A small herb-and-garnish prep station for holiday cooking

Prepare the herbs and garnishes for a holiday meal once, in small labelled containers, so each dish gets the right one. The prep sheet lists each herb or garnish, the dish it is for, when it was washed and prepared, its container, and a use-by date you take from your recipe or label.

What you need

- Fresh herbs, citrus and other garnishes for your recipes
- Small lidded containers, one per herb or garnish
- Clean cutting board, knife, salad spinner or towels
- Paper towels or a clean cloth for drying
- Labels or tape and a pen
- The printed prep sheet

1. List what each dish needs

Go through your recipes and write every herb and garnish on the prep sheet with the dish it is for and the amount the recipe asks for. Check the refrigerator before buying more.

2. Wash, then dry

Start with clean hands. FDA advises washing produce under running water before preparing it, without soap, detergent or commercial produce wash, and then drying it with a clean cloth or paper towel. Produce sold as pre-washed and ready-to-eat can be used without washing again.

3. Prepare and label each container

Chop, zest or pick each herb with a clean board and knife and put it in its own container. Label it with the name, the dish and the preparation date. Keep wet items, such as citrus segments, apart from dry herbs.

4. Refrigerate and check before cooking

FDA advises storing perishable fresh produce such as herbs in a clean refrigerator at 40° F or below. Before each dish, check the container and throw away anything that looks rotten. The sheet helps you plan; it does not extend how long prepared herbs keep.

Important

Wash herbs under running water without soap, dry them, and keep them in the refrigerator at 40° F or below. Throw away anything that looks rotten.

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Print at 100% on plain paper.

Meal and date: _____

Fridge thermometer reading: _____

Herb or garnish	For dish	Amount	Washed and dried	Prepared on	Container	Use by (recipe or label)
			☐			
			☐			
			☐			
			☐			
			☐			
			☐			
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Before each dish

- ☐ Container label matches the dish.
- ☐ Herb looks fresh; anything rotten thrown away.
- ☐ Clean spoon or tongs used to take it out.

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Tips and disclosures

- Use a refrigerator thermometer to check that the fridge holds 40° F or below (FDA).
- Prepare the herbs for the first dishes first, and leave sturdy garnishes for later in the day.
- Use suitable containers you already own; follow each container and lid manufacturer’s directions.

Notice: AI concept illustration

AI concept illustration: the image is an original AI editorial illustration of a herb and garnish prep station, not a photograph of a tested result or of the linked product. It does not establish colour, capacity, fit, temperature or results; check the retailer listing and the maker's directions.

Sources

Main source: FDA: Selecting and Serving Produce Safely

FDA: Selecting and Serving Produce Safely
https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/selecting-and-serving-produce-safely

Source note: FDA supports washing produce under running water without soap, detergent or produce wash, drying it with a clean cloth or paper towel, and storing perishable produce such as herbs at 40° F or below. FDA gives no storage time for prepared herbs; take the use-by date from your recipe or the package.