

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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January's spice is Old Bay!

The average home cook in America spends about 53 minutes a day preparing food, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. We kept that number in mind as we planned ahead for the *fourth* year of our Spice of the Month kits! In 2025, we'll be shining a spotlight on time-saving spice blends, a secret weapon for packing meals with a lot of flavor in almost no time.

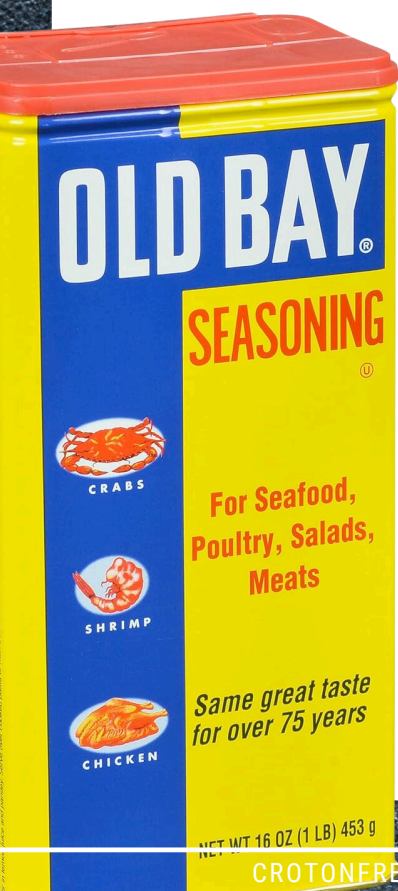
First up: Old Bay. It evokes memories of the beach, of a quick crab boil dumped out on a table covered in newspaper, of salty breezes briefly chilling the air on a summer night. Its spicy complex flavor is a distinctive and alluring addition to almost any meal (not just seafood!).

Old Bay seasoning has a storied past. On Nov. 9-10, 1938 — Kristallnacht, “The Night of Broken Glass” — a German spice merchant named Gustav Brunn became one of tens of thousands of Jews violently captured by the Nazis. He was sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp, but his family was able to secure his release. After they immigrated to Baltimore, Brunn resumed his career

selling spices, working first for McCormick and then opening up his own spice business. When Brunn discovered that local fishermen and seafood vendors were using his spices to develop their own blends to create signature flavors, he followed suit and developed an 18-ingredient legend that he patented soon after.

Once upon a time, Old Bay contained paprika, mustard, celery salt, red and black pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and a handful of undisclosed spices. McCormick, which bought the rights after Brunn's death in 1985, acknowledges that the blend still contains paprika, celery salt, both peppers, and mustard, but it keeps the remaining ingredients top secret.

In spite — or maybe because — of this, Old Bay seasoning has attained cult status in Baltimore and beyond, with Old Bay socks, hot sauce, Bloody Mary mix, and more, all available for sale.



Croton
Free
Library

**All books listed here are available to check out
from the Westchester Library System!**

Our sources:

- [Exploring time spent on cooking, reading, and other activities for National Hobby Month | The Economics Daily: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- [Frito-Lay and Quaker's U.S. Snack Index Predicts 2024 Trends Amidst an Increasing Time Crunch | FritoLay](#)
- [An Ode to Old Bay, the Great American Condiment | The New Yorker | Casey Cep](#)
- [OLD BAY Gifts, Merchandise & More | OLD BAY](#)
- [Gustav Brunn's Baltimore Spice Company | Explore Baltimore Heritage](#)
- [OLD BAY® Seasoning | McCormick For Chefs](#)

The recipes in this kit are:

- Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Cakes from *American Home Cooking* by Cheryl Alters Jamison & Bill Jamison (p. 110-1)
- Old Bay Curry Sauce from *A Very Upsetting Cookbook about Sandwiches* by Tyler Kord (p. 165)

See our cookbook collection for additional info & recipes, like:

- Fried Sunchokes with Old Bay and Lemon from *The Side Dish Bible* by America's Test Kitchen (p. 157)
- San Francisco Crab "Meatball" Chowder from *50 Chowders* by Jasper White (p.164-5)

**What did you make with your
Old Bay?**

Post it on social media with the hashtag
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a photo &
description to ref@crotonfreelibrary.org!

Old Bay purchased from Amazon.