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>>Nothing beats the flavor and aroma of fresh herbs! Whether in our garden or in the kitchen, fresh herbs can't help but enliven the senses, and it turns an average, everyday meal into a gourmet treat! And on today's show, we have a very special treat. We're headed to Paris, France, to learn from a gourmet chef how to make the most out of those fresh herbs. Hi, I'm Rebecca Cressman, and you're watching HomeGrown.

>>Welcome to HomeGrown! The show that brings you all the dirt on vegetable gardening. Today we're all about fresh herbs. And to learn the best way to use those herbs in the kitchen, we decided to head to one place that we can think of that's most known for its use of herbs and for cooking in general. And that is, of course, Paris France! Our very own Miriam Casos had that tough assignment of traveling to Paris and meeting up with celebrated gourmet chef and educator, Samira Hradsky, to learn from all her tricks and tips for using those fresh herbs. Let's take a look.

>>So you said there are three things I need to look for when I shop for herbs? You said it has to look; I have to pay attention to the appearance, the fragrance, and the texture.

>>Yes, exactly. This is the tarragon. So when you look at it, just look how green. It's absolutely beautiful, brilliant. You can't even see one brown leaf on it, you see? Because it looks new, see? Not even one brown leaf on it. I mean, when it starts getting like this, for example, like a little brownish here, that's when it's really starting to get old. So if it was old, all of it, especially at the end, would look like that. This is one of the herbs that you have to rub here. See? You don't smell much, but when you rub it with your hand...

>>That's when you smell?

>>Smell now.

>>Yes, indeed.

>>See? Isn't that beautiful? Like licorice, kind of a smell. It's green, it's soft, if it was really tough and it wasn't soft, then it would be old.

>>Look at the parsley here. It looks so green, it's absolutely beautiful. It's standing like a bouquet of flowers. This is the flat-leaf parsley or the Italian parsley. In the United States we are more sort of used to see the frizzy one. Here, you will be used to seeing more of this flat-leaf or Italian parsley. Now parsley. When you touch it, and if it's really harsh, rough, it means it's old. It's been sitting there before they picked it for a long time. It's soft, you see how nice and soft, like silk! You know? Smooth, like silk. Tender. That's really good parsley. Green, nice green. You see how beautiful green? Once the parsley starts getting too yellow, very yellow, then it's old. It has been sitting there for awhile. And you really don't need that.

>>Right. And how will they smell?

>>Once you start picking it and sniffing it, you will have the smell, because you're releasing the aroma, the juice. But it's been picked already, so the juice from the bottom here, when they picked it, has already been released. So to really get it, you have to start chopping it, or again, rubbing it.

>>Or I can rub a leaf?  
>>Ah, smell that now.  
>>Oh yeah.  
>>So this is mint right here?  
>>That's mint. And you can tell that from just smelling it, right? The aroma.  
>>Very strong, you can't miss it.  
>>And you can see that it's all fresh, it just came, and look how standing, see? Now if this was old, it would, again, would be sort of falling apart.  
>>The leaves, probably the stems would be falling.  
>>Exactly. And you see? Feel here. It's really soft. It's not too harsh. Because sometimes you buy mint, and the leaves are so tough, so off, because it's been sitting, standing there for too long before they picked it up. So it's much better to pick it up when it's just starting to be about, let's say, ten inches like this? Or even shorter, start picking it. And if you want it to grow when I used to plant it, I would snip the edge here, so it will sprout two more leaves and it would go two directions.  
>>That's a good tip!  
>>And the leaves are not too huge, too large and too off.  
>>Oh okay, so it has to be a regular size?  
>>Yes, smaller like this. You see, it's really like a leaf of a little rose, kind of. You know? Now...aneth in French, I'm sorry if I refer it to it, I'm so used to saying aneth, the dill...  
>>Dill.  
>>Aneth comes from the anise and it has that anise kind of smell to it. So if you take it and rub it a little bit. Ah, smell.  
>>Oh yeah, it smells a little bit. And the texture, it should be soft again?  
>>It's always soft, it has to be. Even when it's old, it will be soft, because it's a very fragile leaf. You see how fragile? Look how the leaf, it's very thin, it's very fragile. So even when it's old, it will still look and feel a little soft because it's a very fragile leaf.  
>>This is sage.  
>>Wow, it's beautiful.  
>>When it's really—this one like this leaf—look, when it starts getting older, it starts getting... it starts to fold and curl. And look at the difference in colors.  
>>Oh yeah.  
>>If we rub it, you can still smell the sage smell. This would be stronger.  
>>These would be stronger? Let's see.  
>>It's much fresher and stronger.  
>>Oh yeah, much stronger!  
>>You see, much stronger, much fresher. I find sage very pretty.  
>>It is very pretty.  
>>And it has a sort of rough...  
>>A silky texture.  
>>But a little bit like a velvet, a velvety, a velvety texture. And I like that, I like that velvety texture.  
>>And it seems to be pretty strong leaves.  
>>It's a dark leaf. It's firm, it's tough.  
>>So coriander, would you call cilantro, right?

