



## Herbaceous:

# Six Important Flavors in Herbs

1. **Anethole** (the taste of anise or licorice, ouzo, pernod, sambuca): tarragon and fennel have anethole, and even basil has a mild anethole flavor. Thai basil has a strong anethole taste. The licorice herbs are the most food friendly herbs available. Use licorice herbs, and your food—especially any fish or seafood dish—will sparkle. These anise-tasting herbs are also spectacular on eggs, cheese, meat, and tomatoes. French tarragon (a different taste than Russian tarragon), is the flavor found in béarnaise sauce.  
<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/bearnaise-sauce-395049>
2. **Lemon** tasting herbs: lemongrass, lemon verbena, lemon thyme, and sorrel. It's easy to add lemon to nearly any dish. So make sure than your herb garden contains at least one of the lemon-tasting herbs.
3. **Resinous**, herbs such as rosemary, thyme, and sage, have a resin, or woody, quality. The flavor of resinous herbs comes through in cooking and is a wonderful match for meats. But be careful. That taste can overpower: the longer rosemary cooks, the stronger the flavor gets. Sage and thyme are very easy to grow and will come back with vigor next year. The flavor of sage is also quite musky in taste and aroma, which is why it blends so well with beans and meats.
4. **Grassy**: such as dill and parsley. Don't overlook the value of parsley. It is very herbaceous, which offers a *balance* to other flavors on the plate. Parsley has a very mild anethole taste. For example, Italians use a garnish called *gremolati*, where the heat of raw garlic is blended with the sour of lemon zest and balanced with a whole bunch of grassy parsley. Without the green that condiment would not be in balance.
5. **Cooling**: Mint. Mint is bracing and stimulating and almost astringent. It is mentholated and cooling. This cooling impact is of great use, especially with meat dishes. If you don't care for cilantro, but want to make dishes that traditionally use it—such as Mexican and Thai recipes—substitute fresh mint. Spearmint is the most versatile of all the mint varieties.
6. **Bitter & Peppery**: oregano, marjoram, arugula, nasturtium, watercress, winter savory. Nobody ever seeks out bitter foods. But bitterness can balance food and deepen the flavor. Marjoram is related to oregano and sometimes called Sweet Marjoram because it doesn't have quite the bitter bite of traditional Greek oregano. Arugula has become popular, though the markets only sell the tender, mild baby arugula. Grow your own arugula and taste the strong bitterness as the arugula matures, which is better when cooked.

Compiled by Anne Cori

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