

ENJOY | THE GREEN LIFE

By Avital Andrews

SPICES OF LIFE

Banish bland and power up your food with these expert-recommended eco-spices.

Chef **RICK GRESH**, of David Burke's Primehouse in Chicago, is trying to redefine the term "steak house" by using seasonal, local, and organic ingredients. His modern cuisine focuses on meats that have been dry-aged in his restaurant's salt-tiled aging room.

"**Pink Himalayan salt** is natural, renewable, and ethically sourced—and the best salt for you because it's composed of the same 84 trace minerals found in the human body. It comes in many forms, from ground to slabs, which you can cook and serve on. The taste is clean and oceanic. I use pink Himalayan salt crystals instead of white salt on every table and also use bricks of it for service—it's the 'plate' for several of my tartare and sashimi dishes and is part of the tableside preparation routine, acting as a hot rock." *About \$5 for 4.5 ounces, mountainroseherbs.com*



SHYNO CHACKO PANDEYA co-owns Santhigram Wellnes, an ayurveda wellness clinic in White Plains, New York. Originally from India, Pandeya's family has used ayurvedic practices, including harnessing the powers of spices, for generations.

"**Turmeric** is much more than a spice: It aids in digestion, has anti-inflammatory properties, and is used in traditional medicine to prevent a wide variety of ailments, including cancer and arthritis. To start



benefiting from this multipurpose spice, add a pinch of the certified-organic turmeric root powder from **BANYAN BOTANICALS** to impart an earthy, mustardy, slightly gingerlike taste to any dish. Use turmeric sparingly, however, as it is very strong. Banyan Botanicals is an excellent source for quality spices made from sustainably sourced, fairly traded organic herbs." \$6.50 for 3.4 ounces, banyanbotanicals.com

CHRIS YEO is the chef and owner of Straits Restaurant Group, which runs five Asian-fusion eateries in California and Texas. He co-wrote *The Cooking of Singapore* (Harlow and Ratner, 1993) and has been a guest chef at the Smithsonian Institute, the James Beard House, and the U.S. Singaporean embassy.

"I love taking modern twists on traditional foods by infusing unexpected spices. The **coriander**—also known as Chinese parsley—from **SIMPLY ORGANIC** is made of cilantro-plant seeds and has a fragrant flavor reminiscent of both lemon peel and sage. Warm and citrusy, it adds a sharp element to a variety of dishes and blends perfectly into my yellow curry sauce. The Simply Organic brand doesn't use any fillers or artificial colors or flavors, and its glass bottles are BPA-free." \$5.19 for 2.3 ounces, simplyorganic.com



DANIELLE SHARGORODSKY is a nutrition manager at the food-service company Sodexo. A registered dietitian, she is developing new spice blends, now in the testing stages. Formerly, she managed nutritional services at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

"The organic **no-salt seasoning** from Costco's **KIRKLAND SIGNATURE** brand is my go-to product for crowd-pleasing dishes. This savory blend of 21 organic spices and ingredients provides a fantastic flavor combination without any salt, and adds a kick without bringing on the heat. My favorite use for this versatile, gluten-free blend is sprinkling it on roasted vegetables. I also use it as a tasty topping for popcorn. As an added bonus, the bottle is recyclable." \$8 for 14.5 ounces, bit.ly/kirklandsignature



Chef and chemist **PETER MOLLETT** owns [Smokin' Texas Gourmet](#), a company that makes sauces, condiments, rubs, and herb blends. His Keller, Texas, test kitchen features a 100-flavor spice rack.

"The certified-organic **yellow-mustard powder** from **EDEN FOODS** has a mild, sweet flavor that can liven up any dish. It doesn't have the traditional brown-mustard bite, making it an exemplary addition to marinades, vinaigrettes, sauces, and pickling recipes. To control the thickness of sauces, mustard powder works better than mustard seed, and Eden's version has a flavor that's complex enough to evolve almost any cuisine. It comes packaged in dark-amber glass to protect it from the light." *\$5 for 1.7 ounces, edenfoods.com*

