

In over 50 years as an adult, you will prepare over 18,250 dinners. Here are numerous ideas on how to enhance the 10-20 standard meals you prepare by using any of the more than 100 different flavorings listed. Most recipes are designed for quick preparation and can be prepared without changing your shopping habits.

In **A Busy Cook's Guide to Spices** you will see how easy it is to:

- ✦ Spice a meat or vegetable you already have on hand and prepare a meal by using one of the many Preparation Ideas listed.
- ✦ Create new taste sensations through the better knowledge and use of spices.
- ✦ Avoid running to the store by using one of the many handy substitution lists.
- ✦ Prepare foods in healthier ways.
- ✦ Know what to look for when buying produce and meats.
- ✦ Spice and distinguish among different kinds of pasta, mushrooms, beans and more.
- ✦ Correct errors in cooking without starting over.
- ✦ Mix your own spice blends for Chinese, Italian, Southwestern or other flavors.
- ✦ Dazzle friends with interesting folklore about spices and their origin and uses.
- ✦ Pick a wine to accompany your newly spiced meal.
- ✦ Use the Equivalency Charts for measuring, baking and size conversions.

Linda Murdock owns her own business and is “a busy cook.” She became interested in different spices after finding that her husband’s allergies to preservatives made using pre-packaged foods impossible. Unfortunately, she was unable to find an easy-to-use cookbook with an emphasis on which spice to use with specific foods. **A Busy Cook's Guide to Spices** is her answer to that missing link to other cookbooks. She hopes that you will agree.

Whether you are single, married, with or without children, male or female, you can use this book as a resource guide to spice up everyday meals and create new taste sensations.

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Corn

Benefits: Very low in sodium, high in carbohydrates

Seasonings to use with corn:

Anise	Chives	Onion/Scallion
Basil	Cream & Milk	Paprika
Butter/Margarine	Cumin	Pepper, Bell-red
Cayenne-red pepper flakes	Curry Powder	Pepper, Chile
Cheese	Garlic	Rosemary
Chervil	Lemon Juice	Saffron
Chili Powder	Marjoram	Thyme

How to Cook:

Soak corn on the cob in its husk for 15 minutes in cool water before grilling; or boil 9 minutes without salt or husk; or microwave 2 cobs without husks in a little water for 6-8 minutes.

Use a clean shoe horn to remove corn from the cob.

3 ears of corn = 2 cups of kernels

Bourbon is corn whiskey that has been aged four years or more.

Buying Guide:

Check for freshness by pricking a kernel to see if it bleeds milky drops. Choose cobs with pale yellow kernels. Dark kernels indicate age and toughness.

Preparation Ideas:

Baked Corn: Add 4 crumbled crackers to 1 beaten egg, 1 cup grated cheese, a pat of butter, ½ cup milk, paprika and 1 can of corn. Bake 30 minutes at 400°.

Spicy Hot Corn Chowder: Stir-fry a diced potato and a diced carrot for 5 minutes in margarine. Add 4 chopped scallions, 2 diced celery stalks and ½ tsp red pepper flakes and stir-fry 10 minutes longer until potato is tender. Add 2 8-oz cans of corn or cooked frozen kernels. Add 3 cups milk, black pepper and marjoram. Add ½-¾ cup diced ham or sausage. Put half of the mixture in a blender and then return it to the pan. Cook covered on low for 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Add arrowroot to thicken, if needed. Grate cheese over the top. You can also thicken enough to use as a sauce over pasta.

Creamy Cheesy Corn: Sauté 1 medium chopped onion and a diced red pepper and add 2½ cups corn. When heated add ½ cup milk, ½ cup heavy cream and ¼ tsp black pepper. Cook until thick. Cover and cook low 10 more minutes. Add 6 oz grated Fontina cheese. Spice with ½ tsp curry powder.

Cream corn was once a blend of corn, butter and cream. Now there is no dairy and the juice is thickened with starch.

Eat corn on the cob with butter, salt and pepper. Instead of butter, sprinkle each ear with salt, chile pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Corn can be used instead of beans for **burritos**. Cook ground beef, spice it with cayenne, cumin, oregano and lots of chili powder. Drain grease and add cooked rice (instant for speed), salsa and a can of corn. Stuff a steamed tortilla, melt cheese over it with cut tomatoes or lettuce.

Bay Leaf



Flavor/Taste:

Slightly bitter, usually not eaten; dominant flavor

Use:

Use SPARINGLY, 2-3 leaves for 4 servings or 1 leaf per quart.

Remove before serving.

Add at the BEGINNING, heat and moisture increases flavor, as does cutting it. Overuse can cause bitterness.

Use with gumbo, stews, white sauces, soups and marinades.

Mix with:

- Allspice • Garlic • Mustard • Parsley
- Fennel • Lemon Juice • Orange • Thyme

Color & Form:

Whole light green dried leaves or more flavorful fresh leaves

• Historical Remedies •

Internally:

Coughs
Cramps
High blood pressure
Sedative

Externally:

In a tea for dandruff

• Origin •

Bay leaf is from a small laurel tree. It is native to Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. Most leaves now come from California.

• Folklore/History •

Bay leaf is also known as **sweet laurel**.

When Cupid hit Apollo with an arrow, making him fall for Daphne, she begged the gods to change her into something else—a laurel tree. In honor of Daphne, Apollo decreed that laurel leaves be a sign of courage or accomplishment, thus “to win one’s laurels” refers to public recognition.

A wreath of laurels, known for its medicinal values, was given to doctors at graduation. Thus from *bacca lauris* comes “baccalaureate degree” and the term “bachelor’s degree,” a person too busy with his studies to marry.