



Foods of the Month
Fun, Experiential Activities

Fresh Herbs & Spices

Grades 3-5



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Fun Ways to COOK WITH HERBS

Salads

sage, lemon balm, violets, mint, anise hyssop, nasturtiums, borage flowers, rosemary

Soups, Stews and Sauces

curry, cumin, rosemary, thyme, oregano, nettles, calendula, alfalfa and dandelion

Ice Cream

lavender, rose petals, lemon balm, mint

Edible Decorations

pansies, violets, borage flowers, nasturtiums, chives and the tiny flowers of rosemary, sage and lavender

Hot Chocolate

ginger, cinnamon and cardamom

Lemonade

Lavender, ginger, rose petal

Baking

cinnamon, ginger, cloves, allspice, nutmeg, cardamom, rosemary, sage, oregano, thyme and even lavender

Dips

cilantro, basil, chives, parsley

Smoothies and Popsicles

chamomile, lemon balm, mint, hibiscus and elderberry

Hot Apple Cider

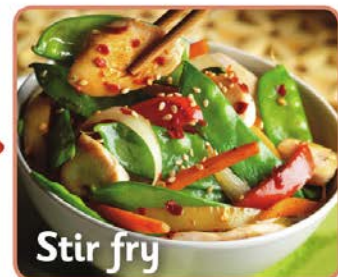
cinnamon, ginger, cloves, allspice and orange peel

Infusions

lemon balm, mint, elderberry, rose, chamomile, lycium berry, nettle, oatstraw, hibiscus, violet, and calendula



Can you label the spices correctly?



cinnamon

vanilla

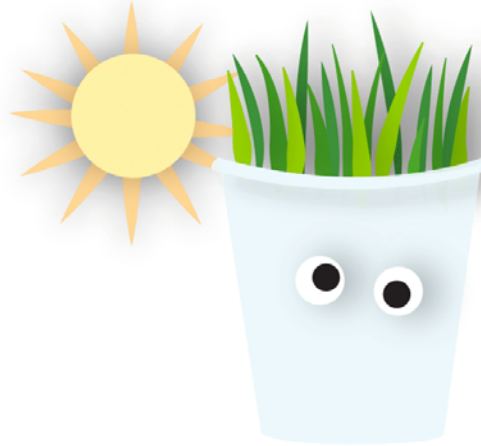
chilli flakes

ginger

Mr. Herb Head

Collect:

- Plastic Cup
- Scissors
- Nylon pantyhose or tights
- Soil
- Herb seeds - try chive, lavender, or chia seeds
- Decorations (googly eyes, pom-poms, foam stickers)



Prep your planter

1. Take an old pair of nylon pantyhose or tights and cut the end off around the knee. Keep the part with the enclosed toe and dispose of the rest.
2. Stretch the open part of the pantyhose around the lip of the cup so that the toe end hangs into the cup. This will hold the pantyhose open.

Plant your seeds.

3. Sprinkle a teaspoon of seeds into the toe end. Fill the rest of the pantyhose with dirt until you reach the top of the cup.
4. Pull the pantyhose off of the cup. Press the dirt down into the toe of the pantyhose to form a firm ball and tie it off by making a knot close to the dirt with the remaining material. Trim off the excess a couple inches from the knot.
5. Turn the plastic cup into a holder by placing your herb head inside with the seed part facing up and the knot side touching the bottom of the cup.
6. Cut around the top of the cup so that your herb head sticks out above the rim.
7. Soak your herb head so that it is thoroughly wet, but not muddy.
8. Decorate your herb head!

Take care of your herb head!

9. Place your herb head in a nice sunny spot.
10. Keep a little water at the bottom of the cup at all times, and sprinkle the top of the herb head every day with a little bit of water. It will take up to a week to start growing.
11. Observe how the seeds sprout and grow. Give your herb head a hair cut if you want to use edible sprouts in a food dish!

How does it work?

Seeds need water, light, and soil to germinate and grow. Without all of these, seeds stay dormant and do not grow. Most of the herb head's water comes from the bottom of the cup. The excess pantyhose touches the water and acts as a wick to pull the water up into the soil.
















Smelling Spices

Talk with students about how difficult it is to describe what something smells like, and how we often say what something actually is, rather what it smells like. Think about food such as 'cheese', 'oranges', 'onions' and 'garlic'. Ask students to come up with any words to describe the smell of these foods, *other than the names of the foods themselves*. You will find that they are more likely to say an orange smells of 'orange' etc. The same is true when smelling spices. We are much more likely to say cinnamon smells of 'cinnamon' if asked to describe it. There are, however, some words in the English language that we can use to help us describe how something.


