

# Parsley, Sage, Rosemary &

# Thyme

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Recipes by Culinary Team Saskatchewan

## Fresh is Best

The freshest herbs come right from the garden into the kitchen. Saskatchewan greenhouses carry more varieties of herbs every year as the trend to grow and use herbs increases. Another source of fresh herbs is the local farmers' market. You may also buy them from a local grower. See the side bar for a listing of Saskatchewan growers who supply fresh herbs to the retail market.

As I write, the words to Paul Simon's *Scarborough Fair* run through my mind... "Are you going to Scarborough Fair... parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme..." These are just a few of the great culinary herbs that are available fresh for us to enjoy. And fresh is the key. We all probably have a bottle or two of dried herbs that have been around too long and now resemble dusty, musty artifacts that were unearthed from an archeological dig. Although dried herbs are quite acceptable, fresh is best in most recipes. Dried herbs and spices do lose flavour over time. The best test is to simply smell and taste the dried herbs -- if they do not have any 'zip', it is time to get a new bottle.

### Cooking with Fresh Herbs

The challenge for most people is what to do with the fresh herbs once they have been purchased or grown. There are lots of recipes that use fresh herbs but if you want to experiment with flavours some helpful hints include:

- Tasting the herb. First take a leaf and smell. Then, as you eat the herb, breathe in through your mouth and out through your nose, just as you would do to sample a wine. This will really help you taste the flavour of the herb. As you taste, think of foods that might go well with this flavour:

- Adding herbs to a bland food like potatoes, sour cream or rice. This is a safe way to start and it allows the intensity of the herb to stand on its own. It will help you to know how much of the herb to add to get the desired flavour:

- Pairing herbs with food. Sage with turkey or chicken stuffing, rosemary and thyme with meat, basil with tomatoes, mint with tea or lemonade, lemon flavours with chicken or iced tea, dill with cucumbers or new potatoes, cilantro with Mexican flavours, and parsley with just about anything are all tried and true flavour combinations that you can build on.

- Don't be afraid to experiment. Start with one or two herbs in a recipe and then build from there.

Three of my favourite culinary herbs, the ones I use fresh most often, are chives, basil and cilantro. They are all easy to grow and add a lot of flavour to my cooking.

### Chives

One of the first hopeful signs of spring at my home is the chives by the back door poking through the ground. It is always the first herb to appear and is the first one from the garden to make its way to the kitchen. I love growing chives as they are so hardy and the purple flower heads are not only pretty but edible too. It is easy to use chives: simply chop the stems and add to salads, season grilled meats and egg salad sandwiches or mix with sour cream to dress baked potatoes or garnish soups.



### Cilantro

Is it cilantro or coriander? Let's clear this up right away... cilantro refers to the leaf and coriander to the seed. They have similar flavours but are used differently in the kitchen. The cilantro leaf is an acquired taste for some people, but I like it. I often add it to Mexican or Tex-Mex recipes, especially soups and guacamoles. If you are growing it yourself, be sure to remove the flower heads as soon as they appear. Once the flower heads are established the plant starts to set seeds and then finishes its life cycle. Cilantro grows quickly and should reseed itself each year.



### Basil

Without a doubt, basil is one of the most popular herbs and my personal favourite. It grows relatively quickly, comes in diverse colours and flavours including sweet, dark opal, lemon and cinnamon. If you are growing your own basil, it is important to harvest it on a continual basis. Basil, like cilantro, will start to flower in the summer heat. Once the plant begins to flower it concentrates on flowering and not on producing leaves. Flower heads should be trimmed off to encourage leaf growth resulting in a bigger, bushier basil plant.



### Savoury Turkey with Pasta

1 lb	ground turkey	500 g
½ tsp	fresh chopped dill	2 mL
½ tsp	fresh chopped thyme	2 mL
	dash red pepper flakes	dash
	fresh cracked pepper	
	and salt to taste	
½ cup	butter	125 mL
2 cups	julienne vegetables	500 mL
½ tsp	garlic, minced	2 mL
2 cups	tomato juice	500 mL
4 cups	cooked pasta	1 L
	(your favourite)	

In a mixing bowl add turkey, dill, thyme and pepper flakes. Mix well and add the salt and pepper to taste. After the mixture is well mixed, shape into small pieces and set aside. In a non-stick frying pan melt the butter and cook all the turkey pieces until golden brown. Add your favourite julienne vegetables and sauté until the vegetables are almost cooked. Add the garlic and continue to cook for only one minute. Add the tomato juice and let simmer for a couple of minutes. Add in the cooked pasta and let simmer until the pasta is warm.  
Yield 4 servings.



