



McCormick Science Institute: Mission, Funding Guidelines, Governance and 20 Years of Contribution to the Research and Public Health Communities

Johns Hopkins University, March 26, 2025

Hamed Faridi, PhD, Executive Director



Spices and Herbs Have a Long History of Use for Health

“An herb is the friend of physicians and the praise of cooks”

Charlemagne - 9th Century





McCORMICK

SCIENCE
INSTITUTE



In 2006, McCormick launched the McCormick Science Institute (MSI) to enhance scientific knowledge about the potential health benefits of spices & herbs.

The Institute is led by nutrition scientists and guided by a Scientific Advisory Council consisting of internationally-renown scientists and health professionals from leading research institutions.

MSI is a “Thought Leadership” gift from McCormick & Company for the benefit of everyone and operates independently from the business unit.

Our Mission Statement

The McCormick Science Institute is a research-driven organization whose mission is to support scientific research and disseminate information on the potential health benefits of culinary herbs and spices to all stakeholders including consumers and health professionals.

The Institute does not conduct research on any proprietary commercial products and/or formulations and do not lobby on behalf of any company, organization or NGO.

The Institute does not accept any IP from the researchers and considers all information public (mccormickscienceinstitute.com). The findings, views, and opinions of researchers, scientists, health professionals and others expressed on the Institute's website are theirs alone.

MSI does not fund research, endorse or provide any advice about prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or curing of any health-related condition or disease.



Funding Guidelines

Areas of research that are considered for funding by MSI include *in vitro* and *ex vivo* experiments, studies on analytical methodology and/or determinations, observational studies and IRB-approved experiments with human subjects. MSI does not fund fully or partially any *in vivo* studies with experimental animals.

All research will be conducted with culinary spices and/or herbs approved for food use by the FDA. Research on botanicals or other substances not used for their sensory characteristics in foods will not be considered for funding.

The results of all research supported by MSI must be submitted for publication in a credible, peer-reviewed journal and ideally would be presented at an appropriate national and/or international professional meeting.

The funding source for all studies supported by MSI must be fully disclosed in scientific publications.



30+

Universities in
US, UK,
Holland,
France &
Canada

75+

Research
studies
completed or
in progress

90+

Peer-reviewed
studies and
monographs
published

100+

Presentations
in national &
international
conferences &
meetings

28

Awards given
as endowed to
ASN and AND

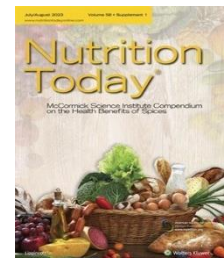
**Three areas of
focus on the role of
spices and herbs:**

Metabolic
health

Diet
Quality

Translation
& Education

**MSI Funded-research By the Stats
19 Years of service to Public Health...**



MSI Has Three Areas of Focus....

Metabolic Health Research

Including Heart Health, Cognition, Gut Health, Chronic Inflammation & more.

Diet Quality Research

Increasing the Healthy Eating Index (HEI) through consumption of beneficial dietary components (e.g., vegetables) and/or partially replacing saturated fat added salt and/or sugars in the diet without sacrificing flavor

Translational Research

Learning how to motivate consumers to improve diet quality and metabolic health with spices and herbs more quickly and efficiently.



MSI research is positively received by USDA CNPP and other agencies in charge of implementation of the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and School Meal programs and beyond.

