

Medicinal Properties of Kitchen Masala

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ABSTRACT

Indian masalas are a daily part of Indian food and have been used since long. The stories of Grandmothers using masalas as medication has been heard and used for long in the Indian households. Whether for flavor or taste or extra chilliness or for medicinal purposes the masalas are always used. The general properties of the masalas have known in most of the households. People store them in high quantities as the powdered form of these masalas have a long shelf life. Continued Studies have conducted to establish the medicinal effects of these masalas. As for exports it should be known that India contributes almost 70 percent of the total world spices. In this paper the general properties of 12 masalas have been studied, which are generally present in most of the Indian households.

Keywords : Masala, Spices, Medicinal Spices, Spices For Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

Spices or as we call them masalas are a daily part of our food and life. Spices add flavor, taste, smell and health to our food. Basically, all Indian subcontinent uses these masalas, including China and Korea etc. and is also used all over the world. The use of spices has been incredibly important throughout history and were used as medicine way before it entered our kitchen for culinary use. A spice may be a root, bark, fruit or any other part of plant to be used as flavoring, taste or color the food. Another use of spices is in the rituals, making of cosmetics etc. and perfume production. Dried spices usually have a very long shelf life and can be stored in large quantities at home for daily use. India contributes around 70 percent of the total world spices.

PROPERTIES:

Generally, all the masalas found in the general household in India have some medicinal properties.

They are available in dried and grinded form. That is why they have a long shelf life and can be kept for very safe for very long. Some of these are good for aroma, some for digestion, some protect us from general cold-flu etc. Some of these stimulate our taste buds and improve production of saliva. They take a little time to mix or infuse in oil, water etc. during the cooking of the food so they are added at start of the preparation of the food.

II. LIST OF 12 POPULAR KITCHEN MASALA

1. **Fenugreek (*methi*):** Contains carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, alkaloids, flavonoids, fibers, saponins, steroidal saponins, vitamins, and minerals, nitrogen compounds.

Benefits: Based on the available evidence, fenugreek has benefits for lowering blood sugar levels, boosting testosterone, and increasing milk production in breastfeeding mothers. Fenugreek may also reduce

cholesterol levels, lower inflammation, and help with appetite control, and also help in body pains



2. Coriander (*dhania*): Contains linalool, followed by λ -terpinene, α -pinene, camphor, limonene, geranyl acetate and p-cymene.

Benefits: helps lower blood sugar, Rich in immune-boosting antioxidants, benefit heart health, protect brain health, promote digestion and gut health, fights infections and protect your skin.



3. Chillies (*mirch*): Contains Capsaicin (8-methyl-*N*-vanillyl-6-nonenamide).

Benefits: attribute this to pain-stimulated release of endorphins, a different mechanism from the local receptor overload that makes capsaicin effective as a topical analgesic. Promotes Weight Loss, Fight Cancer, Natural Pain Reliever, Help Prevent Stomach Ulcers, Help Fight Infections, Keep Your Heart Healthy.



4. Turmeric (*haldi*): Contains curcumin, desmethoxycurcumin, and bisdemethoxycurcumin— Benefits: Turmeric — and especially its most active compound, curcumin — have many scientifically proven health benefits, such as the potential to improve heart health and prevent against Alzheimer's disease and cancer. It is a potent anti-inflammatory and an antioxidant. It may also help improve symptoms of depression and arthritis. However high doses can increase the risk of kidney stones as it has oxalate.



5. Clove (*laung*): Clove oil contains a chemical called eugenol.

Benefits: might help decrease pain and fight infections. the eternal tree of tropical medicine, belongs to the Lauraceae family. Traditionally, clove oil has been used for easing digestive upset, relieving pain, and helping with respiratory conditions. Research has found that clove oil may have benefits for dental and topical applications, for treating infections, and even fighting cancer.



6. Cinnamon (*dalchini*): Contains Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*), consists of a variety of resinous compounds, including cinnamaldehyde, cinnamate, cinnamic acid, and numerous essential oils. Benefits: Reported are that the spicy taste and fragrance are due to the presence of cinnamaldehyde and occur due to the absorption of oxygen. Cinnamon is a coagulant and prevents bleeding Cinnamon also increases the blood circulation in the uterus and

advances tissue regeneration, this plant plays a vital role as a spice, but its essential oils and other constituents also have important activities, including antimicrobial antifungal, and antidiabetic.



