

SPICES FOR HEALTH

INTRODUCTION:

Spices constitute an important group of agricultural commodities which are virtually indispensable in the culinary art. In India, spices are important commercial crops from the point of view of both domestic consumption and export. Besides, huge quantities of spices are also being consumed within the country for flavouring foods and are also used in medicine, pharmaceutical, perfumery, cosmetics and several other industries.

According to the International Organization For Standardisation (ISO); The term 'spices and condiments' applies to such natural plant or vegetable products or mixtures thereof, in whole or ground form, as are used for imparting flavour, aroma and piquancy to and for seasoning of foods".

The following are the list of herbs which are known to be spices and is a remedy for various ailments of the body.

1. Zingiber officinale
2. Syzygium aromaticum
3. Cinnamomum verum
4. Cinnamomum tamala
5. Elettaria cardamomum
6. Carum copticum
7. Coriandrum sativum
8. Myristica fragrans
9. Cuminum cyminum
10. Pimpinella anisum
11. Ferula asafoetida
12. Curcuma longa
13. Piper nigrum
14. Trigonella foenum graecum
15. Allium sativum

ZINGIBER OFFICINALE

English Name : **Green ginger**
Family Name : Zingiberaceae

Parts Used : Dried rhizomes as well as green ones
Action : Carminative, stomachic, digestive, stimulant,
Chemical constituents : Zingeberine, gingerin, gingerol, cineol
General Uses :

Green ginger is extremely valuable in dyspepsia, colic, flatulence, cough, diarrhoea, and indigestion. It helps in increasing the appetite.

Specific Uses :

- ? It is a rejuvenating herb. It is cut into pieces and is soaked in honey and when taken for a period of 48 days helps in regaining strength and vitalizes the body.
- ? It also helps in relieving colicky pain, intestinal disorders, and belching.
- ? When eaten raw, in proper doses is a remedy for throat disorders.
- ? The juice of ginger and onion mixed together relieves nausea, vomiting.
- ? The paste of ginger made with milk when given twice a day cures respiratory cough, peptic ulcer, giddiness, gastritis. It also improves appetite.

ENGLISH NAME : **Dried ginger**
GENERAL USES :

It is used as a carminative in indigestion, heart burn, belching, gastritis and is used to cure cough, diarrhoea, headache, sinusitis, peptic ulcer, and anaemia.

SPECIFIC USES :

- ? Its made into a paste and applied externally for cephalgia, throat ache etc.
- ? The powder of dried ginger mixed with equal parts of sugar candy is given twice a day with

- the adjuvant tender coconut for chest pain due to over exhaustion and cold perspiration.
- ? The decoction of dried ginger mixed with cane juice relieves peptic ulcer.
 - ? The powder given in cow's milk improves appetite.
 - ? When applied externally in the form of paste reduces swelling.

SYZYGIVM AROMATICUM

English name	: Cloves
Family name	: Lauraceae
Parts Used	: Dried buds
Action	: Carminative, Anti-spasmodic, Stomachic
Chemical constituents	: Cinnamon oil, and eugenol.
General Uses	:

Its used in relieving vomiting, chronic diarrhoea, dysentery, giddiness, tenesmus, ear disorders etc.

Specific Uses :

- ? Its made into a paste and when applied externally over frontal and nasal areas helps in relieving sinusitis and rhinitis.
- ? It is mildly fried and when chewed is a reputed remedy for throat disorders, and tonsillitis. This also strengthens the teeth.
- ? It is finely powdered and when given in hot water arrests diarrhoea and improves the appetite.
- ? The decoction of cloves and green chiretta kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*) is given during the convalescent period of chronic fever and helps in removing excessive tiredness and regains health.

CINNAMOMUM VERUM

English Name	: Bark of Cinnamon
Family Name	: Lauraceae
Parts Used	: Dried inner bark of the shoots
Action	: Carminative, Stimulant, Aphrodisiac
Chemical constituents	: Cinnamic acid, Resin, Phellandrene, Pinene, Linalol, Caryophyllene.
General Uses	:

It acts as an anti-dote for snake bite, insect bites etc. It is employed in relieving cough, bronchial asthma, internal hemorrhoids, menorrhagia. It also acts as a refrigerant.