Sound Science is the ONLY Lever appropriate to Impact Public Nutrition Policy

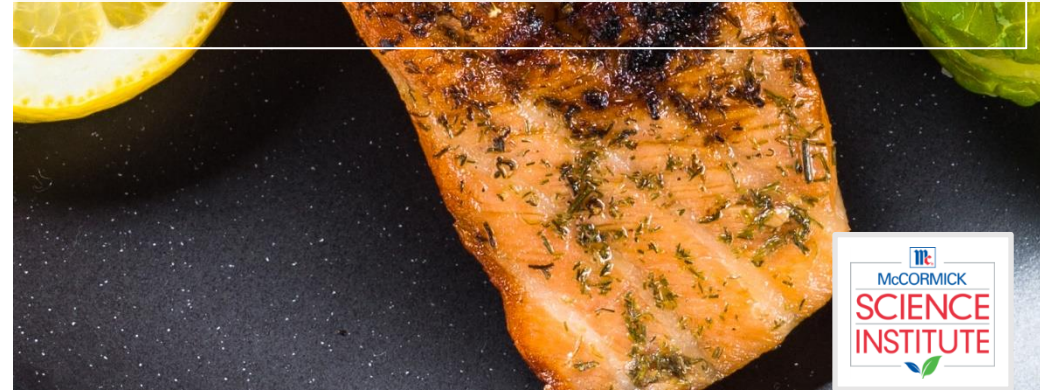
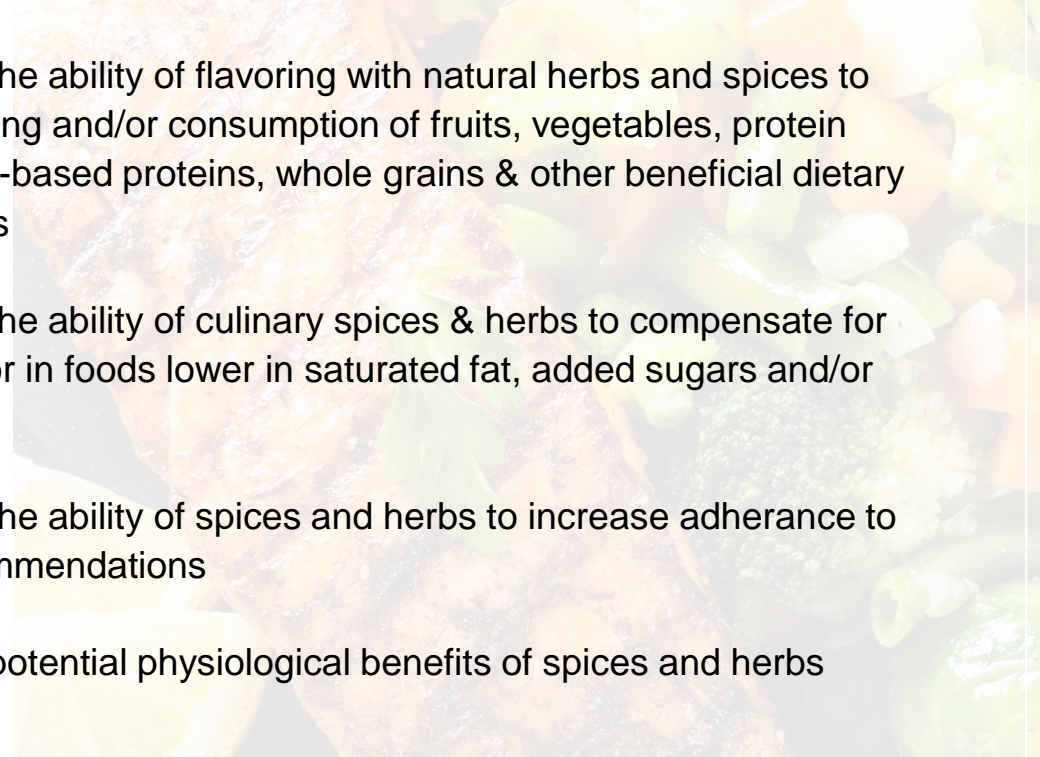


USDA and HHS only consider findings supported by peer-reviewed scientific research in formulation of nutrition policy.

