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Press Release

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### Outdated Spices

My daughter has recently discovered that she likes to cook and is exploring the world of spices. She learned rather quickly that they can be very expensive at the grocery store, so being thrifty, she “shopped” in my spice cabinet. Fortunately, my spice cabinet contained duplicates and I was happy to reduce my inventory before some lost their flavor.

Because dried spices can lose their flavor, it is a good idea to date your spices when you buy them and share your spices with friends--or your daughter.

McCormick recommends the following for spice shelf life:

- Ground spices—2-3 years
- Whole spices-3-4 years
- Seasoning blends-1-2 years
- Herbs-1-3 years
- Extracts-4 years, except pure vanilla, which lasts indefinitely

To make sure your McCormick spices are not “antiques”—

- Check the bottle for a “best by” date.
- If the container is from Baltimore, Maryland, it is at least 15 years old.
- If it’s a tin, it is also at least 15 years old, except black pepper.
- The fourth way to check on the age of your spice is to go to this web site, [www.spicecheckchallenge.com](http://www.spicecheckchallenge.com) and type in the needed information

Recipes for fall vegetables, especially pumpkins, winter squash and sweet potatoes, require many spices for their ingredients, so now is a good time to check your spice cabinet for outdated ones.

Modern shoppers are accustomed to buying spices in containers without knowing where they originate. The following lists where some of the more commonly used spices originate.

- Nutmeg and Mace are two different spices that come from the seed of the same fruit. There is a thin, dark shell around the nutmeg. Surrounding that shell is a brilliantly red lacy network, the Mace. Nutmeg is one spice that I always have on hand and I grate the nut when a recipe calls for nutmeg. There is definitely a taste difference.
- Allspice, also called “Jamaican Pepper,” comes from the shiny –leaved evergreen trees of the myrtle family that bear berries, which when dried resemble oversized peppercorns. Allspice aroma suggests a blend of cloves with hints of cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger.
- Cloves are the buds of the clove tree. It takes between 4,000-7,000 dried cloves to make a pound of spice.
- Cinnamon, one of the first spices used by man, comes from the dried bark of trees in the evergreen family. Bark is peeled from the trees and rolled into slender “quills” for shipment. Ground cinnamon is one of the most important baking spices in cakes, breads, cookies and pies.
- Ginger, the root of a tuberous perennial, is grown in the tropics. When the plant is about a year old, the roots are dug up, washed, dried and often bleached in the sun. Ginger needs to be peeled before use. Plunging the roots in boiling water loosens the peel so it can be easily peeled.

Julie Noles, served this delicious Pumpkin Bread last week at a Sip N’ See for a friend.

### Pumpkin Bread

Yield: 3 loaves

3 cups sugar  
 1 cup salad oil  
 4 eggs  
 2 tsp vanilla  
 3 ½ cups flour  
 2 tsp soda  
 2 tsp salt  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 1 tsp nutmeg  
 1 tsp cinnamon  
 2 tsp pumpkin spice  
 2/3 cup water  
 2 cups pumpkin  
 1 cup chopped pecans

Combine sugar and oil. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add vanilla. Sift dry ingredients together. Set aside. Add dry ingredients, alternating with water. Add pumpkin and pecans. Mix and pour into 3 well greased and floured 9x5x3 pans. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour or until they test done. Remove from pans when barely warm.

Icing:

4 tbsp butter  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1 ½ tsp vanilla  
1 ½ cups powdered sugar  
Dash salt

Cream butter with cream cheese. Add vanilla. Add sifted sugar and salt. Fold in nuts last. Frost cooled bread.