

**LESSON PLAN TOOLKIT: STAND-ALONE CLASS  
COOKING WITH HERBS AND SPICES**

**HOW AN EDUCATED PALATE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

The creative use of herbs plays a pivotal role in enhancing both the aroma and flavor of many dishes. The Educated Palate® sensory training kits provide a means to improve the user's ability to identify herbs and spices and to increase understanding of the flavoring potential of individual ingredients. These educational materials are designed to help culinary educators and employers teach their students and employees to gain a thorough understanding of the unique characteristics related to *Cooking with Herbs & Spices*, but anyone interested in cooking will benefit from using the kits.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Identify culinary herbs and spices
- Use of culinary herbs and spices

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Lecture/Discussion  
Product Evaluation  
Hands-on Production Exercises  
Tasting and Product Evaluation: Herbs and Spices  
Post-Evaluation

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SPICES**

### **TASTE AND FLAVOR**

#### **FLAVOR IN COOKING IS DEVELOPED THROUGH ...**

- Proper execution of cooking techniques
- Selection of quality ingredients
- Application of processes that capture flavor
- Appropriate use of seasonings and flavorings

#### **SPICES, HERBS, & AROMATICS**

**SPICES:** Are derived from the bark, root, fruit or berry of perennial plants, example:

- ✓ Cinnamon from the bark
- ✓ Pepper from the berry
- ✓ Ginger from the root
- ✓ Nutmeg from the fruit

**HERBS:** The leaves of annual and perennial low-growing shrubs

**AROMATIC SEEDS:** The seeds of graceful lacy annual plants (Anise, Caraway, Coriander)

## **The Educated Palate**

- Product introduction
- Demonstration
- Key Words to describe flavor
- Key words to describe aroma

### **HERB & SPICE EXERCISE**

#### **GENERAL EXERCISE DESCRIPTION**

This exercise is designed to allow students to explore a sampling of herbs & spices that are common within the kitchen, using the Educated Palate test kit. During this exercise, a variety of **herbs & spices** will be tasted and evaluated.

#### **SPECIFIC EXERCISE INFORMATION**

1. Separate students into groups
2. Have each group evaluate different spices from the kit

### **TOMATO SAUCE EXERCISE**

### **GENERAL EXERCISE DESCRIPTION**

This exercise is designed to experience the effects of adding various aromatic ingredients into a basic tomato sauce to observe the impact each aromatic combination has on the flavor of the product. Each team will be given tomato sauce and a predetermined aromatic mixture. After each team has added its aromatic mixture to the sauce, a taste comparison will occur.

### **SPECIFIC EXERCISE INFORMATION**

1. Obtain tomato sauce.
2. Gather assigned aromatics.
3. Follow the processing instructions for each group of aromatics.
4. Combine the processed aromatics with tomato sauce.
5. Simmer the sauce for 5 minutes.
6. Label your sauce and deliver to the tasting table.

### **TEAM ASSIGNMENTS OF AROMATIC MIXTURES**

#### **1 - Fines Herbs (using fresh herbs)**

- ¼ Tbsp. Parsley, minced
- ¼ Tbsp. Tarragon, minced
- ¼ Tbsp. Chervil, minced
- ¼ tsp. Chives, minced

**Method:** Heat sauce to a simmer. Add fines herbs and remove from heat.

#### **2 - Fines Herbs (using dry herbs)**

- ¼ Tbsp. Parsley, minced
- ¼ Tbsp. Tarragon, minced
- ¼ Tbsp. Chervil, minced
- ¼ tsp. Chives, minced

**Method:** Heat sauce to a simmer. Add fines herbs and simmer for 15 minutes.

#### **3 - Herbs de Provence (using fresh herbs)**

- ¼ tsp. Thyme, minced
- ¼ tsp. Basil, minced
- ¼ tsp. Oregano, minced
- ¼ tsp. Rosemary, minced

**Method:** Heat sauce to a simmer. Add herbs de Provence and remove from heat.

#### **4 - Herbs de Provence (using dry herbs)**

- ¼ tsp. Thyme, minced
- ¼ tsp. Basil, minced
- ¼ tsp. Oregano, minced
- ¼ tsp. Rosemary, minced

**Method:** Heat sauce to a simmer. Add herbs de Provence and simmer for 5 minutes.

## **WHITE SAUCE EXERCISE**

### **GENERAL EXERCISE DESCRIPTION**

This exercise is designed to experience the effects of adding various aromatic ingredients into white sauce to observe the impact each aromatic combination has on the flavor of the product. Each team will be given 1 pint of white sauce and a predetermined aromatic mixture. After each team has added its aromatic mixture to the sauce, a taste comparison will occur.