Prepare group sets of spices in spice bags or similar and label A-E etc. Tell the children that they are going to put their noses to the test and see if they can recognize, and describe, a selection of secret spices. Ask the children to take turns, or work as a group, to complete the smelling spices sheet as they go.

- Can they guess which spice is which? Discuss findings.
- Before revealing the correct order, ask the children if it was easier or harder than they thought it would be, and also which smell they preferred and least preferred.
- Ask if they have every tried any of these spices.

Can you guess the name of the spice using your sense of smell?

| | Name of spice | Description of smell <small>Does it smell like something else you know?</small> | Foods in which this spice may be used |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Spice A |  |  |  |
| Spice B |  |  |  |
| Spice C |  |  |  |
| Spice D |  |  |  |
| Spice E |  |  |  |

nutty woody peppery fruity smoky sharp sweet sour
 fragrant flowery spicy earthy lemony strong light minty
 pungent fresh clean citrusy scented musky pleasant

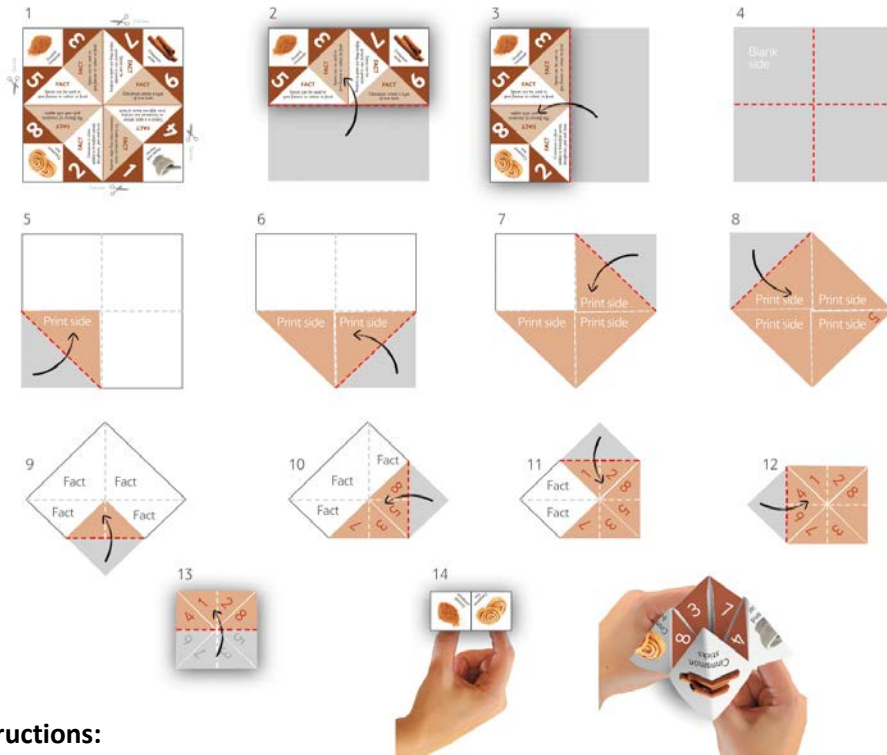


Spicy Fortune Teller

Print out pages 2 & 3 and follow the below instructions for a fun way to learn more about two popular spices – pepper & cinnamon!

Folding Instructions:

1. Trim around the printed area so it is a square.
 2. Have the printed side facing towards you and fold in half along the central lines.
 3. Then open again and fold in half the other way.
 4. Open up and have the printed side face down on the table.
 - 5-8. Fold over each corner to the middle. The printed side will now be seen.
 9. Turn over so the folded corners are on the bottom (you will see the facts now).
 - 10-12. Fold the corners into the middle again, making a smaller square. You will see the numbers.
 - 13-14. Fold in half and press down along the folds, you will see the pictures.
- *It is ready for you to put your fingers in it and start playing!







Playing Instructions:

- Play with another person (one will work the fortune teller, one will do the choosing)
- Put your thumbs and pointer fingers in the opening at the bottom of the fortune teller, making sure they are up in the corners. To move the fortune teller, move your fingers up and down, then out and in.
- The “chooser” picks a one of the four pictures. Then move the puzzle to spell out the name of the picture, one letter at a time.
- Pick a number, move the puzzle the corresponding number of times.
- Pick another number. Reveal and read the information inside.





