The way a food looks and tastes are the main factors that determine what we like to eat. Herbs and spices provide color and flavors to foods. The terms “herbs” and “spices” are often used interchangeably and are sometimes referred to as “seasonings,” however, they are not them same.

**What’s the Difference?**

**Herbs:** Herbs are the leaves from low growing shrubs and include parsley, chives, thyme, basil, oregano, rosemary, and more. Herbs can be purchased dried or fresh. When substituting in recipes, use the ratio of 3 fresh to 1 dried.

**Spices:** Spices come from the bark, roots, buds, seeds, berry, or fruit of plants and trees. Spices include cinnamon, ginger, onion, garlic, cloves, black pepper, paprika, and more.

**Seasoning Blends:** Seasoning blends include a mixture of spices and herbs such as seasoning salt, Italian seasoning, curry, taco seasoning, and poultry seasoning.

**Rubs:** Rubs are a mixture of spices and can be wet or dry. Wet rubs usually have condiments such as mustard, ketchup, or yogurt added. They are added to meat to enhance the flavor.

**Marinades:** Marinades generally contain herbs and spices, oil, and an acid such as yogurt, citrus juice, or vinegar. They are used to tenderize meats.

**Storage Tips:**

Dried herbs and spices lose their color, flavor, and aroma over time, but do not spoil. The type of spice determines how long it can be stored.

- Whole herbs and spices can be stored longer than ground herbs and spices.
- Store spices in a cool, dry place, away from exposure to bright light, heat, moisture, and air.
- Avoid storing herbs and spices close to the stove, oven, dishwasher, or refrigerator.
**Tasty Tips:**

- If you are new to using spices and herbs, use just a little at first; you can always add spice, but it’s hard to remove it. Start with ¼ teaspoon for four servings, per pound of meat, or for two cups of liquid.

- Flavor intensity is reduced in cold dishes; therefore, more spices may be needed for the flavor to shine through.

- Fresh herbs cook differently than dried herbs. Dried herbs are best used for slow-cooking dishes such as soups and stews. Fresh herbs are best when used in fast cooking dishes or added at the end. The same is true for ground vs. whole spices; whole spices take longer to release their flavor.

- For more flavor, add spices to uncooked dishes, such as salads, several hours before serving.

- Rub leafy herbs in the palm of your hand before adding them to food to release the aroma and flavor.

- Spices such as fennel seed, cumin seed, sesame seed, and white peppercorns may be toasted to intensify their flavors. Simply add the spices to a dry, non-stick, skillet and heat until you can smell them.

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**Poultry Seasoning**

*Makes 1/3 cup*

- 3 tsp. Dry mustard
- 1 tsp. Garlic powder
- 3 tsp. Onion powder
- 1 ½ tsp. Pepper
- 1 tsp Dried thyme
- 3 tsp. Paprika
- ½ tsp. Dried basil

1. Mix together and sprinkle on poultry.

2. Cook poultry as desired (grilled, baked, etc.)

3. Store leftover seasoning in a sealed container or re-sealable plastic bag.

Source: NEP Food Preparation Manual