information with family and members of our community? *As people share their ideas, make a list so you can follow up next month.*
☐ doctor bill
☐ health insurance bill
☐ rent
☐ electric bill
☐ water bill
☐ phone bill
If any money is left, buy groceries

Seniors, we can help you find a food pantry, meal delivery service or meal site near you. For help finding healthy food, dial:

2-1-1
LifeLong Links: 866-468-7887
Food Assistance Hotline: 1-855-944-FOOD (3663)
August Conversations

- Get fresh with summer herbs
- What's a safe temperature?
- Try an herb-licious recipe

When?

Where?

Contact:

Name: _________________________

Phone: ________________________

Living Your Dreams • Be Active, Be Strong

JOIN US FOR
FUN, FELLOWSHIP & FOOD

Information & resources for seniors with home & family questions
ISU AnswerLine 1-800-262-3804