PEPPER

✂ Cut along dotted lines

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
|  <p>Pepper vine leaves</p> | <p>3</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Vietnam produces more black pepper than any other country</p> | <p>7</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Around the world, pepper is the most commonly used spice</p> |  <p>Pepper vine fruits</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Black pepper is the dried fruit of a flowering vine</p> | <p>3</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Vietnam produces more black pepper than any other country</p> | <p>7</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Around the world, pepper is the most commonly used spice</p> | <p>6</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Black, white and green peppercorns all come from the same pepper plant</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>The chemical that makes peppercorns spicy is called piperine</p> | <p>2</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Pepper has been used in cooking for over 2000 years</p> | <p>4</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Pepper can be added to savoury or sweet dishes</p> | <p>4</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Pepper can be added to savoury or sweet dishes</p> |
|  <p>Ground pepper</p> | <p>2</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Pepper has been used in cooking for over 2000 years</p> | <p>1</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Black pepper is a good source of calcium, iron and copper</p> |  <p>A pepper grinder</p> |

CINNAMON

✂ Cut along dotted lines

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  <p>Ground cinnamon</p> | <p>3</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Many spices come from Asia or Africa</p> | <p>7</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Spices can be ground into a powder before they are used in cooking</p> |  <p>Cinnamon sticks</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Spices can be used to give flavour or colour to food</p> | <p>FACT</p> <p>Cinnamon comes from the inside layer of the bark of a cinnamon tree</p> | <p>6</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Cassia is a spice similar to Cinnamon but coming from different kinds of bark</p> | <p>4</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Sri Lanka produces more cinnamon than any other country</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>The flavour of cinnamon goes well with apples</p> | <p>2</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Cinnamon is often added to breakfast cereal, doughnuts, pies and buns</p> | <p>1</p> <p>FACT</p> <p>Cinnamon is often added to breakfast cereal, doughnuts, pies and buns</p> |  <p>Pestle and Mortar</p> |
|  <p>Cinnamon bun</p> | | | |

Fragrant Spices - spicy fact cards

LESSON ACTIVITY Age group: 7 - 11 years

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Farm to Fork
— Online Field Trips —

Cut along dotted lines

Ginger



Originates from Southern China

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Root |
| What does it look like? | Pale brown and knobbly |
| Example dish which includes it | Gingerbread |
| What does it taste like? | Pungent and tangy |
| Fun fact | The ginger plant produces pink buds and yellow flowers |

Turmeric



Originates from South Western India

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Root |
| What does it look like? | A stubby yellow carrot |
| Example dish which includes it | Lamb tagine |
| What does it taste like? | Like bitter oranges |
| Fun fact | Turmeric is used to add extra colour to mustard products |

Galangal



Originates from Indonesia

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Root |
| What does it look like? | Like ginger, but whiter & shinier |
| Example dish which includes it | Tom Yum soup |
| What does it taste like? | Like ginger, but hotter |
| Fun fact | Galangal looks like ginger but is much spicier |

Liquorice



Originates from Southern Europe

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Root |
| What does it look like? | Greyish wooden sticks |
| Example dish which includes it | Pontefract cakes |
| What does it taste like? | Bitter and salty |
| Fun fact | In some countries raw liquorice root is chewed as a breath freshener |

Fragrant Spices - spicy fact cards

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Farm to Fork
— Online Field Trips —

Cut along dotted lines

Horseradish



Originates from South Eastern Europe

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Root |
| What does it look like? | A thick white carrot |
| Example dish which includes it | Horseradish sauce and roast beef |
| What does it taste like? | Hot and peppery |
| Fun fact | Horseradish root has no smell, it only smells when you grate or crush it |

Black Pepper



Originates from Southern India

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| What part of the plant is it? | Fruit |
| What does it look like? | Small, round pellets |
| Example dish which includes it | Pepper steak |
| What does it taste like? | Smoky and woody |
| Fun fact | Pepper is the most widely used spice in the world |

Cardamom



Originates from Southern Asia

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Fruit or seeds |
| What does it look like? | Green, triangular pods and small black seeds |
| Example dish which includes it | Masala curry |
| What does it taste like? | Cool and smoky |
| Fun fact | Cardamom is known as the "queen of spices" |

