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- A Spice is a seed, fruit, root, bark, berry, bud or vegetable substance primarily used for flavouring, colouring or preserving food.
- They are primarily used for enhancing taste of food. Spices are distinguished from herbs, which are parts of leafy green plants used for flavoring or as a garnish.
- Spices play an important role in Indian cooking. 'Masala ' is the Hindi word for spices which also refers to a combination of spices, herbs and others condiments ground together.
- Not only India but spices form an important part of virtually all recipes in all cultures. This is also because of their numerous medicinal values and not only for their flavour and seasoning of food.
- Spices are more commonly used in warmer climates, which have more infectious diseases because many of these spices have antimicrobial properties.
- Use of spices is prominent in meat as it is particularly susceptible to spoiling.
- These may also other uses including religious ritual, cosmetics and perfume production or as a vegetable.
- India is known as the home of spices and has a very long history of trade with ancient civilizations of Rome and China.
- Today, Indian spices are the most sought after globally because of their exquisite aroma, texture, taste and medicinal value.
- India has the largest domestic market for spices in the world. India produces a wide variety of spices.

List of Indian Spices and its uses

S.No.	Name of the Spices	Parts which is been used	Functional/Medicinal uses
1.	All spice 	Seeds	<i>Uses:</i> Flavouring agent in cakes, breads and cookies.
2.	Asafoetida 	Resin from the tree	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in digestion, has Anti flatulence properties, good for bronchitis and whooping cough.
3.	Bay leaves 	Dried leaves from bay tree	<i>Uses:</i> flavouring agent in curry and rice preparation.
4.	Cardamom 	Fruit pod	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in removing fat, cure for skin and urinary problems.
5.	Red chilli 	Seeds/Fruit	<i>Uses:</i> Rich in vitamin-A, used for spicy dishes
6.	Green Chilli 	Fruit from plant	<i>Uses:</i> Rich in vitamin-A, used as flavouring agent in curries
7.	Fenugreek seeds 	Seeds from fenugreek plant	<i>Uses:</i> Used to reduce blood sugar level carminative, and relieves anorexia.
8.	Garlic 	Bulb from garlic plant	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in digestion, appetizer and stimulant. It has an antibiotic factor Allin in it which prevents cancer.
9.	Ginger 	Stem of the plant	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in digestion, anthelmintic.

10.	<p>Clove</p> 	Flower buds	<i>Uses:</i> Used as refrigerant, helps in digestion, stimulant, anti spasmodic, antibacterial. Relieves tooth ache.
11.	<p>Cinnamon</p> 	Bark of the tree	<i>Uses:</i> It is diuretic, given as tonic, analgesic and anti-inflammatory.
12.	<p>Coriander Seed</p> 	Seeds	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring and thickening agent. Analgesic and anti-inflammatory.
13.	<p>Cumin seed</p> 	Seed	<i>Uses:</i> Used to cure constipation, acts as galactagogue, uterine and nerve stimulant.
14.	<p>Aniseed</p> 	Seed of ajwain family	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in relieving flatulence, induce perspiration, used in asthma medicine.
15.	<p>Mustard</p> 	Seeds of mustard plant	<i>Uses:</i> Anti inflammatory cures skin disease, thermogenic.
16.	<p>Pepper</p> 	Dried fruit	<i>Uses:</i> Used to cure fever, asthma, cough, arthritis helps in digestion and flatulence.
17.	<p>Poppy seeds</p> 	Seed	<i>Uses:</i> Acts as skin moisturizer, used in internal haemorrhages, diarrhoea and dysentery.

18.	Star anise 	Seed	<i>Uses:</i> Used as Anti-influenza drug, deodorant, helps in digestion.
19.	Turmeric 	Stem	<i>Uses:</i> Anti septic, appetizer cures skin diseases, asthma, cough, bronchitis, inflammations, ulcers, intestinal worms and skin discolouration.
20.	Tamarind 	Fruit pulp from tamarind tree	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring and souring agent. Used as laxative, helps in gastropathy.
21.	Saffron 	Stigma the plant	<i>Uses:</i> Used as colouring agent. acts as stimulant, helps in curing bronchitis, fever, epilepsy, skin diseases.
22.	Ajwain 	Fruit	<i>Uses:</i> Helps in digestion and has anti flatulence properties.
23.	Nutmeg 	Seed	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring agent. has anti-bacterial, antiseptic and anti microbial properties.
24.	Mace 	Dried aril of nutmeg(outer covering of nutmeg)	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring agent. Has anti microbial property.
25.	Dill 	Seeds and leaves are used	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring and curing agent. Has anti pyretic property.

26.	Fennel 	Bulb, foliage and seeds of anise were used	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring agent. Similar to anise. Prevents cardiac problems.
27.	Vanilla 	Seeds of vanillin plant	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring agent. Cures stomach ailments.
28.	Curry leaf 	leaves	<i>Uses:</i> Used as flavouring agent and garnishing agent.