Specific Uses	:
	? As a stimulant of the uterine muscular fibre it is employed in menorrhagia, and in tedious labour due to defective uterine contractions. And in these conditions the powder of the stem bark is given from 65mg to 260 mg according to its severity.
	? In cases of acute dysentery the bark powder is given upto 650 mg.
	? Three kinds of oil is obtained from the plant. The one obtained from the leaves is locally applied with much benefit in neuralgia, headache, and toothache.

CINNAMOMUM TAMALA

English Name	: Cassia Cinnamomum
Family Name	: Lauraceae
Parts Used	: Leaves and bark
Action	: Carminative, Stimulant, Stomachic, Diaphoretic
Chemical constituent	: Essential oil, Eugenol, Terpene, and Cinnamic aldehyde
General Uses	:

Specific Uses : It is used in cough, fever, asthma, mouth ulcers, vomiting, and dyspepsia.

- ? The compound pill is used in cough, fever, dyspepsia.
- ? The oil obtained from the leaves is used in relieving tooth ache, and other spasm of the body.

ELETTARIA CARDAMOMUM

English Name : **Cardamom seeds**
 Family Name : Scitamineae
 Parts Used : Dried ripe seeds
 Action : Stimulant, Carminative, Stomachic
 Chemical constituents : Cineole, Terpinyl acetate, Terpinol
 General Uses :

Its employed in common diseases of the throat, mouth and is also valuable in cough, diarrhoea, dysuria, and helps in removing the flum. It also acts as an anti-dote in insect-bite.

Specific Uses :

- ? A compound powder made of cardamom seeds, cloves, ginger helps in curing gastritis, cough and dyspepsia.
- ? A compound pill made of equal parts of cinnamon bark powder , piper longum, Glycyrrhiza glabra, dried grapes powder and dates is useful in diarrhoea and colicky pain.

CARUM COPTICUM

English Name : **The Bishops weed**
 Family Name : Umbelliferae
 Parts Used : Dried seeds
 Action : Stomachic, Carminative, Anti-spasmodic, Tonic, Sialogogue

Chemical constituent	: Thymol, Essential oil
General Uses	: It is employed in cough, fever, diarrhoea, gastritis.
Specific Uses	: ? A compound powder made of seeds of <i>Carum copticum</i> , <i>Piper nigrum</i> mixed with palm jaggery is taken twice a day for a period of 10 days helps in curing diarrhoea, stomach ache. ? Infusion obtained from the seeds relieves colicky pain, gastritis. ? Medicated oil obtained from the seed is reputed to relieve spasm, gastritis.

CORIANDRUM SATIVUM

English Name	: Coriander seeds
Family Name	: Umbelliferae
Parts Used	: Fruit, Leaves
Action	: Stomachic, Carminative, Stimulant, diuretic
Chemical constituents	: Coriandrol, Coriander oil
General Uses	: It is generally used in indigestion, vomiting, hiccough, fever, and eructation.
Specific Uses	: ? It is fried well and is powdered finely and is given for diarrhoea and dysentery. This also strengthens the heart. Dosage : 650mg to 2000mg ? It is made into paste with sandal wood and when applied externally cures severe headache. ? The decoction of the seeds cures indigestion.

MYRISTICA FRAGRANS

English Name : **Nut meg**
Family Name : Myristaceae
Parts Used : Dried seed, nut meg, arillus surrounding the seed
Action : Stimulant, Carminative, Aromatic, Aphrodisiac, Narcotic
Chemical Constituents : Myristin, Myristic acid, Myristicene, Myristicol

General Uses :

It is largely employed in acute dysentery, chronic diarrhoea, gastritis, stomach ache, indigestion, cough, and cephalgia.

Specific Uses :

- ? A compound powder made of nut meg-130mg, ginger-130 mg, cumin seeds-325 mg when given before food cures indigestion, gastritis.
- ? 2 gms of nut meg powder when given in milk cures diarrhoea.
- ? Oil prepared from its seed relieves tooth ache.

English Name : **Arillus of the nut**
Action : Aphrodisiac, Carminative, Stimulant, Hypnotic.
Chemical constituents : Volatile oil, a fixed oil, resin, fat, Myristicol, Myristicene.

General Uses :

It is generally used in diarrhoea, fever, dysentery. It also strengthens the body.

CUMINUM CYMINUM

English Name : **Cumin seeds**
Family Name : Umbelliferae
Parts Used : Fruit or seed, essential oil
Action : Carminative, Stimulant, Stomachic, Astringent
Chemical Constituent : Thymene, Thymol, Cuminol

General Uses

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It is commonly employed in gastritis, liver disorders, mouth disorders, cough, renal calculi, asthma, and rhinitis. It also vitalizes the body.