Nutmeg



Originates from Indonesia

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| What part of the plant is it? | Fruit |
| What does it look like? | A round nut |
| Example dish which includes it | Pumpkin pie |
| What does it taste like? | Sweet and nutty |
| Fun fact | Nutmeg is sometimes used as an ingredient in toothpaste |

Fragrant Spices - spicy fact cards

LESSON ACTIVITY Age group: 7-11 years

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Farm to Fork
— Online Field Trips —

Cut along dotted lines

Mace



Originates from Indonesia

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| What part of the plant is it? | Fruit |
| What does it look like? | Red string |
| Example dish which includes it | Doughnuts |
| What does it taste like? | Fruity and flowery |
| Fun fact | Mace is the peel from nutmeg |

Vanilla



Originates from Central America

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Fruit |
| What does it look like? | Long, thin, black pods |
| Example dish which includes it | Ice cream |
| What does it taste like? | Smooth and smoky |
| Fun fact | Vanilla was not brought to the UK until the 1600's |

Saffron



Originates from South West Asia

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| What part of the plant is it? | Part of the flower |
| What does it look like? | Delicate red strands |
| Example dish which includes it | Saffron risotto |
| What does it taste like? | Grassy honey |
| Fun fact | Saffron is the most expensive spice in the world |

Cloves



Originate from Indonesia

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| What part of the plant is it? | Flower |
| What does it look like? | A very small torch |
| Example dish which includes it | Pilau rice |
| What does it taste like? | Warm and sweet |
| Fun fact | Cloves are flower buds from a tree |

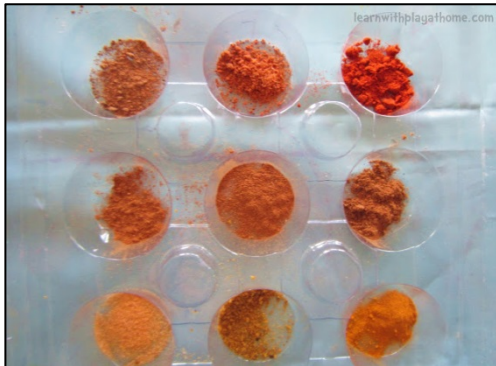
“Spicy” Painting

Materials: Spices & Seasonings, water, paintbrush, containers for paint, paper

Directions:

Before adding any water to the seasoning and spices, let the children smell them all and talk about what they could smell.

1. Put a small amount of each powder into containers.



Spices/seasonings pictured here are:

Top left across: Nutmeg, Tandoori Seasoning & Smoked Paprika
Middle row from left: Mixed Spice, Ground Cinnamon & Chinese Five Spice
Bottom row from left: Chicken Salt, Moroccan Seasoning & Turmeric

2. Mix a small amount of water into each (less water gives stronger colors)
3. You're ready to paint!

Talk about any different textures you see. Some dissolve well and others are still a little grainy.



Handy Tips:

- **Simplify** this for younger children by letting them paint with their fingers. Just ensure that none of the seasonings or spices are too hot or spicy in case your little one just has to have a taste. You will also need to make sure they don't rub any in their eyes.

- **Extend** this by challenging older kids to try to match the made up seasoning/spice paint to the original dried seasoning/spice.

Adapted from: <http://www.learnwithplayathome.com/2012/08/painting-with-seasoning-and-spices.html>



Foods of the Month
Fun, Experiential Activities

Salad Greens

Grades 3-5



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Grow Your Own Salad!

Celebrate **National Garden Month** with a fun way to try a Food of the Month - Salad Greens!

Materials:

- Seeds (quick-growing greens like arugula)
- Growing containers (recycle household containers)
- Potting soil
- Window that gets a lot of sunshine!

Instructions:

