COUNTERTOP HARVEST

A FREE PRINTABLE PLANNER

The *30-Day* Indoor Herb Planner

Plant, water, harvest. One small step a day to your first month of fresh herbs on the kitchen counter.

Basil | Mint | Parsley | Cilantro | Chives

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START HERE

How to use this planner

Most indoor herbs die for one of two reasons: **too little light** or **the wrong amount of water**. This planner fixes both with one small habit a day.

1

Print & pin it up

Keep the calendar on the fridge or near your herbs, where you'll see it every morning.

2

One task a day

Each day takes under five minutes. Tick the box when it's done, and skip ahead if a task doesn't apply.

3

Check the herb cards

Pages 5–6 cover light, water and harvest for the five easiest kitchen herbs.

4

Fix problems fast

Leaves yellow or stems leggy? Page 7 matches each symptom to its likely cause and fix.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- [ ] 1–3 pots with drainage holes & saucers
- [ ] Fresh potting mix (not garden soil)
- [ ] Seeds or nursery starts
- [ ] A sunny window *or* an LED grow light
- [ ] Liquid fertilizer (from week 3)

THE TWO GOLDEN RULES

Light first.

Herbs want about 6+ hours of strong light. In winter or a dim kitchen, a grow light makes the biggest difference.

Water by touch.

Push a finger in. Water only when the top inch is dry, then let it drain.

DAYS 1–14

Your 30-day checklist

WEEK 1 Set up

DAY 1 ☐
Pick 1–3 herbs to start (basil, mint or chives are easiest)

DAY 2 ☐
Choose your brightest spot: a south or west window, or plan a grow light

DAY 3 ☐
Gather pots with drainage holes, saucers and potting mix

DAY 4 ☐
Plant seeds or pot up nursery starts; label each pot

DAY 5 ☐
Water gently until it drains; empty the saucer

DAY 6 ☐
Check light: 6+ hrs of sun, or 12–16 hrs under an LED

DAY 7 ☐
Rest day: just look, don't water unless dry

NOTES

WEEK 2 Settle in

DAY 8 ☐
Finger test: water only when the top inch is dry

DAY 9 ☐
Rotate pots a quarter turn for even growth

DAY 10 ☐
Thin seedlings to the strongest 2–3 per pot

DAY 11 ☐
Note which herb looks happiest in your log

DAY 12 ☐
Set the grow light 6–12 in above leaves (or per its instructions)

DAY 13 ☐
Check saucers: no standing water

DAY 14 ☐
Wipe dust off leaves with a damp cloth

NOTES

DAYS 15–30

Keep going, then harvest

WEEK 3 Grow strong

DAY 15 ☐
Start a light feed: half-strength liquid fertilizer

DAY 16 ☐
Pinch basil tips above a leaf pair to make it bushy

DAY 17 ☐
Look under leaves for pests (sticky spots, webbing)

DAY 18 ☐
Rotate pots again

DAY 19 ☐
First tiny harvest from chives or mint

DAY 20 ☐
Repot anything with roots out of the bottom

DAY 21 ☐
Photograph your counter: compare to Day 1

NOTES

WEEK 4 Harvest

DAY 22 ☐
Harvest basil from the top, snipping above a leaf pair

DAY 23 ☐
Cut parsley's outer stems at the base

DAY 24 ☐
Snip cilantro's outer leaves; sow a fresh pot

DAY 25 ☐
Cook one meal with your own herbs

DAY 26 ☐
Remove any flower buds on basil and cilantro

DAY 27 ☐
Root a mint or basil cutting in a glass of water

DAY 28 ☐
Plan month two: what to add or swap?

NOTES

BONUS Days 29–30

DAY 29 ☐
Freeze extra herbs in olive oil cubes

DAY 30 ☐
Celebrate: you kept herbs alive for a month!

NOTES

NOTES

My streak: ○

HERB CARE CARDS

Know your herbs

Basil

Ocimum basilicum

The warm-weather favorite. Loves heat and light; hates cold drafts.

LIGHT
6–8 hrs of direct sun, or 14–16 hrs under a grow light. Leggy stems mean it needs more.

WATER
Keep evenly moist and never let the mix dry out completely, but don't let it sit soggy.