### Saskatchewan Pulse Salad

½ cup	red lentils	125 mL
½ cup	chickpeas	125 mL
½ cup	split green peas	125 mL
1 each	red pepper;	1
	yellow pepper;	
	long English cucumber;	
	purple onion,	
	large dice - julienne cut	
1 cup	feta cheese,	250 mL
	crumbled	
1 head	butter lettuce,	1
	shaved	

Soak chickpeas overnight in 2 cups (250 mL) water. Drain, add 1½ cups (375 mL) water and cook until tender (2½ hours). Cook split peas in 1 cup (250 mL) water and cook until tender; about 40-45 minutes. Drain and rinse. Cook lentils in 1 cup (250 mL) water until tender; about 30 minutes. Drain and rinse. Prepare vinaigrette.

### Herb Vinaigrette

1 tsp	fresh chopped basil	5 mL
1 tsp	fresh chopped cilantro	5 mL
½ cup	canola oil	125 mL
¼ cup	balsamic vinegar	50 mL
½ tsp	fresh ground pepper	2 mL
1 Tbsp	chopped garlic	15 mL

Place all ingredients in an airtight container and shake well for 30 seconds. Place all salad ingredients in a large bowl and toss with vinaigrette to mix well.  
Yield 4-6 servings.



### Crusted Elk Loin with Grilled Portabella

4 lb	elk striploin	2 kg
½ cup	chopped garlic	125 mL
	salt and pepper	to taste
2 Tbsp	Dijon mustard	25 mL
½ cup	canola oil	125 mL
2 cups	toasted bread crumbs	500 mL
	Assorted herbs (thyme, oregano, tarragon, etc.)	
2 cups	finely chopped sautéed onions	500 mL
1 Tbsp	fresh ground ginger	15 mL
1 Tbsp	salt	15 mL
½ cup	melted butter	125 mL

Cut sliver of skin off the striploin. Rub meat with chopped garlic, salt and pepper. Let meat absorb the rub for approximately 1 hour in fridge. Brush Dijon mustard on one side of the elk. Sear loin in hot oil on all sides. Mix bread crumbs, herbs, sautéed onions, ginger, salt and melted butter. Crumb should be moist. Add a little more melted butter if it seems to be dry. Spread crumb mixture on one side. Roast at 350°F (180°C) for 45 minutes. This will be medium rare - cook 75 minutes for well done.

Yield 6 servings.

### Wild Mushroom Sauce

½ cup	canola oil	125 mL
¼ cup	chopped garlic	50 mL
6	Portobello mushrooms	6

Mix oil and garlic. Baste mushrooms and grill for 5 minutes each side. Serve with elk loin.

### Chicken with Lemon and Herbs

4 Tbsp	butter	50 mL
½ cup	chopped white onion	125 mL
1 Tbsp	chopped fresh basil	15 mL
1 Tbsp	chopped fresh fennel	15 mL
⅓ cup	lemon juice	75 mL
4	chicken breasts	4
	salt and pepper	to taste

Preheat broiler. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Add onion, herbs, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Brush chicken breasts generously with herb mixture. Broil 10 to 12 minutes, basting frequently with herb mixture. Turn chicken breasts and baste again. Cook another 10 to 12 minutes or until chicken juices run clear. Serve garnished with lemon and herbs and with any remaining herb mixture.

Yield 4 servings.

### Barbecue Steelhead Trout

6	steelhead trout steaks 8 oz (200g)	6
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#### Barbecue Sauce

½ cup	canola oil	125 mL
2 Tbsp	chopped fresh basil	25 mL
2 Tbsp	chopped garlic	25 mL
2 Tbsp	lemon pepper spice	25 mL
2 Tbsp	finely chopped onion	25 mL
2 Tbsp	finely chopped green onion	25 mL
1 Tbsp	grainy mustard	15 mL
1 Tbsp	prepared yellow mustard	15 mL
¼ tsp	cayenne	1 mL
3 Tbsp	ketchup	45 mL
1 tsp	salt	5 mL
2 Tbsp	horseradish	25 mL

Whip all the barbecue sauce ingredients together in a blender. Baste steaks while barbecuing. You can also pour a little sauce on the steak just before serving.

Yield 6 servings.