MSI Translational Research is closely aligned with the Federal government's public health program focus and its efforts to improve American diet quality

Key Research Focus Areas

- Assessing the ability of flavoring with natural herbs and spices to increase liking and/or consumption of fruits, vegetables, protein foods, plant-based proteins, whole grains & other beneficial dietary components
- Assessing the ability of culinary spices & herbs to compensate for loss of flavor in foods lower in saturated fat, added sugars and/or sodium
- Assessing the ability of spices and herbs to increase adherence to DGA Recommendations
- Assessing potential physiological benefits of spices and herbs



MSI's Research Program Is Guided by Our Esteemed Scientific Advisory Council



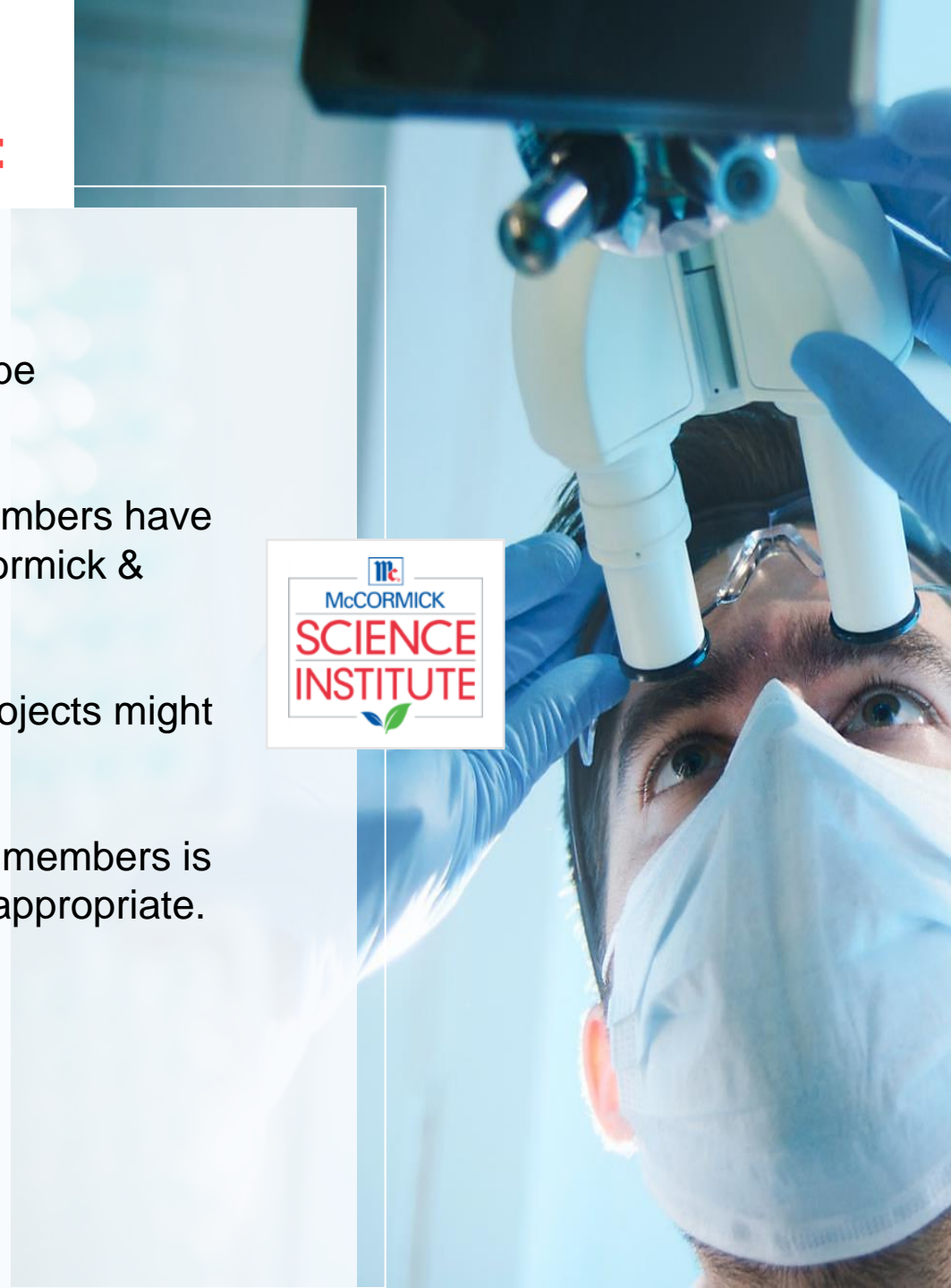
The MSI Scientific Advisory Council Is Governed By the Following Guiding Principles:

The primary role of SAC members is to identify areas of research to be considered for funding by MSI.

