

Preserving herbs in salt (or sugar!)

This old-fashioned method has an added bonus: herb salt that adds flavor to your meals, as well as encourages you to reduce actual salt intake.

Harvest herbs at their peak. Rinse the leaves and let them dry, or blot them dry with a cloth or paper towel. Then remove the leaves from the stems.

Pour a layer of non-iodized salt (or sea or kosher salt) into a jar, add a layer of leaves, and cover with another layer of salt. Continue alternating layers, pressing down firmly, until the jar is full. (Make the first and last layers of salt thicker than the middle layers, which should be quite thin and just cover the herbs.) Cover tightly and store in a cool, dark place.

To use salt-cured leaves, remove them as needed for use in stews and sauces. Use the flavored salt for salad dressings, roast meat, or wherever the flavor of herbs is needed.

Salting works especially well with basil, chives, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, savory, tarragon, and thyme.

To make herb salt in an instant, combine 1 cup of non-iodized salt (or sea or kosher salt) with 4 to 8 tablespoons of dried herbs. Whirl in a blender until fairly uniform. Store airtight.

By substituting sugar for salt, you can have sugar with an herbal accent.