



## INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN SPICES: BEYOND CURRY POWDER

Spices are quintessential ingredients in Indian cooking. Start with the basic six spices and as you expand your repertoire of Indian dishes you can add to your spice pantry.

### TURMERIC *(Haldi)*

Turmeric is typically used as a powder, mainly to color food to a bright yellow. It has a mild earthy flavor. Its health benefits are being studied from preventing cancer to Alzheimer's disease. It is used in auspicious occasions and prayers & as a beauty-aid.

### CUMIN SEEDS *(Jeera)*

These long brown seeds are used in multiple ways. For maximum flavor and taste the cumin seeds are dry-roasted or fried in oil. Cumin seeds aid in digestion and are also thought to help in treatment of common cold.

### CAYENNE PEPPER *(Lal-Mirch)*

Cayenne pepper is sold as chili powder in Indian grocery stores. **Do not** use "chili powder" sold in American stores for it is a blend of spices and is used in Spanish or American chilies. Chilies, both red and green, contain phytochemicals & believed to have numerous health benefits such as preventing cancer, reducing heart disease, and reduce chronic pain.

### GROUND CORIANDER *(Dhania)*

Coriander powder adds flavor as well as body to the sauce. It is used in all types of Indian dishes. Coriander is used in cooking as a general digestive aid. In Ayurvedic (herbal) medicine it is used as a diuretic and to treat skin disorders such as acne.

### MUSTARD SEEDS *(Rai)*

Reddish brown or black mustard seeds are used in Indian cooking. When heated the brown mustard seeds pop and add a smoky flavor. Mustard seeds have antibacterial and antiseptic properties. The seeds also help relieve symptoms of asthma, arthritis, high blood pressure, and migraines.

### GARAM MASALA *Spice Blend*

Translated garam means hot, and masala means spices, thus garam masala is a blend of spices that are thought to create heat in the body—that is not the same as chili hot. It is a potent spice blend that can alter the taste of a recipe significantly, and should be used sparingly. It is primarily used in north Indian recipes.