All SAC activities are dedicated to supporting the mission of MSI. Members have no obligation to support or promote the commercial interests of McCormick & Company, Inc.

The SAC provides advice and guidance to MSI on which research projects might be appropriate for MSI funding.

Composition of the SAC is public and the identity and affiliation of its members is disclosed in MSI publications, the MSI website and other venues as appropriate.



In 2007, We Could Not Identify a Single U.S. University with Research Programs on the Goodness of Culinary Levels. Since Then, More Than 30 North American and European Universities Have Conducted Research Sponsored by MSI.



Raleigh



MSI Annual Research Awards Have Helped Us Establish Our Professional Credibility in the Scientific Community

For over **19** years we have sponsored **28** annual MSI-endowed research awards in conjunction with the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)



Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



Kristina Petersen, Ph.D., APD, FAHA,
Associate Professor
Nutritional Sciences, Penn-State



Latest Awardees



Mary Pickler, MS, RD, LD
Baylor University

Virtually All Major News Publications and Nutrition-Related Websites Have Featured Stories on the Health Benefits of Adding Culinary Spices & Herbs to the Diet

Most of these stories are directly related to research findings funded by MSI and/or their basis for supporting herb and spice usage recommendations in the DGA.

Without a doubt, MSI's work is raising awareness.



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100 Years of Clev

Flavoring Foods Without Salt

Cutting back on salt doesn't mean sacrificing flavor. Here is a list of options for adding taste to your food without picking up the salt shaker.

What seasonings can be used in place of salt that will still add flavor to foods?

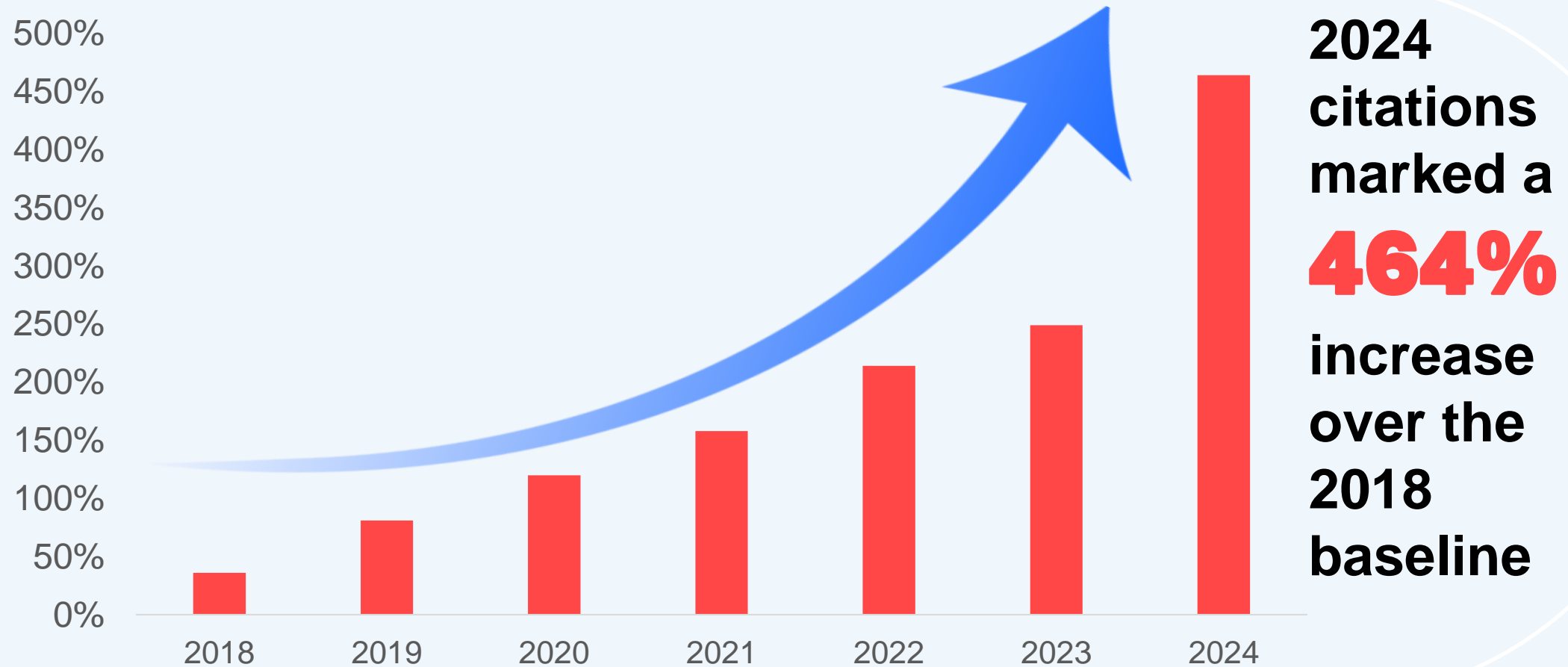
There are many ways to lower your sodium intake without sacrificing flavor. You might try herbs, spices, and seasoning blends when cooking. Here is a list of some options for adding taste and zest to your food without using extra salt.