>>It's coriander, it's called cilantro, or Chinese parsley. These, when you see Chinese parsley, cilantro, it is fresh coriander. Some people prefer to use coriander when it's dry, for the seeds. Some people like to use that to say coriander seeds, and when it comes to the fresh, they say cilantro. When it's nice and green, and when it's fresh it's green, it's beautiful. And you can smell it.

>>It's a very strong smell.

>>It's a strong smell. And I'm picking here the bad leaves. You see? They have spots. They're turning yellow. Okay? Look at the spots. Even though it could be green and still have spots, which means they've given it too much water. You know, when it gets too much water, it starts getting spotty. But when it gets old, it starts getting yellow. Alright, basil.

>>Okay, this is basil right here.

>>That's a basil. Look how beautiful, green, perfect the leaves are. They're wonderful.

>>And they have some pretty long and big leaves.

>>Big leaves, and it's sort of like it has lines, you know? It's like all the lines of beauty. And when you buy it here, I like buying it...when you buy it, try to buy it with roots. Because if it has roots, you can put it in water, and it's like a flower. You sort of have it in water and it's dancing right then. It's absolutely beautiful. And it stays for a few days in water like that. Now basil, you really...it's the most fragile herb that I can think of. It is so fragile ...it's thin, and it's very fragile, and it has a very short life, if you may. So that's why get it in roots so you can have it still alive. It needs to be alive, once you pick it up. And put it aside. It will start getting dark. You see, when it starts getting dark, look at this little teeny leaf. If you handle it, if I handle it with my hand, it will immediately start getting darker. So be careful when you're handling basil.

>>So don't touch it too much?

>>Don't touch too much. Because you don't even have to rub it to get the smell. The smell is right there, the aroma is right there. And the greener, the better!

>>How would you describe the smell of the basil?

>>Uh, the word that comes to my mind when I smell it is "sweet." Very sweet.

Rosemary, this one is starting to get old. And that's dry. You see, when rosemary starts drying, it starts getting darker in color, not...

>>Brownish.

>>Exactly, it's brownish, not greenish. You see the difference between this?

>>Oh yes, definitely.

>>This is getting drier.

>>It's like a different plant.

>>Ah, it's like a different plant, you see?

>>Alright. So when I buy rosemary, I should look for, of course, it has to be standing up firm, green, leafy and soft. Very smooth. And the smell. And we need to rub it. You can smell it right away.

>>You can smell it, but if you rub it.

>>It doesn't smell...it's not as strong as the other herbs.

>>It's even sweeter than basil.

>>So what do we have here?

>>This is thyme, okay? And before we start, we thought we'd say anything about it. Just do this and smell it. Smell now.

>>Mmm, it's very strong.

