

# NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

## Finding the 'thyme' for herbs and spices (March 4, 2024)

by Mary-Catherine Paden, Tulare County Master Food Preserver

Homemade seasoning mixes, herbs, and spices are undoubtedly the unsung heroes of the culinary world, adding a delightful array of flavors and aromas to our food.

Incredibly, these preserved foods originate fresh from plants like leaves, stems, seeds, and roots. After harvesting, the herbs and spices are packaged into air-tight containers and bags, and various techniques are used to preserve their flavors, such as drying, granulating, and blending.

At the grocery store, the spice aisle is a vast and exciting place to find new flavors. Each culture has its own favorite spices, and trying something new can be a fantastic adventure. Although you can see many fresh herbs and spices in the grocery store's produce section, most are packaged and preserved for longer shelf life.

When it comes to using herbs and spices in cooking, many home cooks rely on spice packets, which often contain hidden ingredients or additives that can be challenging to pronounce. Making your own seasoning blend is a fun and creative way to experiment with different spices to avoid confusion and ensure you're using only the ingredients you like.

Mixing spices is an art, with the freedom to add more or less of any ingredient. In the kitchen, there are no rules, and you can tailor the spice blends to your liking. If you find a blend too salty, you can add less salt, or if you want more spice, you can add more chili flakes. It's all up to you!

Making a batch of your favorite spice blends and sharing them with friends and neighbors is an excellent way to show them you care. Packaging a spice blend in a cute little jar with a ribbon and a tag with the name and contents, along with a recipe that uses it (or a finished dish that includes it), can make a great hostess or holiday gift, housewarming present, or even a party favor. Gifts from the kitchen are unique and special because of the love and care that goes into them, and the personal touch is priceless.

Here are two recipes you can try to get your feet wet. Feel free to let us know what you think of them.

Master Food Preservers are here to help you with food preservation needs, and you can reach us by emailing [MFPTulare@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:MFPTulare@tularecounty.ca.gov) or calling us during our office hours, 9:30 am – 11:30 am every Friday (second Friday of the month 11:30 am – 1:30 pm), at 559-684-3326.

You can also meet us in person at the Visalia Farmers' Market every third Saturday of the month. We can't wait to meet you, learn about the food projects you're working on, and share information to help!

### Recipes

#### Homemade Bouillon Powder

Homemade bouillon powder is great for all sorts of recipes. Use it to make quick, flavorful broth when cooking soups, stews, grains, and risotto. This blend will introduce depth of flavor to your cooking. This homemade version is easy to make without artificial flavors or ingredients.

Published by 101 Cookbooks

Recipe by Heidi Swanson

Prep Time: 5 mins, Total Time: 5 mins, Yield: 12 Tablespoons, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cup

#### Ingredients

1/2 cup nutritional yeast

1/2 tablespoon fine-grain sea salt

3 tablespoons dried minced onion or 1 tablespoon onion powder

1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric

3/4 teaspoon dried oregano

3/4 teaspoon dried thyme

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

#### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a blender, and pulse until everything is finely ground and powdery, about a minute or more if needed.

Store in a cool, dry place in a small jar or air-tight container.

To ensure freshness, store for three months and always check the expiration dates of the individual spice jars, using the most recent and shortest date available.



**Usage**

Use 1 tablespoon of bouillon powder in place of one bouillon cube; for example, if a recipe calls for two bouillon cubes, use two tablespoons of this powder.

<https://www.101cookbooks.com/homemade-bouillon-powder/#recipe>

**Homemade Taco Seasoning**

Published by Curious Cuisenaire

Recipe by Sarah, published July 14, 2021

Prep Time: 5 mins, Total Time: 5 mins, Yield: Roughly 1 cup of seasoning

**Ingredients**

¼ cup + 2 Tbsp chili powder

3 Tablespoons cumin

2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour (or 1:1 gluten-free flour)

1 Tablespoon salt

1 Tablespoon paprika

1 ½ teaspoons garlic powder

1 ½ teaspoons onion powder

1 ½ teaspoons red pepper flakes

1 ½ teaspoons dried oregano

1 ½ teaspoons ground black pepper

**Directions**

In a small bowl, mix all the ground spices until well combined.

Store in a cool, dry place in a small jar or air-tight container.

To ensure freshness, store for three months and always check the expiration dates of the individual spice jars, using the most recent and shortest date available.

**To Use For Seasoning Meat**

Mix 3 Tbsp of taco seasoning with 1 lb. of browned meat in a large skillet.

Add ½ c water and simmer over medium heat until the water evaporates.

Serve with your favorite Mexican recipe!

<https://www.curiouscuisiniere.com/basic-taco-seasoning/>