Getting Ahead of the Holiday Meal Cost Part 4- Spices

Now that canned goods and dry ingredients (Part 3; hyperlink)are taken care of, we are moving on to the ingredients known to add flavor and distinction to your dish, spices! With so many spices to choose from, remember this rule of thumb, take inventory so you don't overspend. Certain recipes will call for a small amount of a certain spice, which is not commonly used. To save money, utilize something similar that you already have on hand. Certain spices such as basil & thyme; and red pepper & paprika can be used to substitute each other. If using a substitution, be advised that the recipe may be slightly altered.

Depending on the amount of each spice you'll be using, purchase small or large bottles and split with family or friends. Not only will this make sure the item will be used at its freshest, but you'll also save money by splitting the cost!

Herbs and spices from your garden will flavor any meal perfectly. Don't have a herb garden yet? There's always next year! Learn more about container gardens here.

Some of the most common/popular holiday spices include:

Baking Spices	Cooking Spices	Flavors, etc.
• Cinnamon	• Chili Powder	• Almond Extract
• Ginger	• Cumin	• Lemon Extract
• Nutmeg	• Garlic Powder	• Vanilla Extract
• Peppermint	• Kosher Salt	• Lipton Onion Soup
• Pumpkin Spice	• Mint	•
• Vanilla Bean Sugar	• Onion Powder	•
	• Paprika	•
	• Rosemary	•

	• Sage	•

Tip: Organize your spices in the pantry by grouping them by purpose. A small basket from the dollar store can be helpful; place the baking spices together in one basket and cooking spices in another. If you are baking, you can quickly find the spices you need without sorting through savory spices.

Don't forget your pantry staples: pepper, salt, season salt, garlic powder, Italian seasoning, poultry seasoning and onion powder. All seasonings, herbs, and spices are SNAP eligible items. Be sure to write down staple seasonings in your home and include them on your list. If a recipe calls for a specific salt such as Kosher salt, sea salt or pink Himalayan salt, generally refined salt (table salt) will serve as an acceptable substitute.

Why plan ahead for your spice purchases? Think about pumpkin pie without the pumpkin spice or dressing without sage. As the holiday nears, more people will begin to stock up on their favorite spices – which guess what – they are *your* favorite spices too! Waiting until the last minute might mean that your dash to the grocery store for cinnamon leaves you empty handed and your batch of oatmeal cookies flat. Purchasing spices early will help spread out the cost of the holiday meal.

Stay tuned. In the coming weeks *More In My Basket (MIMB)* will continue our series on planned shopping to spread out the cost of the holiday meal.

The Getting Ahead of Holiday Meal Cost series is sponsored by the *More In My Basket (MIMB)* Program. Visit morefood.org for the complete series or to contact the *More In My Basket* staff.