>>Isn't that beautiful? The fresher it is, the stronger the smell it's going to come. And that's really with any herb. The fresher, the more pungent the aroma is going to be. So always, that's why we look for the fresher, because we want to infuse as much of that taste, the aroma in what we are making.

>>And it's very soft.

>>It's extremely soft. It's very, very teeny. It's teeny, teeny, teeny. Smaller than a smaller aunt, each leaf.

>>The smallest leaves ever.

>>And this is one kind of thyme. As it gets older, these will start...look it's getting older. Starts getting drier and drier, you know? As it dries.

>>So when I buy thyme, I need to look for pale-ish green, soft texture. And the aroma. And the smell, it has to be fresh and strong.

>>Okay, well that was great. I'm really excited to go to your kitchen and for you to show me how to use them.

>>Oh great, let's go.

>>Okay so now here we are in your beautiful kitchen with all the herbs that we purchased this morning. And now we'd like to know how you keep it fresh.

>>First of all, with all these herbs, don't mush it until you are ready to use it. I prefer using the fresh herbs. If I cannot find a fresh herb, then I will use the dried. The purpose of cleaning these herbs, first of all, to take any bad leaves. And also to make room for the water, so when I take the glass of water, right here, and you cooked it, you want to make sure that not a lot of it in the bottom not touching the water because it will get wilted, and it will wilt and it will get bad. It will look really yucky. So this, I can keep it for a couple of days like that. The mint, I can keep just like that. It will be nice, it will stay erect, it will not go bad. As long as you change the water, it's like you do it for a flower. When you have roses, you change the water, you keep it clean, you trim them. The same thing you do with your herbs, you know? Be nice, be gentle and kind to your herbs. They will be nice to you and they will last longer. Now, if I want to keep them in the fridge for, like, say longer than a couple of days, for like a week or so, I will clean them. Just take the bad ones, the dark ones, you know, just take all of that, and then what you do is you take a paper towel...and you roll it, you roll it nicely. Okay?

>>So use a paper towel?

>>Paper towel, not wet, dry. Because it will absorb the moisture and then you take a Ziploc bag, okay? Put it in and then that goes for parsley, for the coriander, for the dill, okay?

>>So for all the herbs, it's the same technique?

>>Except for the basil and I'll show you and tell you why. Okay, when we get to the basil. See, what I'm doing here, flattening it and rolling it. Why? To take the air out.

>>So it has to be...

>>Airtight. Yeah. And then go ahead...see, there's no air.

>>Oh yeah.

>>See? The air is gone. Then I put it in the vegetable and fruit drawer in your fridge. I can assure you this will stay green and nice for a week like that.

>>That's good.

>>Okay? And that's what I do. So this is for the mint.

>>Now, we come to thyme. And the way I buy it here, as you saw in the market, it comes with the roots. Just put it in the water, and here. If I keep it like this, it's fresh, it's nice and the smell always, it's fantastic, the smell will always be nice.

>>And this is good for how many days, if you keep it here?

>>I keep it like this for a week. I don't even have to wrap it in paper towels and put it in here. As long as it has the root, yes, it's tougher because it's tougher. You see? But as it gets older, look what happens, there's no green leaves anymore. It becomes dry and they start falling. So if I dry this to keep it as a dry herb, look at how the leaves are falling, so I can get rid of all the dried leaves. And we have basil now. And again, I buy it with the roots, so all I have to do now, take it and put it in water here. And it's my flower. And it's full.

>>It is very pretty!

>>Yeah, it's a very beautiful—it's sweet and fragile. I don't wrap it in paper towels and put it in a Ziploc bag. It will get brown immediately. It needs to breathe. If I want to keep it, sometimes if I want to keep it for...I advise that basil, you pick or you snip, you immediately use. Don't let it sit for a long time, because if it starts getting...it's very fragile, it doesn't have longevity there. It really doesn't.

>>Not ideal for storage, then?

>>No. I can keep it for up to three days.

>>Just three days?

