

# Q&A

questions & answers



## FRESH VS. DRY

Is it okay to substitute dried herbs for fresh?

**Florence Weinstein**  
White Plains, NY

Yes. Because dried herbs lack the moisture of fresh herbs, their flavor is much more concentrated. The general rule is to use one-third the amount of dried herbs as you would fresh. Therefore, if a recipe calls for 1 tablespoon of fresh thyme, use 1 teaspoon dried instead.

In addition, when cooking with fresh herbs, it's best to add them at the *end* of the recipe, so the heat doesn't destroy their bright color and flavor. If using dried herbs, add them at the *beginning*. This way, their flavor has time to better infuse the dish.

## HOLEY CHEESE

Why does Swiss cheese have holes?

**Delores Gibson**  
Golden, CO

When people say "Swiss" cheese, they're most often referring to Emmental, a cow's milk cheese that's filled with holes (or eyes)—a reaction to natural bacteria introduced during the cheese-making process.

As Steven Jenkins writes in his book *Cheese Primer*,

## WATER DISTINCTION

I can't tell one bottled water from another. Can you help?

**Janet Herridge**  
New Orleans, LA

Americans are drinking more bottled water than ever—and a walk down the grocery store aisle proves it. But what, exactly, are we paying for?

According to the Iowa State University Extension Service, *artesian water* comes from a confined, underground water source, while *spring water* comes from an underground source from which water flows naturally to the surface. *Distilled water* has been

evaporated and allowed to condense, which removes all of the minerals and contaminants. *Natural mineral water* contains only the minerals present in the water as it flows from the ground. (Water not labeled "natural" may have had minerals added or removed.) And finally, *drinking water* is tap water that has been filtered and disinfected by water treatment plants.

The Extension also reminds consumers that even though bottled water has many positive attributes, just because it's bottled does not guarantee quality—the water is often high in sodium and low in fluoride.

## CHICKEN FRICASSEE

What's a fricassee?

**Kathy Bell**  
Madison, WI

Fricassee is the French term for a light-colored, thick, chunky vegetable stew. It's prepared by first cooking pieces of meat in fat, like

butter, without letting it brown (otherwise, it'd be considered a *brown fricassee*). The stew is then simmered in stock, thickened with a roux, and finished with egg yolk and cream.

"To fricassee a chicken," for example, is to make the stew using chicken as the meat.