HARVEST
Snip young leaves and tips from the top, just above a leaf pair. Harvest before it flowers.

COMFORT
Rooms of 65–70°F by day suit it. Basil can't survive below 50°F, so keep it off cold winter sills.

Mint

Mentha spp.

Vigorous and forgiving, but it spreads fast. Give it its own pot.

LIGHT
Full sun to part shade. It's most productive with more light but copes with less.

WATER
Likes consistently moist soil, so check every couple of days.

HARVEST
Cut stems often, just above a leaf pair. Frequent cutting keeps it compact.

TIP
It spreads aggressively by runners, so give it its own pot (12–16 in across is ideal).

Parsley

Petroselinum crispum

Slow to start, then steady for months. Flat-leaf has the most flavor.

LIGHT
6–8 hrs of direct light (tolerates light shade), or 12–16 hrs under a grow light.

WATER
Don't let it dry out completely between waterings.

HARVEST
Cut the outer stems at the base and let the center keep growing.

TIP
Seeds take 2–5 weeks to sprout. Soak them in warm water for up to 24 hrs, or start from a nursery plant.

Cilantro

Coriandrum sativum

A cool-season herb that bolts (flowers) in heat, so sow little and often.

LIGHT
6 hrs of sun is ideal, but it tolerates lower light than most herbs. Keep it in a cooler spot.

WATER
Keep it evenly moist in a well-drained mix.

HARVEST
Snip leaves as needed, before it flowers. After bolting the leaves turn lacy and bitter.

TIP
Heat makes it bolt. Sow a new pot every 2–3 weeks for a steady supply.

Chives

Allium schoenoprasum

The easiest herb on this list. Snip, and it grows right back.

LIGHT
A bright, sunny window or a grow light. It tolerates less light than most herbs, but growth slows in winter.

WATER
Keep the soil evenly moist. It survives the odd dry spell, but grows less.

HARVEST
Cut leaves back to 1–2 in above the soil. Regular cutting keeps them tender.

TIP
Clumps get crowded. Divide and repot them every 2–4 years. Snip off spent flower stalks.

AT A GLANCE

	LIGHT	WATER	EASE
Basil	High	Even	●●○
Mint	Medium	Moist	●●●
Parsley	High	Even	●●○
Cilantro	Medium	Moist	●○○
Chives	Medium	Even	●●●

Sources: UMN Extension, extension.umn.edu (basil, parsley and chives guides) · Penn State Extension, extension.psu.edu/growing-herbs-indoors · Iowa State Extension, yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu (indoor herbs, supplemental lights, mint) · Clemson HGIC, hgic.clemson.edu (cilantro) · UW–Madison, hort.extension.wisc.edu (cilantro) · UMD Extension (mint) · USU Extension (chives). Homes vary, so watch your plants.

TROUBLESHOOTING

What your herbs are telling you

Find the symptom, check the likely cause, then try the fix. Most problems come back to light or water.

YOU SEE	LIKELY CAUSE	TRY THIS
Leggy, stretched stems	Not enough light	Move it closer to the window, add a grow light 6–12 in above the leaves, and pinch the tips.
Yellow lower leaves	Overwatering or poor drainage	Let the top inch dry out, use pots with holes, and empty saucers.
Wilting, dry soil	Underwatering	Water slowly until it drains, then check every 1–2 days.
Wilting, wet soil	Root stress from soggy soil	Stop watering and let it dry. Repot into fresh mix if it smells sour.
Black spots on basil	Cold draft or cold glass	Move it away from the window at night and keep it above 50°F.
Flowers / bolting	Heat or age (basil, cilantro)	Pinch off the buds, harvest more often, and sow cilantro again.
Sticky leaves, webbing	Aphids or spider mites	Rinse the plant, wipe the leaves, and isolate it. Insecticidal soap if needed.
White fuzz on the soil	Too damp, low airflow	Scrape it off, water less, and add a small fan or open a window.

Still stuck? Our guide *"Why is my indoor basil dying?"* walks through the fixes: countertopharvest.pages.dev/why-is-my-indoor-basil-dying

YOUR GROW LOG

Notes

Herbs I planted

Where they live & light hours

Observations

Happy growing.

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