Create your favorite flavors using herbs and spices:

Fish

- Bay leaf

MSI Citations in Professional Literature Have Increased Dramatically Since 2018



MSI's Research Has Been Recognized and Embraced by the Food and Nutrition Public Health Policy Community

Active partnership with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service across three Presidential Administrations

Regarded by USDA as an exceptional *MyPlate* partner in developing materials that address core USDA and Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) priority areas and messaging themes

The first to achieve the top delineation of "**Champion**" in USDA's *MyPlate* National Strategic Partners

USDA, AHA, ASTA, and numerous State Extension Groups are **magnifying** the work of MSI on the role of spices and herbs on diet quality and public health



Landing page [MyPlate Partner Resources](#) for USDA's MyPlate Partner Resources

A screenshot of the USDA MyPlate website's "Partner Resources" page. The page header includes the USDA logo, "MyPlate U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE", and navigation links like "HOME", "EAT HEALTHY", "LIFE STAGES", "RESOURCES", "PROFESSIONALS", and "MYPLATE KITCHEN". The main heading is "Partner Resources". Below it, a paragraph states: "The USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) is proud to work with MyPlate National Strategic Partners in reaching consumers with healthy eating messages." A bolded section reads: "The following materials have been developed by MyPlate National Strategic Partners:". Underneath, the "McCormick Science Institute" logo is displayed. Four recipe cards are shown in a grid, each with a photo of the dish and a link: "Quesadilla Seasoning (JPG)", "Creole-Inspired Seasoning Blend (JPG)", "Mexican Salt-Free Spice Blend (JPG)", and "Everyday Salt-Free Seasoning Blend (JPG)".

1) <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>

MSI Connections Run Deep Throughout Key USDA and HHS Services Branches

Our engagement extends beyond political appointees to the senior career staff that are key to the development of public policy, nutrition education and food assistance programs



“MSI is a dream partner”
- Top career executive of CNPP



Our Close Partnership With the USDA, and Its High Regard for MSI Research, Resulted in Inclusion of Two Important Statements About Spices and Herbs in the Current Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)



**Dietary
Guidelines
for Americans**

Published every 5 years, the DGA provide nutrition guidelines for policy makers and health professionals for advising Americans about healthy choices for their diet.

There was no mention of spices and herbs during the first 30 years of DGA's existence

The DGAs form the basis for everything the Government does related to food, nutrition and health including the school meals program.

MSI research was instrumental in having the following language included in the current 2020 – 2025 Guidelines:

“...using the Nutrition Facts label to choose products with less sodium, reduced sodium, or no-salt-added, etc.; and flavoring foods with **herbs and spices** instead of salt based on personal and cultural foodways.”

