Flute Embellishments List

The Three Most Important Embellishments:

1. “Tonguing,” or Attack/Close
   - Touch your tongue to top of your palate to start a note
   - Say “tah” (normal), “dah” (soft), “kah” (hard)
   - Do it again to finish. Don’t let a note just taper off unless you want it to

2. “Trilling”
   - Done with the fingers—keep a steady breath
   - Move the fingers up and down rapidly and evenly. Start slow, speed up
   - Can be only once or many times in a row, on any note

3. “Bending,” or Slide/Roll/Flick
   - Slide the finger gradually sideways over the hole
   - Roll the finger gradually downward or upward on the hole
   - Rapidly push the finger across the hole, then lift it, for a flick
   - A “Cherokee roll” is bending up and down scale with no break in between notes

Other Embellishments:

4. “Chirp” and “Pop”
   - Blow hard into the flute. Listen for the squeak. Play the next note quickly.
   - Slam the fingers down on one or several notes. Add a “kah” if you want
   - Both can be done with 2 notes, more notes, or cross-fingered, you choose
   - Many variations possible—experiment!

5. “Flip”
   - Play a note, rapidly lift the fingers, and squeak by blowing hard.
   - Hold the lower note to get resonance—then squeak to end a song

6. “Half-holing”
   - Place the finger on the top or side edge of the hole and close it about half way
   - Most useful on the fundamental (bottom) hole and for some songs

7. Finger above the air-stream
   - Let the finger rise and fall right over a finger hole. Feel the air pressure change.

8. Mouth pursing
   - Press the rim against the upper or lower lip, move the tongue around the mouth
   - Open the sides of lips, or close lips into a smaller stream of air, for effects

9. “Vibrato”
   - Even variation of pressure using airflow, preferably from the diaphragm
   - Slow and even at first, then speed up. Use it as an embellishment, not all the time

10. “Flutter”
    - Trilling the tongue quickly against the mouthpiece—“rolled” r’s
    - Try 3 notes up or down going into flutter. Don’t overdo it!