

CALLING ALL FOODIES!

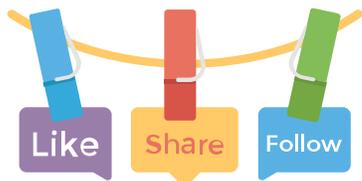
The “Spice of the Month” club is a monthly take-and-make kit featuring a variety of unique spices, herbs, or blends. Each kit will include information about the featured spice, its history with fun facts, and a small packet of the spice with two recipe suggestions!

Once you’ve created your culinary masterpiece, we’d love to see! Share your pictures and tips with us on our Facebook (SEARLibrary) and Instagram (@searlibrary) pages.

Spice of the Month kits are free, but supplies are limited. Only one kit per household.



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SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB



Herbs de Provence originated in the Provence region in southern France. The blend grew in popularity and became a more defined herb mixture in the 1960s. It was when Julia Child included a recipe for Poulet Sauté aux Herbes de Provence in her famous cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

This seasoning blend has become synonymous with the sunny, fragrant landscapes of the Provence region over the years. The traditional ingredients that make Herbs de Provence include:

- **Thyme:** Known for its earthy, slightly minty flavor, thyme is a staple in this blend.
- **Oregano:** Slightly peppery with sweet minty aroma
- **Rosemary:** With its piney aroma and a hint of lemon, rosemary brings a distinctive Mediterranean character.
- **Savory:** Offers a peppery bite that balances the sweetness of oregano and the richness of thyme and rosemary.

Beyond its culinary uses, Herbs de Provence has several health benefits. Thyme and rosemary, for instance, are known for their antioxidant properties, while oregano and savory possess antimicrobial attributes. Incorporating these herbs into your diet not only boosts the taste of your food but could also contribute to overall wellness.

FUN FACTS

- Monks may have created it in the Middle Ages.
- Herbes de Provence is a staple in traditional French dishes like ratatouille and bouillabaisse.
- Lavender buds or leaves are often included in North American, but rarely in traditional French, blends.
- Herbs de Provence plays a crucial role in the social fabric of Provence, often used in traditional dishes during communal meals and celebrations, reinforcing bonds and fostering a sense of community.

Classic Beef Stew



Yields: 8 servings
Prep Time: 30 mins
Cook Time: 2hrs 45 mins

Ingredients

- 1 (2 pound) boneless beef round steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 3 cups chopped onion
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 cups dry red wine (or beef broth)
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 cups beef broth, or more as needed
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 3 cups chopped carrots
- 3 cups cubed Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1 cup fresh peas
- 1 ½ teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, or to taste

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Season beef with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add flour and paprika and toss until evenly coated.
3. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in batches, sear beef in hot oil, stirring occasionally, until well-browned, 10 to 11 minutes per batch. Transfer beef to a plate and leave drippings in the pot.
4. Add onion to drippings; season with salt and pepper. Cook and stir until onion begins to caramelize, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
5. Stir in tomato paste; cook until it turns brown and begins to caramelize and stick to the bottom of the pan.
6. Pour in red wine (or broth) and bring to a boil while scraping the browned bits of food off the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Cook until wine (broth) is almost evaporated, about 3 minutes.
7. Add thyme, rosemary, herbes de Provence, and bay leaves. Stir in broth and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil.
8. Return beef to the pot, then remove from heat and cover with the lid.
9. Braise stew in the preheated oven until beef is almost tender, about 1 hour 30 minutes. Remove from the oven.
10. Add carrots, potatoes, and more beef broth if needed. Cover the pot and return to the oven to braise until beef and vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more.
11. Discard bay leaves. Stir in peas, rosemary, and thyme. Serve hot.

Recipe Sources:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/281995/classic-hearty-beef-stew/>

Herb Focaccia Bread



Yields: 10 servings
Prep Time: 10 mins
Cook Time: 20 mins

Ingredients

- 1 cup very warm water
- 3 tablespoons very warm water
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cups bread flour
- 1 teaspoon white sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast

Toppings:

- 6 cloves garlic, crushed, or more to taste
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon herbes de Provence, or more to taste
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Place 1 cup plus 3 tablespoons water, 1 tablespoon olive oil, bread flour, white sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, and active dry yeast and stir to combine. Place bowl in warm area covered, and allow dough to proof for 1 hour.
2. Combine crushed garlic and 1/3 cup olive oil in a small bowl. Set aside to let it steep, about 30 minutes.
3. Combine Parmesan cheese, parsley, onion powder, and herbes de Provence in another small bowl.
4. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Grease a large rimmed baking sheet with olive oil.
5. Deflate dough and turn out into the baking sheet. Stretch dough gently out to 1/2-inch thickness, using your fingers to make dimples that will hold the toppings.
6. Pour garlic and oil mixture onto dough and spread it evenly over the dough and edges with your hands. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese mixture evenly on top. Sprinkle dough with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
7. Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer from the baking sheet to a rack. Let cool, 5 minutes. Cut into squares with a pizza cutter.

Recipe Sources:

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/245776/deliciously-easy-garlic-herb-focaccia/>