

Importance of Indian Spices and Herbs in Indian Regional Cuisine

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Abstract

Introduction: India is known as a land of spices all over the world. Explorers, Invaders, and traders from all over the world were attracted by the abundance of spices grown in India. Herbs and spices are the most versatile and widely used ingredients in Indian cuisine. They are used as flavoring and coloring agents. They are also used as natural preservatives. In this era of globalization, people do not want to use chemical preservatives and so the importance of spices and herbs is increasing in the food industry. Being natural antioxidants and antimicrobial, spices and herbs have become an important part of the culinary art of cooking. Spices are extensively used in the perfumery, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical industries. Herbs and spices have healthpromoting propertiess in abundance.

Purpose: The research paper explores the importance of Indian spices and herbs in Indian regional cuisine

Methodology: It is secondary research based on data available.

Results: This study gives an overview of the significance of herbs and spices in Maharashtrian cuisine for their flavor, taste and health benefits. Consumption of certain spices increases immunity these are resistant in the human body. Herbs and spices have time-honored past of use with a strong function in cultural legacy and in recitation of foods and its botheration to health. Spices and herbs are available in the form of seeds, bark, flowers, stem, roots, fruits, and, leaves. Indians have always believed in Ayurveda, so instead of eating for taste and convenience, people have incorporated healing immune-boosting. Ayurveda herbs and spices into their daily diets. Indian cuisine with spices and herbs is deliberated for healing, energy, immune support, gut health, antimicrobial power and longevity.

keywords: Spices, Herbs, Immunity boosters, health benefits, antioxidants.

Introduction

Spices and herbs are most imperative to any cuisine, without this the food will taste bland. It contributes not only to the taste but also to the flavor, and color of the food. According to the Oxford English dictionary, spices are “one or other of various strongly flavored or aromatic substance of vegetable origin, obtained from tropical plants, commonly used as condiments”. To explain further, it refers to the natural plant or vegetable products or their blends that are necessary ingredient of any cuisine. The history and culture of spices and herbs are almost as ancient as human civilization itself. The word spice is derive from old french word “espice” which later became “epice” and it is derive from the Latin word “spec” which means “appearance, sort, kind”. Spices are mostly available in dried form, particularly made from the dried parts of the plant that contains fragrant volatile oil and aromatic flavours such as buds, barks, roots, berries, seeds. And herbs are available in fresh form and it is taken from parts of plants such as flower and stem.

India is the world largest producer and exporter of spices and herbs. It contributes 75% of global spice production. The spices and herbs grown in India are turmeric, chillies, saffron, black and green cardamom, cinnamon, fenugreek seeds, cloves, mint, basil, cilantro (fresh coriander), dill, ginger, etc. If we look into Indian cuisine, not a single recipe is done without spices and herbs. It plays a major role in Indian cuisine. Indian food is very famous in all over the world and its known for the great taste, unique colours, tempting aroma and mouthwatering flavours. The cuisine is specified by the extensive use of numerous spices. The spices in India are called as “Masala” it is the “heartbeat” of Indian kitchen. Indian spices are known for being world’s best spices. Every household in India keeps the spices and masalas in a container which is known as “Masala Dabba”. Spices help not only to increase flavor quotient of the food, it also increases shelf life of the food, it prevents rotting of food.

The regional cuisines can be differentiating by the type and quantity of spices and herbs used. This all depends upon the region and climate of the states of India and also the eating palate of the local people. It is seen in many surveys that people from hot countries consuming mostly spicy food rather than cold states. The people from tropical regions, eat more spicy food because of easy availability of spices. As spices need hot weather to grow, so the production and consumption also increases at the same time in the same place. Apart from this, there are also a medical benefit on consuming spicy food. According to medical experts, spicy food not only satisfy our taste buds but also speeds up the metabolism by increasing the body temperature and heart rate. Spicy food is rich in a chemical known as “Capsaicin”. Capsaicin leads to sweating when we eat something spicy. And sweating cools down the temperature of the body. Including this, there are also many health benefits of spices and herbs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Embuscado M.E. 2015) Spices and herbs have been used for thousands of years to add flavor, aroma, color to foods, and as a preservative. They contain effective antioxidants that help prevent lipid oxidation or reduce solubility in substances. Antioxidants in spices and herbs have desirable properties of natural, non-GMO and clean label ingredients (e.g., may be listed as spices or herbs or flavors). Scientific literature has determined the antioxidant activity and antioxidant capacity of compounds made from spices and herbs. Interest in food antioxidants in spices and herbs will continue to grow, and research and technology will lead to the development of better ways to increase spices and herbs that are high in antioxidants. Finding

better ways to isolate active compounds and employing chemometrics while designing more effective combinations of natural food antioxidants as well as the use of blended compositions to optimize the effectiveness of blended spices / herbs or blended antioxidant compounds will increase in the future. To the growing demand of consumers.

(Mukul M., 2020) Herbs are used in a form of medicine by human to increase immunity level in the body by taking products which are made naturally to fight against various diseases like SARS Cov-2 and Covid-19.

