



## Herbs - The Natural, delicious way to replace salt

At the first sign of frost, it's time to harvest the herbs in your garden and bring them inside to dry or freeze for later use. For people with diabetes and other restricted diets who want to reduce their reliance on salt to flavour food, herbs are the answer.



The best time to pick the herbs is on a clear day just as soon as the dew dries, but before the heat from the sun starts to dissipate the herb's natural oils. Gather the herbs in small bunches, tying the ends with kitchen string (or use a rubber band, twisted several times). Hang the herb bunches, upside down, in a dim, airy place away from any source of steam such as the kitchen stove.

Beams in a well-ventilated attic or basement, or from beams or wall pegs in any room that allows circulation between the bunches of herbs work well. You can also use standing antique drying racks, swivel towel racks, or blanket stands. Herbs leaves can also be stripped from the stems and dried in a single layer on flat drying racks available from herb shops or home-made by stretching nylon screening tightly over a wooden frame. Drying time will vary from 2 to 10 days, depending on the humidity in the air and the moisture in the herbs when they were picked. The herbs are dry when the leaves are crisp and brittle.

Once dried, store the herb leaves in tightly sealed spice jars or blend with other herbs to make your own individualized salt substitute. Here are some excellent combinations. Add the herbs in the order listed, adjusting the proportions according to your personal taste and preference. Be sure to note the date and name of the herb or herb blend on the container. Use within six months.

### Salt-Substitute Blends:

Soup Blend: basil, parsley, marjoram, thyme, savory, and bay

Salad Blend: basil, parsley, marjoram, dill, and tarragon

Fish Blend: basil, dill, fennel, savory, rosemary

Poultry Blend: sage, thyme, parsley, rosemary, basil

Pasta Blend: basil, thyme, oregano, parsley

Here's a particular favourite of ours; use it on salads, vegetables, fish, and sprinkled into baked potatoes:

2 tablespoons crushed dried basil

1 tablespoon dried dill weed

1 tablespoon crushed dried mint

1 tablespoon crushed dried tarragon

1 tablespoon crushed dried thyme

Combine all ingredients and store in a spice jar away from light; makes about 1/3 cup.

**Freezing Herbs**

The best way to freeze herbs is to lay the whole sprigs on a baking sheet. Freeze them until firm, and then package the herbs in individual self-sealing plastic bags. Use the herbs straight from the freezer as you would fresh herbs. You will notice some darkening of the colour, but the flavour will be intact.

[www.diatrofologos.com](http://www.diatrofologos.com)