1. BLACK PEPPER

Scientific Name	: Piper nigrum
Family	: Piperaceae
English name	: Black Pepper
Indian name	: Kali Mirch (Hindi), KareMenasu (Kannada),



Black pepper is admired as “king of spices” and “Block gold” is one of the oldest and the world's most important spices. Among all the spice crops, pepper which has the highest contribution to foreign exchange and trade turn over. Black pepper of commerce is the dried, matured and unripened fruit of *Piper nigrum*. These are the dried unripe fruits which are globose in shape and 6-8 mm in diameter

Part used:

White pepper and black paper both are *Piper nigrum*. Fully mature unripe dried fruits are Black pepper while ripe berries are stemmed then dried to get white pepper (sheetalmirchi).

Green pepper is tender green spike of unripe fruits. Used as pickles.

Uses:

1. Medicinally in Malaria, hemorrhoids/dyspepsia etc.
2. Essential preservative of meat or perishable food.
3. Flavoring Agent.
4. Oil of pepper is used in flavouring Sausages.

5. Black pepper is used in culinary seasoning.
6. Essential ingredient of many food stuffs.
7. In some parts of the world it is used as moth killer and insect repellent.

2. SMALL CARDAMOM

Scientific Name	: ElettariacardamomumMaton.
Family	: Zingiberaceae
English name	: Small cardamom, Lesser cardamom, Malabar cardamom.
Indian name	: ChhotiElaichi(Hindi), Yelakki (Kannada)



- The small cardamom, popularly known as ‘Queen of Spices’ is a tall perennial herbaceous plant in the family Zingiberaceae. Cardamom of commerce is the dried capsule of this shadeloving plant indigenous to the evergreen forests of Western Ghats of South India
- These are dried fruits which develop in the flowering shoots arising near the base of the stem.
- Plants of this tall herbaceous perennial are widely grown in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- India is the largest producer of cardamom in the world.
- Fruits are ovoid, many-seeded and three-sided capsules with brownish black, triangular seeds.

Part used: Seeds

Uses:

- Dried fruits are used as a spice and as masticatory and in medicine.
- Seeds pleasant aroma, slightly pungent smell.
- In Egypt there are ground and put in coffee.
- In France and America the oil is used in perfumery.
- In India it is used in curries, cakes, pickles and for other culinary purposes.
- Used in perfumery, flavouring bitters.
- They are carminative, stimulant, aromatic but rarely used alone.
- Their decoction is used as a gargle in disease of the teeth and gums
- In the Matsyapurana, it is described as a constituent of an anti-venom durg.
- It also acts as a mood elevator when chewed

3. CLOVE

Scientific Name : *Syzygium aromaticum* Merrill and Perry
Family : Myrtaceae
Vernacular name : Laung (Hindi), Luvanga (Kannada)



- The clove is one of the important tree spice crop grown in India. The clove of commerce is the fully grown but unopened aromatic dried flower bud of an evergreen tree *Syzygium aromaticum*.
- The plant is a medium, ever green tree attaining a height of 10 to 12 meter.
- Leaves dark shining green color, lanceolate acute numerous oil glands on their under surface
- Fruit oval, 1seeded fleshy and purple colored. About 2.5 cm long and 1.25cm broad.
- Seed oblong in shape, grooved on one side and rather soft in texture.

Plant part used: Dry Buds

Uses:

1. Very aromatic spice with a fine flavour imparting warming properties.
2. Culinary spice in both sweet and Savoury dishes.
3. It is used in Pickles, gravy, baked food, cake, pudding, syrups etc.
4. Oil of clove is used in confectionary, Pickels, Sausages etc.
5. It has valuable medicinal properties, particularly as a carminative and stimulant
6. Used in dyspepsia
7. In java used in the preparation of special type of cigarette for smoking

4. FENNEL

Scientific Name	: <i>Foeniculumvulgare</i> Miller
Family	: Apiaceae
English name	: Fennel
Indian name	: Saunf, Sonp (Hindi), sompu (Kannada)



Fennel (*Foeniculumvulgare* Miller), commonly known as Saunf or Badisaunf. It is cultivated mainly for its seeds from which the spice oil is obtained. The main constituent of the oil from the fruits is **anethole**.

Tall perennial herb with finely divided leaves. Compound umbels have long primary pedicels or rays, but much reduced or shorter secondary rays. Flowers are small and yellow in colour.

Fruits are elliptical, slightly curved, obtuse at the end and greyish-green in colour. Wildfruits are short and dark in colour with blunted ends. These fennels are less agreeable flavor and odour than sweet fennel.

Plant Part uses: Dried ripe fruit & Seed.

Uses:

1. AS FLAVOURANT:

- Pleasantly aromatic and used as pot-herb.
- For garnishing and in fish sauce.
- Used as salad and vegetable.
- Used as masticatory.
- Used for flavouring soups, meat dishes and sauces.
- Extracted oil is used in perfumery and scented soaps.

2. MEDICINAL USES:

- Stimulant and carminative.
- Gripe water.
- Useful in diseases of the chest, spleen and kidney.
- Used to correct the flatulence of infants.
- Increase lacteal secretion and to stimulate sweating.
- Used for chronic coughs.