“**Spices and herbs** can help flavor foods when reducing added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and they also can add to the enjoyment of nutrient-dense foods, dishes, and meals that reflect specific cultures.”



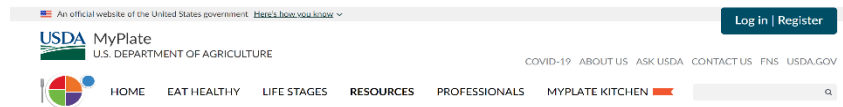
MSI Has Also Had a Primary Role in Translating the DGAs in Culturally Relevant Ways



Dietary Guidelines for Americans

In 2022, MSI co-created the widely-acclaimed MiPlato toolkit which features consumer-tested healthier recipes using spices and herbs.

USDA has also been grateful for the data MSI provided supporting the acceptance and cost-effectiveness of the modified recipes.



Partner Resources

The USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) is proud to work with MyPlate National Strategic Partners in reaching consumers with healthy eating messages.

The following materials have been developed by MyPlate National Strategic Partners:

McCormick Science Institute, Hass Avocado Board, Grain Foods Foundation, and Egg Nutrition Center



MiPlato Toolkit

MiPlato Your Way
[English](#) [Spanish](#)

5 MiPlato Meal Tips
[English](#) [Spanish](#)

MiPlato Your Way Health Professional Guide
[English](#) [Spanish](#)

5 Consejos de Comida MiPlato

para crear versiones más saludables y sabrosas de sus comidas favoritas

¿Está interesado en hacer su comida Latina favorita de México, América Central, Sur América, el Caribe y España sea más **saludable**, pero aún bien **sabrosa**? No tienes que buscar más. Ya sea que acostumbres a cocinar y comer estos platillos en casa con regularidad, o desea ampliar sus opciones, estas comidas transformadas se desarrollaron para ser familiares y sabrosas, y celebran muchos de los alimentos y sabores saludables que se encuentran en estas regiones. Estas recetas fueron diseñadas para incluir más frutas y verduras, menos grasas saturadas, sodio y azúcares añadidos, y más especias y hierbas para que sean nutritivas y deliciosas.



Arepas



Mezcle y combine para adaptarse a sus preferencias

Prepare arepas, baleadas, tostadas con especias y papitas fritas/topotos más saludables

¡Haga que los alimentos básicos sean bajos en grasas saturadas y sodio!

PORCIONES: 6

INGREDIENTES

- 1 taza de agua tibia
- 1 taza de masarepa
- ½ taza de queso oaxaqueño
- 3 cucharadas de aceite vegetal, cantidad dividida
- 1 cucharadita de ajo en polvo
- 1 cucharadita de cebolla en polvo
- ½ de cucharadita de pimienta negra
- ½ de cucharadita de sal

PREPARACIÓN

1. En un tazón grande combine agua tibia, masarepa, queso, 1 cucharada de aceite vegetal, especias y sal. Amasar la mezcla hasta que se forme una masa suave. Si la masa está demasiado seca, agregue más agua. Si está demasiado húmedo, agregue más masarepa.
2. Divida la masa en aproximadamente ½ tazas de bolitas. Coloque cada bola entre dos trozos de pergamino o plástico y use un rodillo para aplanar hasta que tenga aproximadamente ½" de grosor.



Frijoles Refritos



Di sí a los acompañantes

Como guacamole, salsa verde, ensalada de repollo morado y frijoles refritos

¡Una excelente manera de obtener más verduras y más nutrición!