>>For a couple of days in here, if it's with the roots. It's with the roots, you will get much longer life from it. If it's not, what I do is I take a Ziploc bag and I make holes in it. I make holes. And put it in with no paper towels. Put that if it doesn't have the roots. Make the holes, and put it in when it's dry—no water. And leave it at room temperature. It will stay for three days, no problem. It needs to air, it needs that air. And the other ones we took the air out, but this one they need the air.

>>So this is a special one? A special treatment.

>>Very fragile, very special and it requires a special treatment.

>>And now I would like to know how you prepare and clean them.

>>Okay, as you see here, we'll start with the mint. I started doing part of it when I was showing earlier, is we took the leaves from the bottom there, and here I haven't because I wanted to show you how, okay you see one that is dark and whatever, it doesn't look nice. So all you have to do is take them, and then, clean them like that.

>>Can I try one?

>>Yes, please. You know, as if you were cleaning, you know, how you do the rose? Exactly. When you do the roses. And mint is absolutely like this. It's okay, because I'm going to use them for chopping right away. Anything that looks dark like this, it's old, I throw it away. Now if I want to wash it then take the leaves, I want to take just the leaves. Then when you get to the end, just snip that like that, okay? So that's what we do, we take all the leaves, okay? And that, okay? And then what we do is let's say we finish, that's all we need. We take it and run the water. Just gently, gently. And then, there. It's ready. And if you want to leave it a little bit, you can just take it and let it dry a little bit before you use it. And there are really two ways of cleaning parsley. You can take it and do like I did with the mint, but if it's really dirty because sometimes it comes

and it has a lot of sand in it. So what you need to do, I do sometimes, for example, I'll take just the leaves, okay? And those that are the tough, rough kind of stems you don't need. You just take...you see there are two here? Okay. One here. So I just take that, and go and take that.

>>So you take the tops of those, the ends of those...

>>But not just the leaves, I take the little bit of the soft stems, okay? These are soft so I take them like that.

>>And why is that?

>>Because these are too tough. Okay? And if I want to chop them and put them in my salad, they're really tough to chew, even. I save them sometimes because there's a lot of aroma in them. I save them sometimes I put them with soups, you know, with broth, when you're making soup.

>>So you take the thinner part of the stem, not the thicker part?

>>Right, and then you chop it very fine. Then I wash it. And like I have here, it's already chopped. And what I did was I put water and all the sand and the dirt goes to the bottom. Then I skim that and squeeze it a little bit with my hands, and then I wash it again a couple of times. And after I chop it. You can do that, it's much easier. I find it easier for me, you don't have to waste any effort because what you do is take it back to your sink, wash your hands, take all the chopped parsley, all of it, and then...

>>Oh, perfect! That way you won't waste any of the parsley.

>>So all the bag, all the stuff, the dirt is in the bag. And same here. See? And then, I do this, I don't even have to touch it with my hand. And I go, there.

>>If you ever want to dry all these herbs, and you don't have a salad spinner and you don't want to go buy one, the best way, the way my mother used to do it, is, there...like that. Like that.

>>Oh, great. That's very practical, yes.

>>See the water? It absorbed the water, and look, see all the water? All the water, the towel is wet now. All the water is...

>>You could probably use another towel.

>>Yeah, you could put a double towel. Or you can use it from one corner. See? Now it's wet here too. So that's how you can dry it. So now it's dry and we can use it.

>>The way I clean dill, I take them one by one like that, line them all up, okay? Like this. And then I go to a bowl of water, and just have a bowl of water. And you know, I don't clean them until I'm...because they don't really take a lot of dirt and sand in them. They're very fine.

>>So it's easier than the parsley.

>>Exactly, it's much easier, because they're very fine. Nothing will stick or stay in them. It's very, very, very fragile. So now, we move into that sage. And I put here that dry form. I bought some a couple of weeks ago. And it gets grey-ish, more white. To wash it the same way we did with some water, let the water run on it. And with a bowl of water, have it and then shake it like this, okay? And then you have it ready to use. And when you're using what you need...

