

January Spice of the month

Smoked Paprika



Paprika is made from the dried, ground, ripened fruit pods of less pungent varieties of the *Capsicum annum* species. It is mildly flavored and prized for its brilliant red color. It is closely related to [red pepper](#) which also derives from the *Capsicum annum* species. The name *Capsicum* is derived from the Latin/Greek word for “capsule” which refers to the shape of the fruits. Paprika goes by many names in different languages such as *tian jiao* (Mandarin Chinese), *deshi mirch* (Hindi), *piment annuel/piment doux* (French), *fulful halou* (Arabic), *paprika* (German, Spanish, English), and *peperone* (Italian) (1).

History

The *Capsicum annum* plant is a New World fruit, believed to have originated in Mexico. Based on recent findings, experts believe that the peppers of the plant may have been consumed for thousands of years, making it a categorically ancient spice. In ancient times, paprika was used by indigenous people for culinary reasons and as a red dye for textiles, and is still used as a culinary and textile dyeing agent today.

Paprika was introduced to Europe when peppers were brought back to the Old World in the 16th century (according to some accounts by Christopher Columbus himself). When they arrived in Europe, Spanish monks began cultivating the plant. They hung the peppers in smokehouses and dried and ground them into powder in ancient stone mills. Today, some of the best smoked paprika is still made in La Vera, Extremadura (a county in western Spain). In Spain, paprika is sold in variations labeled *dulce* (sweet) *picante* (spicy), *agridulce* (medium) and *pimentón* (smoked).

The Turks (of the Ottoman Empire) brought chili peppers to Hungary, where paprika became a cornerstone spice in traditional Hungarian dishes, flavoring staples such as goulash. In the mid 1800s, Hungarians gave paprika the great honor of naming it their National Spice.



Prize-Winning Baby Back Ribs

Cooking ribs on the grill is easy with this recipe for the most tender, delectable ribs you've ever had!

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 1 hr 5 mins

Total Time: 1 hr 35 mins

Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3 pounds baby back pork ribs
- 1 cup barbeque sauce

Directions

Gather the ingredients.

Preheat a gas grill for high heat, or arrange charcoal briquettes on one side of the barbeque. Lightly oil the grate.

Combine cumin, chili powder, paprika, salt, and pepper in a small jar; close the lid and shake to mix.

Trim the membrane sheath from the back of each rack. Run a small, sharp knife between the membrane and each rib, and snip off the membrane as much as possible.

Sprinkle as much of the rub onto both sides of ribs as desired. To prevent ribs from becoming too dark and spicy, do not thoroughly rub spices into ribs. Store any unused spice mix in a jar for future use.

Place aluminum foil on the lower rack to capture drippings and prevent flare-ups. Lay ribs on the top rack of the grill (away from the coals, if you're using briquettes). Reduce gas heat to low and close the lid; cook ribs, undisturbed as possible, until meat pulls away easily from the bone, about 1 hour. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read 145 degrees F (63 degrees C).

Brush ribs with barbecue sauce, and grill for an additional 5 minutes.

Serve ribs as a whole rack, or cut between each rib bone and pile individually on a platter.



Oven-Baked Potato Slices

These sliced baked potatoes are seasoned with a flavorsome spice mix for an easy and delicious side dish. Just line your cookie sheet with nonstick foil and clean-up is a snap!

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 40 mins

Total Time: 55 mins

Servings: 4

Ingredients

4 medium baking potatoes, sliced 1/8-inch thick

1/8 teaspoon garlic powder

1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

1/8 teaspoon celery seed

1/8 teaspoon paprika

1 pinch cayenne pepper

1 dash salt

4 tablespoons olive oil, or more as needed

Directions

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).

Place potatoes, garlic powder, black pepper, celery seed, paprika, cayenne pepper, and salt into a zip-top bag. Shake to coat evenly.

Pour the entire contents of the bag onto a large baking sheet and spread evenly. Drizzle with olive oil.

Bake in the preheated oven until potatoes reach desired crispness, turning frequently to brown evenly, 40 to 45 minutes.

Remove from the oven. Let cool slightly and transfer into a serving dish.

Recipe Tip

You may layer potatoes on the baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with seasoning, and toss to coat instead of using a zip-top bag.



Chicken Paprikash

Creamy chicken paprikash comes together in an hour with sweet and hot Hungarian paprika

Active Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 1 hr

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 8 thighs)
- 4 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 2 teaspoons hot Hungarian paprika (such as Pride of Szeged)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons black pepper, divided
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 small red bell peppers, chopped into 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1 yellow onion, chopped into 1-inch pieces (about 1 3/4 cups)
- 6 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced (about 1/4 cup)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons sweet Hungarian paprika (such as Pride of Szeged)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, plus more for garnish
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- Cooked egg noodles, for serving

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle chicken all over with 2 1/2 teaspoons salt, hot paprika, and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Place chicken, skin side down, in a 12-inch ovenproof skillet. Cook over medium-high until skin is browned and crisp, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer chicken, skin side up, to a plate; set aside. Do not wipe skillet clean.

Add butter, bell peppers, onion, and garlic to skillet; cook over medium-high, stirring often, until onion starts to soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in flour and sweet paprika; cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Add wine; cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute. Add 1 1/2 cups water, thyme, bay leaf, remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.

Add chicken, skin side up, to skillet; transfer to preheated oven, and roast, uncovered, until sauce is slightly reduced and a thermometer inserted in thickest portion of chicken registers 165°F, about 30 minutes. Transfer chicken, skin side up, to a plate. Transfer 1/4 cup of the pan sauce to a small bowl; stir in sour cream. Stir sour cream mixture back into remaining pan sauce in skillet until well combined. Return chicken to skillet, skin side up. Serve with cooked egg noodles, and garnish with additional thyme.