

AWESOME Cookery's Flavor Spectrum---from Base to Bright

1) Onions, Carrots and Celery

They are the Holy Trinity of base flavor, used in nearly all stocks and soups.

These three are referred to as the 'aromatic vegetables' and as 'mirepoix'.

Carrots and Celery are part of the same family.

Even if you don't like celery, you should still cook with it!!

2) Garlic and Shallots

Both important in creating base flavor.

Both are part of the onion family.

Add early in the cooking for depth, add at the end for more prominent flavor.

Even granulated garlic can help, the flavor holds up.

Roasting makes them sweet, adds another dimension to a dish.

3) Black and White Pepper

Black Pepper is picked unripe, and is a common seasoning used especially with meats and stocks.

White pepper is picked ripened but the hull removed. Also used in many foods, and used in light colored dishes as it won't be seen. Some say it has a milder flavor, due to the absence of the outer layer of skin that is on black pepper.

Numerous kinds of peppercorns are available, with pungent and fruity flavors.

4) Red Pepper/Cayenne and Paprika

Cayenne in tiny amounts adds depth and a little warmth, and a flavor that blends well without changing anything.

Paprika adds a distinct flavor, but in strong flavored dishes can add much depth.

5) Nutmeg

It enhances all flavors, and is extremely versatile in both sweet and savory dishes.

Used in a wide range of dishes: Mexican, Mediterranean, Italian, Caribbean.

It's slangily referred to as the "Italian MSG".

Parsley, Nutmeg and Garlic are three of my most-often used seasonings.

6) Parsley

It wins 'The Most Versatile Herb' award in my world.

Parsley adds depth to anything without changing its direction or its color.

Parsley and Celery are considered "bitters", both are very handy in adding depth.

Add early in a dish for more subtle base flavor, later for a more uplifting punch. Use it fresh.

7) Other Green Herbs

Green leaf herbs can help add depth when added early.

They add a lively flavor when added at the end of a dish.

Dried herbs are more concentrated and are probably better used for base flavors, fresh herbs still have their volatile oils which give them their punch.

8) Salt

Salt is extremely important for flavor enhancement, also necessary to live!

Real Salt and sea salt have more minerals and flavor.

Kosher Salt is lower in sodium per teaspoon because of the large flakes, which is also easy to handle with fingers.

Many, many other kinds of salts are available, including smoked salt and hand harvested salt.

9) Tamari

It adds salt, and also a depth of the fermented soy.

In delicate flavored dishes, the soy can overpower all flavors.

10) Ginger

A rhizome used in Asian and Indian dishes, can help add warmth, depth and brightness

It can be used in both savory and sweet dishes.

11) Mustard

Dried or prepared, it adds brightness.

There is a distinct flavor so be careful of its use.

12) Lemon Zest

It adds a bit of the lemon oil, giving additional brightness and a tiny bit of bitter.

It can work to liven pilafs, baked goods, meat and poultry.

Use only the yellow parts, not the white.

13) Lemon/Lime Juice

The flavor and the aroma brighten and liven everything.

The acids help break down tissue, beginning the cooking process.

Add to a pot roast at the beginning to help with tenderness and flavor.

Add at the end of any dish for an uplifting effect.

14) Wine/Brandy

They have similar uses to citrus.

They're great flavoring for soups, sauces, desserts, entrees.

They should be cooked or simmered to eliminate most alcohol in cooking process.

If you wouldn't drink it, don't cook with it. Use a decent quality beverage.

Deglaze with them.

- Deglaze means to douse a saute pan with wine after you have removed the meat, but with the heat still on. This will loosen the tasty meat residuals. The alcohol will mostly evaporate, leaving a lovely sludge packed with flavor.

15) Vinegars

Vinegars are used like citrus and wine, to brighten and liven.

Their flavors can be powerful, so add vinegar in small amounts, and always taste!

They are great in beans, stews (red wine or cider), potato salad (cider), blanched vegetable salads

(wine, cider or balsamic), pot roast, tomato sauce (red wine or balsamic).

Balsamic vinegar can be reduced to a syrup---a great addition to salads or vegetables.

I will also add links to the posts about the Flavor Spectrum as they happen.