(Tura A.M., 2019) In addition to enhancing the taste and flavor of food, spices are widely considered to have digestive stimulating action. Spices generally treat saliva flow and gastric juice secretion, which increases digestion. Many medicinal plants available to improve digestive disorders use some spices in addition to other plant substances. Some of the medicinal properties of spices such as tonic, carminative, potent, diuretic and antispasmodic have long been known. These properties are largely empirical, yet effective, they have found medicinal application in the unhealthy system of medicine as digestive stimulants and to relieve digestive disorders. Herbal extracts and natural compounds have been used by humans for centuries to treat and eradicate various inflammatory diseases.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find the Categories of the Indian spices and herbs
2. To find the role of spices and herbs for medicinal purpose
3. To find the role of spices and herbs in Indian food
4. To find the cultivation of spices in different States of India.

The Indian spices are categorized into three main groups

1. The Basic Spices and herbs
2. Complimentary Spices and herbs
3. Aromatic / Secondary Spices and Herbs

1. The Basic Spices:

There are a few basic spices in Indian Cuisine that go into most dishes. It Includes

	Spices & Herbs	Other names	Uses
1	Cumin Seed	Jeera	Used mainly in North Indian food
2	Coriander Seed	Dhaniya	Used as a whole spice in powdered form
3	Mustard Seed	Mohri	Used as Tempering
4	Turmeric	Haldi	Used for medicinal properties
5	Chilli Powder	Lal Mirch	It gives pungent hot aroma with strong bite
6	Asafoetida	Hing	Used as a digestive
7	Garam Masala	Mixed Spice Powder	Used as a mix of all Spices

2. Complementary Spices

These are the spices used in the combination with the basic spices and aromatics they are:

Sr. No.	Spices and Herbs	Other Name	Uses
1	Fennel Seed	Saunf	Used in North Indian Cuisine and posses digestive qualities
2	Fenugreek Seed	Methi	Used for its Healthful properties
3	Nigella Seed	Kalongi	Used to enhance the Vegetable
4	Carom Seed	Ajwain	Used in the preparation of many Indian Vegetables & Pulses

3. Aromatics or Secondary Spices

To the above spices we add chopped onions, tomatoes, herbs and any of the following secondary spices and create a curry. It is added in small quantities.

S. No.	Spices and Herbs	Other Name	Uses
1	Green Cardamom	Elaichi	Used to flavour curry, rice, dessert and ever famous Masala Chai
2	Black Cardamom	Kali Elaichi	Used to flavour meat, poultry and rice dishes
3	Cinnamon Stick	Dalchini	Used in curries, pulaosto give a dish a rich flavour
4	Cloves	Laung	Used in marinades pickles, meat dishes and in many garam masalas
5	Nutmeg	Jaiphal	Used to flavour Indian sweets, may be used in some savoury dishes
6	Mace	Jaivitri	It is better to use the blades whole and remove them after cooking, used to flavour curries
7	Saffron	Kesar	Most expensive used in the preparation of dessert which are milk based
8	Bay leave	Tejpata	Used for the flavouring of the dish

MEDICINAL ROLE OF SPICES

In our society, if you are suffering from stomach, muscle or headache, you should not immediately seek medicine but get relief from it but many things put a burden on the thin lining of the intestine, liver, or kidneys. Rather than all this, we should always select natural relief. In our kitchen, you need to have everything you need to be calm, quiet, and relaxed in case of minor ailments.

Spices and Herbs	Uses	Benefits
Cardamom	It is used in most Indian and other sweet dishes to give a good flavor and smell. It is also used widely in the pharmaceutical sector.	Helps to control bad breath and digestive disorders. A whole cardamom chewed is good for coping with diabetes
Chilli	It is the main ingredient used for adding hot flavour to the food.	The antioxidants present in chili help to cope with cholesterol. It also helps burn calories
Cinnamon	It is used mainly for seasoning food and preparing masalas It has medicinal use too.	It supports the natural production of insulin and reduces blood Cholesterol.
Clove	It is used as a cooking ingredient mainly for seasoning or preparing Masalas.	Clove oil is beneficial for coping with toothaches and sore gums. It is also a beneficial remedy for chest pains, fever, digestive problems, cough, and cold.
Coriander	Coriander leaves as well as coriander seeds are used in cooking. It also has some medicinal uses.	It can be used externally on aching joints and rheumatism. It is also good for coping with soar throat, allergies, digestion problems, hay fever, etc

Basil	Basil leaves are mostly used as a seasoning and flavoring agent. It also has a wide range of medicinal use.	The fragrance of basil is good for heart and head health. Basil is used for stomach spasms, loss of appetite, intestinal gas, kidney conditions, fluid retention, head colds, warts, and worm infections. It is also used to treat snake and insect bites.
Mint	Mint leaves can be used fresh or dried in the spectrum of cooking dishes. The leaves give a warm, fresh, fragrant, sweet flavor and a cool aftertaste.	It helps to treat indigestion, boost immunity, improve brainpower, and beats stress and depression. And it's also being used in many skincare products.
Curry leaves	It is used in cooking and acts as a flavoring agent.	As an indigenous medicine, the leaves bark, and the roots of the plant are used in indigenous medicine as a tonic, stomachic stimulant, and carminative. Externally they are also used to cure eruptions and the bites of poisonous animals.
Turmeric	It is used in cooking and skincare products. It has a wide range of medicinal uses.	It helps deal with skin problems. Turmeric powder can be used for healing cuts and wounds. It also makes coping with diabetes easier
Cumin	It is used for cooking and it also possesses medicinal properties.	It is a good source of iron and keeps the immune system healthy. Water boiled with cumin seeds is good for coping with dysentery.