PORCIONES: use 2 cucharadas como relleno en tacos o baleadas

INGREDIENTES

- 1 lata de frijoles rojos o frijoles pintos bajos en sodio con líquido
- ½ cucharada de aceite de oliva
- 1 diente de ajo picado
- 1 cucharada de cebolla morada picada
- 1 cucharadita de ajo en polvo
- 1 cucharadita de cebolla en polvo
- 1 cucharadita de pimientón
- ½ cucharadita de orégano mexicano, seco
- ½ cucharadita de comino molido
- ½ cucharadita de pimienta negra
- ½ cucharadita de sal

PREPARACIÓN

1. Coloque los frijoles con el líquido en una licuadora y mezcle hasta que quede suave.
2. Caliente el aceite en una sartén a fuego medio. Agregue el ajo y la cebolla y cocine unos 2 minutos. Agregue el



MSI Has Strong Ties and Partnerships With Key Satellite Agencies and NGOs

Quasi- government Agencies and NGOs



Gerald J. and Dorothy R.
Friedman School of
Nutrition Science and Policy
**FOOD AND NUTRITION
INNOVATION INSTITUTE**



**American
Heart
Association.**



**AMERICAN
EGG BOARD**





Former USDA Secretary Thomas Vilsack made a pre-recorded presentation during the 2024 MSI Annual Dinner

Click here to [view](#)





Looking Forward

We Have Been Closely Engaged in the 2025-2030 DGA Development Process

- ✓ We have provided written and oral comments to the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee
- ✓ MSI is participating in all USDA DGA public meetings
- ✓ We are also positioning MSI to contribute to the consumer education programs that will be developed based on the new Guidelines



We have geared most of our sponsored research to be of value to scientific evidence that informs the DGA and its implementation

Under the Auspices of Dr. Daniel Smith, an MSI Researcher, for the First Time in the U.S. an Undergraduate/Graduate Course Is Designed on the Health Benefits of Spices & Herbs



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

It will be offered both at undergraduate and graduate levels to students enrolled in Dietetic and Nutrition programs. It is expected that the online version will attract students from other universities as well.

Dr. Daniel Smith,
Professor of Nutrition,
University of Alabama at
Birmingham

Celebrating MSI's **20th** Anniversary Milestone in **2026**, We Are Publishing a Comprehensive Review of All the MSI-Sponsored Research for the Past 20 Years....

Nutrition Reviews®
Established 1942



Publisher: The prestigious journal of **Nutrition Reviews**, a component of Oxford University Press and the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI), with nearly 3,000 global subscriptions

Date: Publication target date is 1Q, 2026 both for print and digital formats

Content: 22 review papers **exclusively of MSI-sponsored original research** covering the role of culinary spices and herbs consumption on metabolic health, diet quality and nutrition education and translation. All authors are current or previous MSI principal investigators and/or SAC members

MSI 19th Annual Research Review Will Be Held on June 26, 2025, in Washington DC

The review meeting will feature MSI's sponsored research on the role of spices and herbs on metabolic health, diet quality and translation / behavior as well as panel discussions.

There will be three roundtable panels on topics of interest to the future of MSI:

- Current DC environment impact on DGA & other relevant programs
- Role of spices and herbs in GLP-1 movement
- Role of spices and herbs in Food is Medicine initiatives

The MSI Scientific Advisory Council, principal investigators and selected members of academia are expected to attend. The annual dinner and award ceremonies will be hosted by McCormick Chairman & CEO Brendan Foley

This is a by-invitation-only meeting. No member of the media or PR agencies is invited, and the sessions are recorded



In Conclusion...

MSI Has the Highest Level of Momentum in Our 19-year Existence

The Institute has developed credibility with academia and policymakers as an independent, science-based entity funding groundbreaking research on culinary spices and herbs in the areas of metabolic health, diet quality and nutrition translation

MSI-funded research has prompted recommendations in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* for consumers to use spices and herbs to add flavor to foods reduced in sodium, saturated fat and added sugars while increasing their enjoyment

MSI-funded research has potential of great scientific value in the new Administration's "Make America Healthy Again" initiative

We have embarked on a multi-center & multi-year study to examine the potential of spices and herbs to lower the sodium and added sugar content of school meals to meet new USDA standards and to evaluate communication strategies designed to promote their acceptance by students

MSI is currently funding an all-time high of 26 studies at leading academic institutions dedicated to exploring additional ways spices and herbs can contribute to public health through beneficial physiological effects, improved diet quality and effective nutrition education.



Thank you!!