### Wild Rice with Bacon and Peppers

3 cups	wild rice, cooked	750 mL
5 strips	chopped bacon	5
¼ cup	diced red pepper	50 mL
¼ cup	diced green pepper	50 mL
½	diced small onion	.5
¼ cup	butter	50 mL
1 Tbsp	fresh chopped basil	15 mL
1 Tbsp	fresh chopped parsley	15 mL
	salt and pepper	to taste

Prepare wild rice as per directions. Make sure the wild rice is fully cooked and well dried off. In a fry pan melt the butter and add the chopped bacon. Sauté until the bacon is almost cooked. Add the onions and cook until the onions are soft. Add the peppers, chopped basil and parsley. Season with salt and pepper to your taste. Add cooked wild rice and mix thoroughly.

Yield 4 servings.





### Marinated Beef

1 lb beef 4-125g 500 g  
(4oz) portions

### Marinade

¾ cup	dark ale	175 mL
1 Tbsp	chopped garlic	15 mL
¼ cup	Dijon mustard	50 mL
¼ cup	honey	50 mL
1 tsp	fresh chopped thyme	5 mL
2 Tbsp	fine chopped onion	25 mL
	fresh cracked pepper and salt to taste	

Place all the marinade ingredients in a bowl and whisk together. Place the beef and marinade into a zip lock bag and refrigerate at least 24 hours. Remove from marinade and pat dry. Roast or barbeque it to your liking.

Suggested beef - eye of round.  
Yield 4 servings.

### Crusted Mustard and Molasses Glazed Pork

Boneless pork roast

### Mustard Glaze

¼ cup	Dijon mustard	50 mL
¼ cup	grainy mustard	50 mL
¼ cup	brown sugar	50 mL
¼ cup	molasses	50 mL
½ tsp	fresh chopped rosemary	2 mL
	fresh cracked pepper to taste	

### Crust mixture

¼ cup	bread crumbs	50 mL
¼ cup	cornmeal	50 mL

Whisk together all of the mustard glaze ingredients in a bowl. Rub mixture all over the roast and place in a roasting pan. Sprinkle with the crust mixture and roast at 350°F (180°C) to desired doneness.



# Pesto Power!

Pesto is a classic sauce, originally from Genoa, Italy. It is a favourite with pasta but can be used in a variety of dishes such as stuffed vegetables, soups, stews, and salads or simply as a condiment. It is an uncooked sauce, traditionally made with fresh basil, oil, garlic, pine nuts and Parmesan cheese, quickly prepared by using a food processor.

Low fat, pesto is not. Use a small amount as a flavouring ingredient. This way you still get the great pesto taste while keeping the dish low in fat. High fat foods can taste great, but by using a small amount to flavour your food you can get great taste without adding too much fat. A great example of this is Pesto Pizza.

Simply replace the tomato sauce on your pizza with a couple of tablespoons of pesto, then top with vegetables and a low fat cheese - YUMMY!

Pesto sauces capture the fresh flavours of herbs but do not preserve them. When making homemade pesto it is important to take precautions to prevent botulism. Botulism is a type of food poisoning, which is potentially deadly. It is present in soil and carried into our kitchens on vegetables, herbs and garlic, as well as on clothing and hands. Botulism thrives in a moist, low acid environment, absent of air and in a temperature range of 70°F (21°C) to 110°F (43°C). The botulism bacterium can be destroyed at 212°F (100°C).

If covered and refrigerated continuously, pesto will keep for two to three days. Make small batches and label each with the date and "keep refrigerated" instructions. Pesto freezes well without losing its flavour or colour. If frozen in ice cube trays or as small patties, it can be easily added during cooking. If accidentally left out at room temperature, pesto should be discarded and a fresh batch made.

### Viva Italia! Classic Pesto

1 cup	sweet basil leaves, washed and dried completely	250 mL
1 cup	Parmesan cheese, grated	250 mL
½ cup	pine nuts	75 mL
5	garlic cloves, peeled	5
¾ cup	canola oil	175 mL
	salt and pepper to taste	

In a food processor combine, basil, Parmesan cheese, pine nuts and garlic with 2 tablespoons (25 mL) of canola blend. Begin blending. As blending continues slowly add the remaining oil so that the sauce emulsifies. Add salt and pepper to taste. Label with the date and "keep refrigerated" instructions. Use within 2 to 3 days. Makes 1 ¾ cups (425 mL).

