Add a Little Spice to Your Life!

Grab & Go Spice Kits for Adults: Nutmeg

Do you love to cook? Do you like to try new flavors and recipes? Or maybe you are in a cooking rut and don't know how to start expanding your cooking repertoire. Let us help you get spicy in the kitchen. Your kit includes a pre-measured packet of ground nutmeg and a few recipes.

What is nutmeg? Nutmeg is not a nut but the seed of Myristica fragrans, a tropical evergreen tree native to Indonesia's Banda Islands. It is unique because it produces two distinct spices from a single fruit: nutmeg, which comes from the inner seed, and mace, which is derived from the reddish, web-like covering surrounding the seed. After harvesting, the seeds are dried for approximately six to eight weeks before being sold whole or ground into powder. Nutmeg contains plant compounds with antioxidant and potential anti-inflammatory properties, along with small amounts of minerals such as magnesium and manganese. During the 17th century, nutmeg was among the world's most valuable spices, partly because many people believed it could protect against the plague.

Easy ways to add nutmeg to your diet. Nutmeg adds a warm, slightly sweet, spicy flavor to everyday foods. You only need a small amount to make a difference and it works in both sweet and savory dishes. So, sprinkle a pinch of nutmeg over oatmeal, yogurt, or into coffee, chai, or lattes to enhance their flavor. Add a small amount to smoothies or to sliced apples or pears before baking or microwaving. Use nutmeg to season roasted or mashed sweet potatoes, carrots, and pumpkin. For savory meals, you can stir a little into mashed potatoes or cauliflower mash to give them a richer flavor. You can also mix nutmeg into pancake or waffle batter, muffins, and banana bread for a warm, spiced taste. Finally, add a small pinch to creamy vegetable soups, such as butternut squash soup, or pasta sauces.

Recipes featuring nutmeg:
- ***Egg Nog***
- ***Cranberry Sauce***
- ***Creamed Spinach with Nutmeg and Golden Raisins***
- ***Scalloped Potato Gratin***
- ***Swedish Meatballs***
- ***Sausage Rice Casserole***

Need more inspiration? You can watch a six-part Great Courses class called ***The Everyday Gourmet: Essential Secrets of Spices in Cooking*** for free with your library card by using a **Hoopla Great Courses BingePass** or streaming on **Kanopy**.

Egg Nog

By Alton Brown
Yield: 6-7 cups

INGREDIENTS

- 4 egg yolks
- 1/3 cup sugar, plus 1 tablespoon
- 1 pint whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 ounces bourbon
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 4 egg whites

PREPARATION

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the 1/3 cup sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Add the milk, cream, bourbon and nutmeg and stir to combine.
2. Place the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat to soft peaks. With the mixer still running gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form.
3. Whisk the egg whites into the mixture. Chill and serve.
4. Cook's Note: For cooked eggnog, follow the procedure below.
5. In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the 1/3 cup sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Set aside.
6. In a medium saucepan, over high heat, combine the milk, heavy cream and nutmeg and bring just to a boil, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and gradually temper the hot mixture into the egg and sugar mixture. Then return everything to the pot and cook until the mixture reaches 160 degrees F. Remove from the heat, stir in the bourbon, pour into a medium mixing bowl, and set in the refrigerator to chill.

7. In a medium mixing bowl, beat the egg whites to soft peaks. With the mixer running gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Whisk the egg whites into the chilled mixture.

Cranberry Sauce

By Alex Guarnaschelli
Yield: about 2 ½ cups

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fresh cranberries, washed and dried
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 orange, zested and juiced

PREPARATION

1. In a medium pot, combine the cranberries, sugar and water. Stir to blend. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat. Reduce to a simmer and add the cinnamon stick, allspice and nutmeg. Stir to blend and simmer for an additional 5 to 7 minutes. Some of the cranberries will burst and some will remain whole. Add the orange juice and zest, stir and allow to cool before serving.

Creamed Spinach with Nutmeg and Golden Raisins

By Molly O'Neill
Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds spinach, washed, large stems removed
- 2 tablespoons golden raisins
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 ¼ teaspoons grated nutmeg
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Bring a large kettle half filled with lightly salted water to a boil. Add the spinach, pushing it down into the pot with a large spoon. Cook until the leaves are softened and turn bright green, about 1 minute. Immediately drain the spinach and plunge it into a large bowl of cold water to stop the cooking. When cool, drain well and use your hands to remove as much excess water as possible. Transfer the spinach to a cutting board and chop coarsely.
2. Meanwhile, soak the raisins in ½ cup of boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain the raisins and chop them coarsely; set aside. Place a large saucepan over medium heat and melt the butter. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Sprinkle with the flour and cook for an additional 2 minutes, being careful not to let the mixture darken. Add the cream and nutmeg and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the spinach and raisins and cook until heated through. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately as a side dish or as a complement to steamed and sliced chicken breasts.