>>Just the leaves, no stems.

>>The leaves. And then you chop it, very, very fine. But don't use a lot of it, it's a very strong herb, and a little bit of it would do. Now if I want to cook with thyme, all I have to do, I don't even have to take the leaves, you see? I will, if I want to take some for

cooking, I just snip some like that. I take a bunch of them, take it like that and then get my water... It's really dirty, it has a lot of dirt because you have it with the roots, you see?

>>So you probably have to wash it more often more times.

>>Exactly, yeah. When I wash it like that, I don't take the leaves because it's tedious, it takes a long time. As I clean it—it's clean—I take it the way it is, tie it and put it in your dish. And then when you come out, when it's done, you pick it up. There will be no leaves. All the leaves have fallen into your dish. And that's what you wanted.

>>So you don't have to take the leaves out...

>>You don't have to take leaves, you don't have to chop, you don't have to go through all that trouble.

>>Basil, wash it only just before using. And again, what we use is we use the leaves. We take the leaves, see? Suppose I'm going to use this.

>>Just the leaves, no stems.

>>The leaves, not the stems. Here. Here, there...and there. And that, I throw away. I have no use for it. And this, after it's washed, then I'm going to use this. Now, some recipes tell you decorate or use with chiffonade. Cut it chiffonade style.

>>What's chiffonade?

>>Aha, good question! You line up your basil like that. Alright? Take those little stems, roll it, you know? And then get a cutting board and a knife. I'm going to show you how you chiffonade it. And then see? I rolled it. I lined them up into both each other. And then roll it, and then very...then see? Basil, when I cook with that, I don't really let it boil or cook. After I turn off all my sauce, like the tomato sauce we're making for the eggplant parmesan, I will not put it and cook it with it. I will turn off the stove while the tomato sauce is still very hot, and I will add that chopped basil to it.

>>Just to add the final flavor.

>>Right. So the infusion comes from the little heat, but it's not boiling to the point where you're killing it and it's dissolving into your dish.

>>And because it is a sensitive one, you said it is the most sensitive. So that's a good thing to remember.

>>Correct. Very, very correct. Yeah. When you want to use rosemary, you just take those leaves, you know? And then you chop them and use them for sauces again. I use a lot of them, I put a lot of them when I'm going to make potatoes, I cut the potatoes very fine and just mix this with some garlic, a little bit of milk and salt and pepper and put them over the sliced potatoes and in the oven. It is absolutely delicious. And you would love it. I always like to pick the longest ones. Why? Because this is a dry, you see how tough it is? It's very tough. I take that and use that as a skewer to put shrimp, scallops seafood, little pieces of fish, and grill them. Your seafood will never taste the same. You will be so surprised how good it tastes. Because all that aroma that comes from the rosemary, it's sort of infused in your seafood.

>>I just love Paris, it's so beautiful! Now, before we go, let's just review a few of the simple things we can do to make sure we successfully use those herbs. First, when buying the fresh herbs, remember the three senses: sight, smell and touch! Next, if you want to store your fresh herbs for longer than a few days, roll them in that paper towel, seal them in a Ziploc bag, and then place them in the refrigerator. Also, remember that

basil is the most delicate of herbs, handle it with care, just like you would a flower. And finally, be sure not to add your fresh herbs to your dish until the very last minute, and that will preserve their flavor. And that's all the time we have for today. But for more information on this and other episodes of HomeGrown, or to order a copy of the series, be sure to log onto HomeGrown at [www.byubroadcasting.org](http://www.byubroadcasting.org). Thank you for watching, and remember, everything is better HomeGrown! Goodbye.

>>On an upcoming episode of HomeGrown, we'll learn how to care for the soil in our vegetable gardens. Whether you're an avid gardener or just starting out, we'll cover all the basics, from how to tell what type of soil you have, and how to mend it. And even learn how to make your own perfect soil! Be sure to tune in!

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