

Wild Game Spice Blends

WITH
HOMESTEADER
TORI KING

My latest project on our homestead has been stocking up on my homemade spice blends, rubs, and other ingredients. I wouldn't have believed you if you had told me a few years ago that I would be making things like my own chocolate syrup, mayonnaise, yogurt, or spice blends like taco seasoning, ranch seasoning, and rubs. I didn't even realize you could! To me, it was just something that you had to buy at a grocery store.

Let me tell you a secret... It's SO EASY!... Almost all of the things I listed take just 15 minutes or less! Bonus: I know exactly what is in them AND save money. Just like most ingredients, when you buy in bulk, it saves you money in the long run. I like to order from Mountain Rose Herbs, Azure Standard, Frontier Co-op, and my local health food stores. Organic herbs and spices are essential to me because I know they were grown without most of the synthetic chemicals and pesticides that conventional herbs are. They also tend to be more flavorful and are generally

considered the healthier option. Don't start on all the filler ingredients found in most of the premade spice packs: Anti-caking agents, hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, "natural flavors," food dyes... yuck!!

I keep a big plastic tote in my canning room with mylar bags of herbs that I tend to use the most for my blends, such as chives, parsley, basil, sage, rosemary, thyme, red pepper flakes, etc. I buy in smaller amounts the ones I use less often as the flavor and quality of spices start to lessen over time.

A general rule for storing spices is that whole spices are good for 3-4 years if stored at room temperature, while ground spices are good for 2-3 years. This is because the essential oils containing the most flavor are kept safe inside whole spices. Though my motto is waste not, want not—I have been known to use more spice than the recipe calls for if I think the herb does not smell as strong as it once did or is getting past its prime. Overall, spices don't "go bad." They just become "less potent."

Another spice I keep in bulk is salt. Salt never goes wrong, so it can be maintained indefinitely. A tip I learned years ago from a fellow homesteader I still use today; Redmond livestock salt, fine 10, is cheaper and more readily available in my area than their food-grade version. The most significant difference is that more minerals are in the livestock version. However, this has never been an issue for our family. When I use more substantial amounts in my canning projects, such as making a salt brine for pickles, lacto-fermenting vegetables, or even brining my Thanksgiving turkey, I allow the minerals to settle on the bottom of the pot.

In contrast, the salt is dissolved in my water. I like keeping a few bags on hand for salt curing and other homesteading projects. (Keep an eye out on future issues for more on that topic)

Keeping with this quarter's hunting theme, I thought I would share a few rub recipes for the wild game you will be harvesting in the coming months.

Venison Dry Rub

- 4 tsp whole coriander seeds
- 2 tsp whole cumin seeds
- 2 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 2 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried thyme

Preheat a skillet to medium-low heat. Add the first four spices to the skillet and stir them every half minute. You should start smelling them around the three-minute mark, and they should appear slightly darker than when you started. Remove them from the heat and let cool. Place all ingredients in a spice grinder (I use my coffee grinder) and grind until smooth. This recipe is easy to double up, but just put the extras in an airtight container to keep them from absorbing



moisture and clumping. When you are ready to use, lightly coat whatever steak or roast in olive oil and coat generously with the spice mixture. This tastes great on both venison jerky and burgers as well! Let us know what you think.

All-Purpose Waterfowl Rub

- ¼ cup salt
- ¼ cup garlic powder
- ¼ cup paprika
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp black pepper
- 2 Tbsp onion powder
- 2 Tbsp rosemary
- 1 Tbsp dry mustard
- 1 Tbsp ground sage
- 1 Tbsp cayenne pepper

Mix well and store in an airtight container until you are ready to use. If you plan to leave the skin on, rub the spice mixture between the fowl skin and the flesh. I like to add a little olive oil to make this process easier. Refrigerate 1-24hrs before cooking. This recipe also pairs well with beef and pork.



DIY Fish Seasoning

- 3 tsp salt
- 2 tsp dillweed
- 2 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp ground ginger

Mix together in an airtight container until ready to use. Cover liberally, and feel free to experiment with more or less salt. You could also squeeze on some lemon juice just before cooking. This recipe is great for all kinds of baked, pan-roasted, or grilled fish! ■