### **SPECIFIC EXERCISE INFORMATION**

1. Obtain white sauce (Béchamel).
2. Gather assigned aromatics.
3. Follow the processing instructions for each group of aromatics.
4. Combine the processed aromatics with white sauce.
5. Simmer the sauce for 5 minutes.
6. Label your sauce and deliver to the tasting table.

### **TEAM ASSIGNMENTS OF AROMATIC MIXTURES**

#### **Team 1 - Garam Masala (toasted)**

- ½ Tbsp. Cardamom, whole, toasted, ground
- 1 ¼ tsp. Coriander, whole, toasted, ground
- 1 tsp. Cumin, whole, toasted, ground
- ½ tsp. Black pepper, whole, toasted, ground
- ¼ tsp. Cloves, whole, toasted, ground
- ¼ tsp. Cinnamon, ground
- ¼ tsp. Nutmeg, ground

**Method:** Sauté the cardamom, coriander, cumin, pepper, and cloves in a dry sauté pan to develop a toasted odor. Cool spices and then grind, using a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle. Add the ground cinnamon and nutmeg. Add to the White sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

#### **Team 2 - Curry Powder (toasted)**

- 1 tsp. Coriander, whole, toasted, ground
- 1 tsp. Cumin, whole, toasted, ground
- 1 tsp. Red chili seeds, toasted, ground
- 1 tsp. Turmeric, ground
- 1 tsp. Ginger, ground

**Method:** Sauté the coriander, cumin, and chili seeds in a dry sauté pan to develop a toasted odor. Cool spices and then grind using a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle. Add the turmeric and ginger. Add to the White sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

**Team 3 - Garam Masala (not toasted)**

½ Tbsp. Cardamom, ground

1 ¼ tsp. Coriander, ground

1 tsp. Cumin, ground

1 tsp. Black pepper, ground

¼ tsp. Cloves, ground

¼ tsp. Cinnamon, ground

¼ tsp. Nutmeg, ground

**Method:** Add to the White sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

**Team 4 - Curry Powder (not toasted)**

1 tsp. Coriander, whole, toasted, ground

1 tsp. Cumin, whole, toasted, ground

1 tsp. Red chile seeds, toasted, ground

1 tsp. Turmeric, ground

1 tsp. Ginger, ground

**Method:** Add to the White sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

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**Team 5 - Indian Style 5-spice mixture**

½ tsp. Cumin seeds, whole, toasted, ground

½ Tbsp. Fennel seeds, whole, toasted, ground

½ Tbsp. Fenugreek, whole, toasted, ground

½ Tbsp. Celery seeds, whole, toasted, ground

½ Tbsp. Mustard seeds, toasted ground

**Method:** Sauté the seeds in a dry sauté pan until the seeds take on a toasted odor. Be sure not to over-toast the fenugreek, as it will turn bitter.

Cool spices and then grind, using a coffee grinder or mortar and pestle. Add to the White sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.

**Post Evaluation**

Using our new found appreciation and understanding of herbs and spices, we use our educated palates to taste, compare and contrast each variation on Steamed Veggies, and Chicken.

## **WHITE SAUCE EVALUATION SHEET**

### **Aromatic Variation Notes**

**No Variation** Visual -

Smell -

Taste -

**Garam Masala (toasted)** Visual -

Smell -

Taste -

**Garam Masala**

**(not toasted)**

Visual -

Smell -

Taste -

**Curry Powder (toasted)** Visual -

Smell -

Taste -

**Curry Powder**

**(not toasted)**

Visual -

Smell -

Taste -

**Indian Style 5-spice**

**mixture**

Visual -

Smell -

Taste -