



## E-CONTENT

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**Topic: SPICES**

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### **SPICES**

**Spices** are aromatic or pungent substances of vegetable origin, obtained from the bark, buds, fruits, roots, seeds, or stems of various plants. They are used to flavour and colour food and are often used in a dried form. **Spices are distinct from herbs, which are the leaves, flowers, or stems of plants used for flavouring or as a garnish.**

SPICES are those plants, the products of which are made use of as food adjuncts to add aroma and flavour (ex. Pepper, Cardamom, Clove, Nutmeg, Paprika etc.), while **CONDIMENTS** are those plants, the products of which are used as food adjuncts to add **taste only**.

Both spices and condiments contain essential oils, which provide the flavour and taste. They are of little nutritive value. They are used as whole, ground, paste or liquid form, mainly for flavouring and seasoning food. Most spices increase the self-life of food.

**USES:** Spices serve several purposes in cooking:

- **Flavour Enhancement:** Spices add depth, complexity, and richness to dishes by imparting unique flavours and aromas.
- **Color Enhancement:** Many species contribute vibrant colours to dishes, enhancing their visual appeal.
- **Preservation:** Historically, spices were used to preserve food due to their antimicrobial properties.
- **Medicinal Purposes:** Some spices have been traditionally used for their medicinal properties.

**Cultural Significance:**

Spices have played a significant role in shaping culinary traditions around the world. They have been traded across continents for centuries and have influenced global cuisines through cultural exchange.



Spices have less nutritive value, and *they cannot be grouped as food*. By adding good flavour and aroma to food, they greatly enhance the pleasure of eating.

In general, all vegetable aromatic products that are used for flavouring foods and drinks are known as 'SPICES'.

**Spices are characterized by pungency, strong odour, and sweet or bitter taste.**

Spices used, in a pulverized state primarily for seasoning or garnishing foods, and beverages and also in medicine, perfumes, incense, dye etc.

**Condiments are other flavouring materials having a sharp taste and are usually added to food after cooking, e.g. Ketchup, Celery salt, Garlic salt, Onion salt, Chilli sauce, Meat sauce, Mint sauce, prepared Mustard, Yellow Mustard, Dijon Mustard, Relish, Vinegar, Wasabi, Hot sauce, Mayonnaise.**

[Ketchup, the self-proclaimed "**King of Condiments**" is derived from a Hokkien Chinese word, ke-tsiap, that can be traced as far back as the 17th century.]

When the aromatic vegetable comes from a temperate plant, it is considered as a **culinary herb, e.g. Bay leaves, Coriander, Cumin, Mustard seeds, Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Thyme.**

Spices also called as "**Food adjuncts**" or "**Food accessories,**" because they stimulate 'Appetite' and help in digestion because of their carminative properties.

Spices have played a prominent part in all the civilization of antiquity in ancient China and India, and have promoted relations amongst various countries. Spices were first used in 3500 BC. In ancient times they were so extraordinary expensive that only

wealthy persons could afford them. Ancient Egyptians used them to perfume the person and to embalm the dead bodies to preserve from decay. In medieval Europe, at one time, custom duties, rents, and court fines were paid in terms of **Black Pepper**.

Majority of spices originated in the Asiatic tropics and were among the first objects of commerce between the East and the West. The quest for spices was once a powerful force in world history. The first traders were the Persians who transported the products of India and the neighbouring Molucca islands by Camel caravans and sold them to the Phoenicians who traded them all along the Mediterranean coasts from Alexandria to Rome. Indian and Greek traders held the monopoly from first to the eighth century A.D. The Arabs controlled the traffic in these spices up to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, selling them to Egyptian, Greek and Venetian traders.

The magic of Spice trade lured adventurers from the Western world to the Indian ocean and brought fame to many of them such as Vasco de Gama, Columbus and reached India by sea in 15<sup>th</sup> century. Following the circumnavigation of Africa, Portuguese gained control of much of the Indian ocean and extended their trade as far as China and Goa in India. For 300 years afterwards, the nations of Western Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Holland and Great Britain) fought wars for spice producing colonies and control the spice trade.

In early part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Spices were smuggled and planted around the world especially in the **West-Indies, Madagascar, Malaysia and Sri Lanka**. Now a days substantial plantations grown in the America. The best quality Cardamoms come from **Guatemala**, the finest Nutmeg and Mace from **Grenada**, black pepper from **Brazil**.

There are about 70 species cultivated in different parts of the world as spice, but only nine are of much importance commercially:

1. **Pepper**, 2. **Allspice (Pimento)**, 3. **Ginger**, 4. **Clove**, 5. **Cinnamon**, 6. **Cassia**, 7. **Mace**, 8. **Nutmeg** and 9. **Cardamom**.

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- A. **GRAINS OF PARADISE**-*Aframomum melegueta* (Zingiberaceae);
  - B. **MADAGASCAR CLOVE**-*Ravensara aromatica* (Lauraceae);
  - C. **BLACK PEPPER**-*Piper nigrum*-“King of spices”/ “Black gold of India”
  - D. **ALL SPICE/PIMENTO/JAMICAN PEPPER**-*Pimenta dioca* (Myrtaceae)

Since time immemorial, India is known as the Land of Spice. Indians have consumed herbs and spices like cinnamon, turmeric, cardamom, and black pepper for thousands of years for both culinary and medicinal uses. In gardens of Babylon, spices native to India (including cardamom and turmeric) were first grown as early as the eighth century BC.

Spice could only be grown in the tropical East, in the South of China, Indonesia as well as in Southern India and Sri Lanka. In particular, they grow in the **Moluccas** a chain of mountainous islands (**Spice Island**) in the Pacific Ocean between Sulawesi and New Guinea. Main Spice grown States in India are Kerala (particularly **Kollam** district), Karnataka (Udupi and Mangalore districts), Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.



Some states in India cultivate spices that are highly prized on the domestic and international markets. The world's best saffron, *Kashmiri saffron*, serves the best illustration. The primary characteristics of this saffron are its distinctive scent and flavouring properties in food preparation.

The different spices produced in India are: PEPPER, CARDAMOM (small & large), CHILLI, GINGER, TURMERIC, CORIANDER, CUMIN, CLOVES, and NUTMEG.

India is considered '*The Land of Spices*' as Indian Spices are world-famous for their flavour and fine texture. Chilli, Cumin, Coriander, Turmeric, and Ginger constitute 75% of the whole spices produced in India.

For a variety of health benefits, ancient herbal treatments included spices including cardamom, ginger, black pepper, cumin, and mustard seed. In Ayurvedic



medicine, spices like cloves and cardamom were chewed after meals to stimulate saliva production and help in digestion.

### **SPICES & CONDIMENTS**

In general all aromatic/pungent vegetable products that are used more for their aromatic flavour than for their food value are known as SPICES. This word is derived from the latin word '*SPECIES*', meaning *specific kind*, and later, goods of merchandise.

According to the American Spice Trade Association (ASTA), spices are, '*any dried plant product used primarily for seasoning purposes*'.

Condiments, on the other hand, are spices or other flavouring substances which possess a sharp taste, and are commonly added to food after it has been cooked.

Most of the herbs, such as **Thyme, Sage, Marjoram, Oregan, Bay leaves, Mint** and **Rosemary** are referred to as **SAVOURY**. The herbs do have varying degrees of flavour intensity, however as potent as spices.

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