

Flavor Cheat Sheet

Whole Food Cooking Made Simple, Delicious, and Nutrient-Rich



The 5-Layer Flavor Formula

Use this for every meal:

- 1. Aromatics (Base):** onion, garlic, leek, scallion
- 2. Herbs & Spices:** fresh + dried seasoning
- 3. Acid:** citrus, vinegar, fermented ingredients
- 4. Umami (Savory Depth):** mushrooms, tomato, coconut aminos
- 5. Finish:** fresh herbs, olive oil, zest, flaky salt

Herbs & Spices

Fresh Herbs (*add at end*)

- Parsley for detox support, fresh flavor
- Cilantro supports natural detox pathways
- Basil as an antimicrobial, bright flavor
- Mint/Dill for digestive calming

Dried Spices (*season in oil*)

- Turmeric + black pepper are anti-inflammatory
- Cumin helps with digestion + bile flow
- Coriander is gut-soothing
- Ginger stops nausea + inflammation support
- Cinnamon supports blood sugar balance

Tip: Heat spices in oil for 30–60 seconds before adding liquid

Chef Secrets

- Fresh herbs (parsley, basil, cilantro)
- Citrus zest
- Extra virgin olive oil drizzle
- Flaky salt adjustment

Tip: Always finish, never just cook

Aromatics

Build sweetness + depth early in cooking

- Garlic for immune + cardiovascular support
- Onion for prebiotic fiber, gut health
- Leek/Scallion for gentle digestion, flavor base

Tip: Cook low + slow in olive oil for best flavor

Acid

- Lemon/Lime juice brightens and improves iron absorption
- Apple cider vinegar boosts digestion + blood sugar support
- Reduced balsamic adds a sweet + tangy finish for veggies & proteins

Umami

- Roasted mushrooms add depth + richness
- Tomatoes (cooked/sun-dried) have a natural savory base
- Coconut aminos offer a soy-free savory enhancer
- Seaweed flakes are a mineral-rich umami boost

Benefit: increases meal satisfaction + reduces cravings

Quick “Flavor Fixes”

- Bland meal - add acid + salt
- Flat aroma - add fresh herbs
- Not satisfying - add umami
- One-dimensional - add spice/oil trick
- Heavy tasting - add citrus or vinegar