

## CALLING ALL FOODIES!

The "MCL Spice of the Month Club" is a monthly "take-and-make" kit featuring a variety of unique spices, herbs, or blends. Included in each kit will be information about the featured spice, its history and fun facts, two simple recipe suggestions, and a small packet of the featured spice with enough for two recipes.

Once you have created your culinary masterpiece at home, we'd love you to share photos of your successes (and fails), opinions, tips, and love (or not) of the spice of the month on the Library's

Facebook page using:

@MukwonagoLibrary.

You can always email your pictures and thoughts to us at

[info@mukwonagolibrary.org](mailto:info@mukwonagolibrary.org)

*Spice of the Month Kits are free, but supplies are limited. Please, only one kit per household.*



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# SPICE *Of the Month* CLUB



A staple in French and Mediterranean cooking, herbes de Provence is a floral and aromatic herb blend that can transport your taste buds to a French café with a shake of a spice jar.

Originating in the Provence region in the south of France, at first, the term "herbes de Provence" described a general multipurpose mixture of herbs grown in the Provençal region during the summer. The blend grew in popularity and became a more defined herb mixture in the 1960s. The mix here includes rosemary, lavender, basil, thyme, marjoram, bay leaf, sage, savory, fennel, and oregano.

The herbs add a distinctive flavor to dishes such as chicken, roasted vegetables, grilled fish, salads, tomato-based soups, and stews like ratatouille.

### FUN FACTS

- Julia Child is credited for introducing herbes de Provence to American home cooks with a recipe in her classic 1961 book "*Mastering the Art of French Cooking*."
- You can add a pinch or two of herbes de Provence to the coals of your grill when they're hot to infuse the smoke with flavor.

## Summer Bounty Ratatouille



Prep Time: 20 mins. (+standing) Cook Time: 60 mins.  
Servings: 12

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large eggplant, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium sweet red peppers, cut into 1/2-inch strips
- 2 medium onions, peeled and chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon herbes de Provence
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cans (14-1/2 ounces each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 4 medium zucchini, quartered lengthwise and sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil (or 1 tbsp. dried basil)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary (or 2 tsp. dried rosemary)
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley (or 2 tsp. dried parsley)
- 2 French bread baguettes (10-1/2 ounces each), cubed and toasted

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place eggplant in a colander over a plate; toss with 1 teaspoon kosher salt. Let stand 30 minutes. Rinse and drain well.
2. In a Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat; sauté peppers and onions until tender, 8-10 minutes. Add garlic; cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in tomato paste, herbes de Provence, pepper, remaining salt, tomatoes, and water. Add zucchini and eggplant; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until flavors are blended, 40-45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in fresh herbs. Serve over baguette cubes.

## Slow-Cooker French Lentil and Carrot Soup



Prep Time: 15 mins. Cook Time: 6-1/4 hours  
Servings: 6

### INGREDIENTS

- 5 large carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1-1/2 cups dried green lentils, rinsed
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons herbes de Provence
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups cubed rotisserie chicken
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the first 7 ingredients in a 5- or 6-qt. slow cooker; cover. Cook on low 6-8 hours or until lentils are tender.
2. Stir in chicken and cream. Cover and continue cooking until heated through, about 15 minutes.

### TIPS:

- *The herbes de Provence in this kit includes lavender (other mixes may not.) The lavender adds an unusual flavor that complements both carrots and lentils.*
- *The amount of heavy cream may be increased, decreased or eliminated depending on personal tastes.*

### **Recipe Sources**

Summer Bounty Ratatouille  
[www.tasteofhome.com](http://www.tasteofhome.com)

French Lentil and Carrot Soup  
[www.tasteofhome.com](http://www.tasteofhome.com)