Fenugreek	It is mainly used as a green leafy vegetable and seeds are used for seasoning and preparing Masalas. It also has medicinal uses.	Fenugreek seed tea or sweet fudge is good for increasing breast milk. It is also helpful for treating diabetes and lowering cholesterol.
Garlic	It is used for cooking as well as for medicinal purposes.	It is useful for coping with coughs and colds. It also has antibiotic properties
Ginger	It is used for giving a specific flavor to food and has many medicinal uses.	Helps to avoid digestive problems. It is beneficial for coping with coughs and colds.
Bishop's weed	It is used for seasoning and flavoring as well as for medicinal purposes	Used in GI ailments including diarrhea, dyspepsia, flatulence, indigestion and cholera. In Ayurvedic medicine it is used as an antiseptic, preservative, for respiratory and ailments. Unani system of medicine as an enhancer of the body's resistance
Nutmeg	It is used in powdered form for garnishing and also for masala preparation. It is used in soaps, Perfumes, and shampoos. It can also.	It is beneficial for the treatments of asthma, heart disorder and bad breath.

Black pepper	It is extensively used in cooking, especially for garnishing. It has many medicinal uses too.	It helps cope with colds, coughs, infections, etc. It helps to deal with muscle pains and digestive problems.
Saffron	It is used for cooking as well as in	It helps to cope with skin diseases. It is a good remedy for cough, cold

	beauty products. It is mainly used in sweet dishes. It has good medicinal properties.	and asthma.
Star anise	It is used in cooking and for medicinal purposes	Star anise oil is beneficial for rheumatism. It is helpful for digestion and avoiding bad breath.

ROLE OF SPICES IN INDIAN FOOD

Spices and Herbs are known as the most remarkable ingredients of Indian Cuisine. In the absence of spices and herbs, the exotic flavors of Indian food don't come out as such. Indian food is getting so much popularity these days because of the remarkable taste of the Indian Spices and herbs, in short it can be concluded that Indian Spices and cuisine go hand in hand as the traditional food items of India are seasoned with a wide array of Spices. The cooks of India use lodes of seasoning in different types of shapes and colors. The common spices which are used to cook the Indian dishes are Golden turmeric, Ginger root, and Cardamom. The spices are added during the cooking times depending upon the type of dishes like vegetables, Chicken, Fish, or Red Meat. The most common Spices used to prepare Indian Food are Cloves Which come with warm and strong flavors. It is cooked in Ghee or oil to prepare Spicy dishes. Mustard Three main mustards used in the Indian cuisine are black mustard, brown mustard, and white mustard which give a strong flavor to the dish. Carom Seeds These are mainly used for tampering with oil before seasoning any dish. Cumin is popular because of its earthy aroma. Popularly it is also known as Jeera. These are a few spices used in the Indian Cuisine. The usage of these popular spices and herbs is as follows. Curry In this process different types of spices are mixed with the vegetables and then cooked together. Bhuna This is a

popularly known method of using Indian Spices where the spices are cooked in the hot oil while preserving and releasing their authentic flavors Tadka This method is quite similar to Bhuna. The only difference is that in Tadka, whole spices are used to extract the flavors Cultivation of Spices. India has a glorious past, pleasant present, and a bright future concerning the production and export of Spices. Pepper, Cardamom, Chillies, turmeric, and Ginger are some of the important spices produced in India. India is a great exporter of Spices, the annual growth rate in area and production of Spices is estimated to be 3.6 and 5.6 % respectively.

Some Spices like Ginger & Turmeric can also be grown in the Homes.

1. Pepper - Kerala Karnataka Tamil Nadu
2. Cardamom (Small) - Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu
3. Cardamom (Large)- Sikkim, West Bengal
4. Ginger- Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya , Orissa, West Bengal Arunachal Pradesh Himachal Pradesh Mizoram
5. Turmeric- Kerala, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Bihar, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu
6. Chilli- Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttrakhand
7. Coriander- Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand
8. Cumin- Gujrat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
9. Celery- Punjab, Uttar Pradesh
10. Nutmeg & Mace- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka
11. Garlic- Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh
12. Tejpata- Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh
13. Aniseed- Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh
14. Herbal & Exotic Spices- Tamilnadu
15. Cinnamon- Kerala, Tamilnadu

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