

THE SEASONING TO BE JOLLY

This recipe is of unrecalled origin. I found it jotted down on an aged-until-brown, fragile, and partially torn scrap of paper in my desk. It had undoubtedly been lying around for a few years, probably the mid '80s, forgotten and untitled.

But I recall that I had seen the list of ingredients on a commercial product and thought "I can make this myself, but better!" The scrap of paper attests that I did make it, and, if you try it I think you will agree that the store-bought version could not have been better.

I put the recipe in a safe place where I surely would find it again (on my desk, among the growing pile of recipe notes), and then proceeded to forget all about it. But one batch lasts a long time; by the time I had finished it, I didn't remember having jotted it down. So in the intervening years I continued to make the sprinkles from memory. Somehow, they never quite seemed as good as that first try. Since having been reunited with my original recipe, I have used it happily ever since.

The proportioning of ingredients shown below is a matter of (my) taste. You may be able to discern by inspection of quantities that I started with one tablespoon of everything listed on the product's label, and maybe a few others that were not. Those ingredients that no longer follow this formula reflect the iterative process of perfecting the final combination.

I probably like my sprinkles a little spicier than perhaps does the average person, so you may want to decrease or omit the amount of an ingredients to suit your own taste.

1 tbsp ground ginger
1 tbsp dried powdered mustard
1 tbsp onion powder
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tbsp paprika
½ tbsp allspice

½ tbsp ground cloves
1 tbsp ground dried thyme
1 tbsp ground fennel seed
1½ tbsp ground cayenne chile
½ tbsp ground pepper
1 tbsp "salt"

Mix all the ingredients together and put into a bottle with a perforated shaker top and airtight lid. Label it "Jolly Seasoning" or some other title of glad tiding.

Sprinkle to taste on eggs, chops, or vegetables. Mix with soy sauce when making a Chinese stir-fry.

Makes about 5½ ounces.