7. Black Pepper (*kali mirch*): Black and white peppers contain a bioactive compound named **piperine**, also found in other members of the pepper family (Piperaceae), including long pepper (*Piper longum*). Piperine is the most abundant and active alkaloid in pepper.

Benefits: Studies have revealed that black pepper plays an important role in improving fertility in males. Black pepper increases the level of testosterone (male sex hormone). Black pepper is rich in magnesium and zinc. Such a composition increases the level of male sex hormones.



8. Cardamom (*elaichi*): Contains The major constituents of cardamom essential oil (CEO) are cineole, α -terpinyl acetate, sabinene, and β -linalool.

Benefits: it has 1. Antimicrobial ability, 2. Metabolic syndrome and diabetes, 3. Heart health, 4. Oral health, 5. Liver health, 6. Anticancer properties and 7. Ulcer prevention.



9. Carom (*ajwain*): Carom seeds contains two of its active compounds, **thymol and carvacrol**.

Benefits: have been shown to inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi.

Trachyspermum ammi commonly known as 'Ajwain' is distributed throughout India and is mostly cultivated in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The fruit possesses stimulant, antispasmodic and carminative properties and is used traditionally as an important remedial agent for flatulence, atonic dyspepsia, diarrhea, abdominal tumors, abdominal pains, piles, and bronchial problems, lack of appetite, galactagogue, asthma and amenorrhoea. Medicinally, it has been proven to possess various pharmacological activities like antifungal, antioxidant, antimicrobial, antinociceptive, cytotoxic, hypolipidemic, antihypertensive, antispasmodic, broncho-dilating actions, antilithiasis, diuretic, abortifacient, antitussive, nematocidal, anthelmintic and antifilarial. Further, studies reveal the presence of various phytochemical constituents mainly carbohydrates, glycosides, saponins, phenolic compounds, volatile oil (thymol, γ -terpinene, para-cymene, and α - and β -pinene), protein, fat, fiber and mineral matter containing calcium, phosphorous, iron and nicotinic acid. 3Ajwain is sold as a dietary supplement in capsules, liquids, or powders



10. Asafoetida (*hing*): It consists of three main fractions, including resin gum and essential oil. Hing comes from **the resin of giant fennel plants** that grow wild in Afghanistan and Iran.

Benefits: The resin can be kept pure, but it is grounded to make a powder and mixed with wheat. It is used in modern herbalism in the treatment of hysteria, nervous conditions, bronchitis, asthma and whooping cough. It has also been used in the treatment of infantile pneumonia and flatulent colic. The gum resin is antispasmodic, carminative, expectorant, laxative, and sedative. The volatile oil in the gum is eliminated through the lungs, making this an excellent treatment for asthma. In the Middle Ages, a small piece of the gum was worn around the neck to ward off diseases such as colds and fevers.



11. Garlic (*Lehsun*)(*Allium sativum*): Contains vitamin C, vitamin B6, and manganese. Garlic contains approximately 33 sulfur compounds (alliin, allicin, ajoene, allylpropyl disulfide, diallyl trisulfide, sallylcysteine, vinyldithiines, S-allylmercaptocystein, and others), several enzymes (allinase, peroxidases, myrosinase, and others), 17 amino acids (arginine and others), and minerals.

Benefits: Garlic has a history of being used to treat ear aches, leprosy, deafness, severe diarrhea, constipation

and parasitic infections, and to lower fever, fight infections and relieve stomach aches. Garlic and its extracts has a long history of being used medicinally. Garlic is thought to have diaphoretic, expectorant, antispasmodic, antiseptic, bacteriostatic, antiviral, antihelminthic and hypotensive effects; it is commonly used to treat chronic bronchitis, recurrent upper respiratory tract infections and influenza. It has been used for medicinal purpose for more than 3000 years, and has bactericidal antibiotic and fungicidal properties. It has been known to have a reduced heart risk factor and has anti-cancer properties.



12. Amchoor: Contains Vitamin C, high iron, Vitamin A and Vitamin E.

Benefits: It combats acidity and improves digestion. Mangoes contain phenols, phenolic compound, antioxidant, and anticancer property. Aids in weight loss. Improves vision, Protects heart.



FINALLY: Indian kitchen generally have all these masalas available and as has been described above the health benefits of these masala are far better than our expectations. A reasonable addition to the food will generally keep our health better.

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