Specific Uses

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- ? A compound powder made of cumin seeds – 4 gm and dried ginger – 2 gm along with sugar is given for gastritis, jaundice, and fever.
- ? The powder of cumin seeds when given in butter cures peptic ulcer.
- ? The decoction of cumin seeds along with root of Pavonia zeylanica is given for malarial fever.

PIMPINELLA ANISUM

English Name

: **Anise seeds**

Family Name

: Umbelliferae

Parts Used

: Seeds

Action

: Carminative, Stomachic

Chemical constituents

: Anethole, Anise aldehyde, Methyl – chavicol

General Uses

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It is used in uterine disorders , stomach ache, fever, indigestion, belching, liver disorders, cough, rhinitis, asthma.

Specific Uses

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- ? It is fried and is powdered well and is given in the dosage of half to 2 gms for the above said diseases.
- ? Infusion obtained from the seeds is used in diarrhoea, intestinal worms, belching, gastritis.

CURCUMA LONGA

English Name	: Turmeric
Family Name	: Scitamineae
Parts Used	: Tubers and Rhizomes
Action	: Carminative, Stimulant, Hepatic tonic
Chemical constituents	: Turmerol, Caproic acid, Phellandrene

General Uses :

It has got anti-septic, and anti-viral action hence kills germs. When given internally cures headache, rhinitis, sinusitis, localized swelling, open wounds, injuries, and leucorrhoea. It also acts as an anti-dote for insect bites.

Specific Uses :

- ? Its powder when sprayed over open wounds helps its heal.
- ? Turmeric paste when applied externally over localized swelling, tumour subsides it.
- ? It is finely heated and when inhaled cures sinusitis, and rhinitis.
- ? In small pox and chicken pox a coating of turmeric paste along with neem leaf is applied to heal the process of scabbing.
- ? The paste made of turmeric powder and malabar nut leaves(*Justicia adathoda*) is used in scabies, obstinate itching, and other skin disorders.
- ? It is given internally along with hot water in affections of liver and jaundice.

PIPER NIGRUM

English Name	: Black Pepper
Family Name	: Piperaceae
Parts Used	: Dried unripe fruit

Action : Acrid, Carminative, Anti-periodic, Anti-dote
Chemical constituent : Piperidine, Piperine, Chavicin

General Uses :

It is prescribed in cough, fever, peptic ulcer, gastritis, anorexia, indigestion, and jaundice.

Specific Uses :

- ? A paste made of the leaves of *Piper nigrum*, *Vitex negundo*, *Capsicum annum*, *Piper betle*, or *Ocimum sanctum* and *Syzygium aromaticum* is given internally twice a day for malarial fever.
- ? The powder of pepper seeds along with quina cures malarial fever.
- ? Medicated oil prepared from its seed relieves headache, and ear disorders.

TRIGONELLA FOENUM GRAECUM

English Name : **Fenugreek**
Family Name : Papilionaceae
Parts Used : Seeds, Pods, and leaves
Action : Refrigerant, Laxative, Carminative, Diuretic, Aphrodisiac, Demulcent
Chemical constituent : Cholin, Neurin, Betain, Methyl amine, Dimethyl Amine, Trimethyl amine.

General Uses :

It is much used in fever, dysentery, leucorrhoea, hypertension, and flatulence.

Specific Uses :

- ? When given internally with water cures indigestion, gastritis, leucorrhoea, and dysentery.

- ? The paste made of its leaves is applied externally over localized swellings subsides it.
- ? It is boiled in water and when given internally acts as a hematinic.

ALLIUM SATIVUM

English Name : **Garlic**
 Family Name : Liliaceae
 Parts Used : Bulb and oil
 Action : Carminative, Stomachic, Tonic, Alterative, Stimulant, Expectorant, Diuretic and Anthelmintic.
 Chemical constituents : An acrid volatile oil, starch, mucilage, and Albumen.

General Uses :

It is used in rhinitis, headache, cough, asthma, dysentery, hemorrhoids, and ear disorders.

Specific Uses :

- ? The decoction of garlic, pepper, and leaves of Eclipta prostrata cures gastritis, and belching.
- ? Oil obtained by heating garlic in gingelly oil cures ear disorders.
- ? It is heated well and when intaken reduces the cholesterol level.

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