1. Translucent clamshell boxes used to package gourmet salad greens make ideal containers for growing lettuce indoors. To get the boxes ready for duty, use the tip of a stout knife to make 8 or 9 gashes in the bottom of each one (adults only, please).
2. Have the students add 2 inches of moist potting soil before planting a pinch (about 25) of lettuce seeds, barely covering them with soil. Because the seeds greens are so small, you may want to help young children with this step.
3. Generously spritz the surface with water from a pump-spray bottle and put on the container tops. (Consider putting something under your garden in case water runs through the holes in the bottom – but it shouldn't, really, since you are suppose to spritz the surface, not pour water on it.)
4. Place the containers in your window and keep the seeds and soil moist. Make sure to rotate the pots every couple of days since one side of the plants will be getting more light exposure.
5. Five days later, when the seeds are up and growing, remove the container tops and place them under the boxes, so they become watering trays. The soil usually stays nicely moist if you fill the trays with water every day. The soil will absorb the water from the trays through the slits in the bottom of the container.
6. It should be time to start harvesting in 3 to 4 weeks (leaves should be a few inches tall). Remind your young gardeners that you won't be growing full heads of lettuce like the ones you buy at the store. The idea is to harvest a few leaves at a time from each plant and then let them grow again. That way, the plants won't take up too much space and you'll get multiple harvests.
7. Harvesting is easy. Using scissors simply cut the greens 1 inch above the soil line, leaving a few larger leaves in the center to keep plants healthy. By holding the boxes sideways, you can clip the leaves right into a colander. Lettuce, spinach and mesclun greens will grow back to yield another harvest in a couple of weeks. After a few harvests the plant stems may get thick and the leaves may remain small. This indicates it's time to compost the potting mix and roots, and start over.
8. Depending on the size and number of containers planted, your harvest may continue for many weeks.
9. For fun, purchase a package of store-bought greens and do a blind taste test against your homegrown greens. See if your young gardeners can tell the two apart.



“Lettuce” Paint!

Materials:

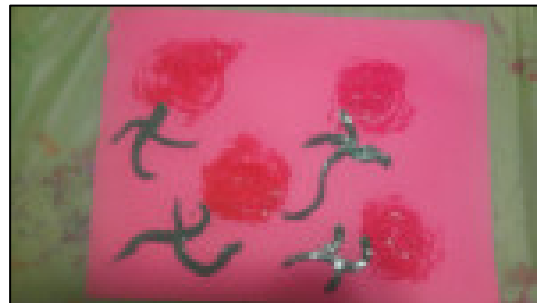
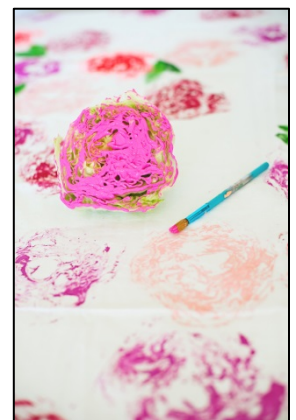
Romaine or iceberg lettuce, paper plates, paints, paintbrushes, paper

Directions:

Trim the end off of romaine lettuce, cut about 3 inches from the end. Or cut a head of iceberg lettuce in half. You will use these parts to make the flowers/design. Put paint colors of your choice on paper plate. Either use a paintbrush to put the paint on the lettuce, or dip the lettuce in paint, making sure not to get too much on.

Stamp flowers or designs on your paper. If you rinse off the lettuce right away, you can use the same stump for different colors. Try twisting the lettuce for different effects. You can also make smaller flowers by removing a layer. Or use a single piece of lettuce dipped in paint to make different, free-hand designs, or for the stems and leaves.

Make a banner for the classroom or think ahead to Mother’s Day and make cards!





Foods of the Month Experiential Activities

April is National Garden Month!

Thirty years ago, the National Garden Bureau worked with 23 co-sponsoring national horticultural organizations to legislate *National Garden Week*. Former President Ronald Reagan signed the Proclamation on April 18, 1986, creating National Garden Week. It was then first celebrated the following year on April 12-18, 1987.

In 2002, the National Gardening Association wanted and worked to extend the celebration to encompass the entire month of April. National Garden Month was celebrated for the first time in 2003.

Now, every April communities, organizations, and individuals nationwide celebrate gardening during National Garden Month. Gardeners know, and research confirms, that nurturing plants is good for us: attitudes toward health and nutrition improve, kids perform better at school, and community spirit grows. Join the celebration and help to make America a greener, healthier, more livable place!

Visit www.nationalgardenmonth.org for celebration ideas, educational activities, projects, gardening tips and a list of gardening events in your area.

Source: <http://www.nationalgardenmonth.org/>





Foods of the Month Experiential Activities

Ripening Science

Materials:

- Lettuce leaves
- Apple
- Two brown paper bags

Directions:

- Take some lettuce leaves and place them in two brown paper bags. Add an apple to one bag. Leave them at least 24 hours.
- Before opening the bags, have students predict what might have occurred in each bag.
- What happened to the lettuce with and without an apple?
- Older students can research fruit and vegetable ripening and determine the best way to store leafy greens based on the results.

Adapted from: <https://georgiaorganics.org/lettucetryit/lessons>



National Recreation
and Park Association

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