

Health and Well-Being

September focus is: Spice up your Life...And Food!

If you want to spice up your life, add some root, bark and plant derivatives to your diet! Herbs and spices add some pep to any meal, and many come with proven healthy benefits and can even ease pain. Herbs and spices have antibacterial and antiviral properties, and most are high in B-vitamins and trace minerals. In fact, most contain more disease fighting antioxidants than some fruits and vegetables. Herb and spices are an inexpensive way to add flavor to food!

Some of the best herbs and spices to incorporate into the diet include:

- **Cinnamon**, most people have cinnamon around the house. Cinnamon has the highest antioxidant value of any spice. It has been shown to reduce inflammation and lower blood sugar and blood triglyceride levels. Cinnamon has also been used to alleviate nausea and to increase sensitivity to insulin and aid in fat burning. It provides manganese, iron and calcium. Its antimicrobial properties can help extend the life of foods.
- **Basil** has anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties and can help prevent osteoarthritis. It has been used in digestive disorders and is being studied for its anti-cancer properties. Though commonly used in Italian cooking, Basil is a versatile herb that can be added to practically anything.
- **Tumeric** is often found in kitchens around the world, but is not commonly used in the U.S. It is a common ingredient in Indian foods, and a great addition to soups. It contains Curcumin, a cancer-fighting compound. It is more often taken medicinally in America for its ability to reduce inflammation and improve joints. For a spark of flavor, add to egg dishes, soups, meat dishes, sauces and baked foods.

- **Garlic** is one of my personal favorites, we use it every cold and flu season to fight off illness and boost immunity. Consuming fresh cloves are always best, but powdered, minced and granulated forms provide excellent flavor. This is another one that goes into everything from eggs, to tuna salad, to baked fish for dinner. Studies show that just 2 fresh cloves a week provide anti-cancer benefits.
- **Cayenne** has many health benefits and can improve the absorption of other nutrients in foods. It has been shown to increase circulation and reduce the risk of heart problems. Though available in capsule form, it is also a great addition to many foods. In small amounts, it can be added to practically any dish, meat, vegetable or sauce. As tolerance to the spicy flavor increases, the amount added can be increased also.
- **Thyme** is a member of the mint family and contains thymol- a potent antioxidant (and also the potent ingredient in Listerine mouthwash). Water boiled with thyme can be used in homemade spray cleaners and or can be added to bathwater for treatment of wounds. Thyme water can be swished around the mouth for gum infections or for the healing of wounds from teeth removal. Teas made with thyme have been used to treat athletes foot and vaginal yeast infections. Thyme tea can also be taken internally during illness to speed recovery.

Source: <http://wellnessmama.com/1092/health-benefits-of-herbs-spices/>

Book: *Healing Spices: How to use 50 Everyday and Exotic Spices to Boost Health and Beat Disease* By Bharat B. Aggarwal, PhD

Blessings in good health,
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