

# Herbs & Spices - Making Your Food Tastier and Your Body Healthier

A lot of people look at “clean eating” as bland, boring and tasteless. But I can promise you, it does not have to be that way. Yes you can smother your chicken in sauce, but along with that comes a heap of sugar, salt and additional calories that you just don't need. The answer to making a simple dish taste delicious, without all the added nasties... herbs and spices. Not only do they make your food taste better, they are also packed full of health boosting compounds to get your body as healthy as it can be.

Herbs and spices come from plants. Whether it is the plant leaves themselves or maybe the seeds, bark or roots. They are jam packed full of phytochemicals, those all-important healthy compounds that plants provide, which can strengthen the immune system and make us as healthy as can be on the inside. Let's look at a few in particular.

**Turmeric** – most commonly known for its anti-inflammatory effect. This bright yellow spice is fantastic to add to omelettes, curries, rice, even lattes. The new craze of Turmeric Latte's is a thing and for good reason, this super spice is a definite to add to the diet.

**Ginger** – commonly used to settle upset stomachs, but why? Ginger has a calming effect on the lining of your digestive system and also carries anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

**Cumin** – naturally rich in iron, this spice is used in a lot of Indian dishes, but can also be very versatile. Try adding it to other spices to make a delicious rub for chicken, fish or beef.

**Cacao** – not chocolate, cacao. It is chocolate before they add all the sugar, milk and other ingredients. High in flavonoids which are a strong antioxidant in boosting heart health.

**Cinnamon** – this spice has a slightly sweet taste without the calories of sugar. Great to add to smoothies, oats, yogurt, toast with ricotta, anything really. Thought to reduce or help stabilise blood sugar levels to some extent, so if you are the type of person who gets the “hangrys”, cinnamon could be a good spice for you!

**Cayenne Pepper** – whether you use fresh, dried or powdered, the addition of this tasty spice will add a kick to any meal. The compound capsaicin, the element that gives it its heat, is thought to boost metabolism and keep the blood vessels healthy.

Herbs such as dill, rosemary, oregano, peppermint, basil and chives all have a host of vitamins and minerals that support a healthy digestive system. Mint is thought to assist in settling upset stomachs. Dill and oregano have a host of antiviral and antibacterial compounds to help keep the immune system fighting fit.

So as you can see, not only do herbs and spices add flavour to your menu, but they provide you with a good amount of health boosting elements to keep you functioning at your very best. You should be using different herbs and spices regularly and using a few at a time. The spice blends you can create provide a flavour explosion when eating your food. You will never reach for the tomato sauce again after experimenting with different herbs and spices.

Coming into the colder months, why not give this homemade Turmeric Latte a go...

- ¼ tsp turmeric
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp powdered ginger
- ¼ tsp coconut oil
- ¼ tsp honey
- Pinch pepper
- Frothed skim milk



Add all ingredients, except the milk, to a glass. Add 1 tbs boiling water and stir until dissolved. Froth milk and add to glass. Stir to combine and enjoy with an extra sprinkle of cinnamon on top!