

- a) What are flavourings?
- b) Differentiate between herbs and spices.
- c) i) State the flavourings used in cakes, biscuits and ~~cooking~~ cookies.
- ii) Name the artificial sweetener used in convenience foods.
- a) Describe any three essences used in cookery.
- b) Identify the herbs used in fish and meat dishes.
- c) Outline the general rules that should be followed when using flavourings.

4.1.13 Flavourings and colourings

There are many ways in which flavour and colour may be added to food at home and by manufacturers. The colour, flavour and aroma of food play a very important part in the enjoyment and digestion of a meal. Only those colours and flavours which have been fully tested are allowed to be used.

Herbs and Spices

Herbs and spices add colour, improve flavour and aroma, but add very little nutritive value to a dish. They make food more varied and interesting and stimulate the flow of the digestive juices.

Herbs were originally introduced into the country by monks. They are usually the leaves of plants which can be used fresh or dried. They have been valued for their medicinal properties, for use in herbal teas and in pot-pourri.

Crushing or chopping the leaves of herbs releases the flavour and scent of the aromatic oils they contain.

Sometimes the flowers, roots or seeds are used.

Spices were used in the past to disguise unpleasant flavours and smells. They are now used in the preparation of medicines, cosmetics, pot pourri, dyes and pomanders.

They are the dried stems, bark, flower buds, roots, seeds and seed pods of tropical plants.

Rules for the use of herbs and spices

- 1 Buy them in small quantities. Flavour deteriorates in storage
- 2 Store them in tightly closed containers. This prevents the evaporation of the volatile oils.
- 3 Quantities used depend a great deal on personal taste. Dried herbs have twice the strength of fresh ones.
- 4 A more pungent flavour is produced if whole spices are bought and ground to a powder in a pestle and mortar when required.

Table 4.10 Uses of some common herbs

Herb	General points and uses
Bay leaves	Used dried in soups and stews. Garnish for a pâté. Part of marinades and of a bouquet garni.
Basil	In salads, tomato, mushroom and egg dishes