Scalloped Potato Gratin

By Tyler Florence
Yield: 4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, plus more to finish
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Unsalted butter
- 2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/8-inch-thick slices
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan, plus more for broiling

PREPARATION

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In a saucepan, heat up the cream with the bay leaves, thyme, garlic, nutmeg and some salt and pepper.
3. While the cream is heating up, butter a casserole dish. Use a slotted spoon to remove the bay leaves and thyme. Pour the heated cream into a large bowl with the potato slices. Mix gently to coat the potatoes. Dust the Parmesan over the potatoes. Season the mix with a little bit of salt and pepper. Mix to gently incorporate. Spoon a little bit of the cream into the bottom of the casserole dish. Then spoon the potatoes in. Level out the potatoes for uniform cooking time. Pour the remaining cream at the bottom of the bowl over the top. Top with some Parmesan and fresh thyme leaves. Cover the dish with aluminum foil, but pull back one corner for the steam to escape. Bake for 40 minutes.

Swedish Meatballs

By Holly Erickson and Natalie Mortimer
Yield: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound 80/20 ground beef
- 1 pound ground pork
- ¼ cup minced flat leaf parsley
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅓ cup grated yellow onion
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Cream Gravy:

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups beef stock
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, (from 1 lemon)
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup heavy cream

PREPARATION

1. Make the meatballs. In a large bowl, combine the beef, pork, parsley, allspice, nutmeg, grated onion, salt, pepper, garlic, panko and eggs. Mix well, then with wet hands, form into golf ball–size balls (about 2 tablespoons each). You should have about 30 to 35 meatballs.

2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet or braiser over medium-high heat. Once the oil is glistening, add half of the meatballs in a single layer. Cook, undisturbed, until the meatballs are just browned on the bottom, about 3 minutes. Turn them carefully and cook to brown the opposite side, about 3 more minutes. Transfer the meatballs to a plate. Repeat with remaining meatballs. Pour any excess grease from the skillet into a heatproof vessel.
3. Using the same skillet, reduce the heat to medium and add the butter, stirring until melted. When the butter begins to bubble, sprinkle in the flour and cook, whisking, until fully incorporated, about 1 minute. Whisk in the beef stock, salt, pepper, lemon juice, allspice and nutmeg, and cream until fully incorporated. Bring to a simmer and cook, whisking until smooth and slightly thickened.
4. Add the meatballs to the sauce and turn to coat. Cover and reduce the heat to low. Simmer until the gravy has thickened and the meatballs reach an internal temperature of 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, about 10 minutes.
5. Serve warm over mashed potatoes or egg noodles, with lingonberry jam on the side if using.

Sausage Rice Casserole

By Kia Damon
Yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 pounds country-style pork sausage
- 1 yellow onion, diced (about 2 cups)
- 1 medium green bell pepper, diced
- 2 celery ribs, diced
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 2 cups long-grain rice (uncooked)
- 3½ cups chicken stock

PREPARATION

1. Arrange one rack in the middle of the oven and another rack 6 inches from the heat source. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Coat the bottom and sides of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with butter, then set aside.
2. Add the sausage to a large skillet, ideally 12 inches, and set over medium-high heat. Cook, using a wooden spoon or rubber spatula to break up and stir the meat, until it's completely cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes. Push the sausage to one side of the pan, then add the onion, bell pepper, celery and garlic to the other side. Let the veggies sit, untouched, for 2 minutes as they release their liquid, which will help the browned bits soften and release. Stir the meat and vegetables together and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are softened, 3 to 4 minutes more.

3. Reduce the heat to medium, then add the salt, black pepper, paprika, nutmeg and crushed red pepper. Transfer the contents of the skillet into the baking dish. Sprinkle the rice evenly across the dish, then pour in the chicken stock. Use a whisk or wooden spoon to stir until evenly distributed. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake on the middle rack for 1 hour.
4. After an hour has passed, take the dish out of the oven and remove the foil. The rice should be tender with little to no liquid left. Broil the casserole for 2 to 3 minutes, until the top crisps up. Let the casserole rest for at least 5 minutes before serving.