



Food & Fitness



Spice Up Your Life!

THE ELITE 8 HERBS AND SPICES

Cinnamon
Turmeric
Garlic
Ginger
Chili Peppers
Thyme
Oregano
Basil

In this issue, you'll learn about the "Elite 8 Herbs & Spices" that have added health benefits!

For centuries, ancient medi-



cine has treated medical conditions with the combination of various exotic herbs and spices. From the common cold to the prevention of cancer, herbal remedies have been marketed to cure just about every ailment imaginable. For this reason it can be difficult to distinguish between what is *truth* and what is *myth* in the various health claims of herbs and spices.

1. Cinnamon

There has been promising research showing cinnamon having beneficial effects in the treatment of type 2 diabetes. Studies have shown that cinnamon supplementa-

tion in type 2 diabetics improved glycemic control in both the short and long term by lowering fasting blood glucose and hemoglobin A1C levels. Scientists believe the theory behind this phenomenon is that



cinnamon may mimic the effect of insulin by increasing glucose absorption in tissues, and/or by delaying stomach emptying.

2. Turmeric

Turmeric, or curcumin is traditionally used as the spice that

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Websites of interest:

- webmd.com
- health.com
- eatright.org
- cspinet.org

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gives curry its familiar yellow color. Turmeric is a yellow, fleshy root similar in appearance to the ginger family. For thousands of years both Indian and Chinese medicine have used turmeric as an anti-inflammatory agent.

Additionally, the antioxidants in turmeric have been shown to reduce the risk of certain types of cancers. This spice has also been shown to protect cer-



tain neurons in the brain, possibly delaying or preventing the onset of Alzheimer's Dementia.

3. Garlic

Garlic, or Allicin, has been shown to have many beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system. Garlic provides protective benefits to the heart by relaxing blood vessels, reducing platelet aggregation, im-

proving hyperlipidemia, and improving hyperglycemia. There has also been some evidence that garlic can re-



duce the risk for different types of cancers, such as colon and stomach cancer. Garlic may reduce the risk of cancer by decreasing oxidative stress and decreasing the number of reactive oxygen species in the body.

4. Ginger

Ginger is an herb commonly used to treat various types of gastrointestinal issues. It has been shown to decrease motion



sickness, vomiting, gas, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and the nausea induced by

chemotherapy. There is also some research showing ginger can reduce the pain caused by osteoarthritis. There is also some promising research that ginger can help prevent colon and ovarian cancers.

5. Chili Peppers

Chili peppers are common in Mexican food dishes. Native to Central America, the chili pepper



was introduced to the rest of the world by Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the 16th and 17th centuries. What gives chili pepper its spicy, hot flavor is a compound called Capsaicin.

Capsaicin has been shown to reduce inflammation and decrease pain caused by arthritis. Red chili peppers, such as cayenne, have been shown to reduce blood cholesterol

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and triglyceride levels and also the formation of clots.

Feeling congested? Capsaicin can help clear mucus from the nose and throat.

6. Thyme

Thyme is used as an ingredient in many soups and sauces as well as a gar-



nish on many dishes. Thyme is an excellent source of Vitamin K, iron, manganese, and calcium. This herb has been used for centuries to treat respiratory problems such as cough and bronchitis. Thyme is also packed with phytonutrients that have been shown to have anti-fungal and anti-septic properties.

7. Oregano

Native to the Mediterranean region, Oregano is known as the “Mountain

Joy” because of its ability to



grow year-round. The oils in oregano have been shown to have anti-bacterial effects used to treat infections. The phytonutrients in oregano have also been shown to have anti-oxidant properties, which can be protective against cancer. Oregano is also an excellent source of fiber and Vitamin K. Fiber can help lower blood cho-



lesterol levels and Vitamin K aids in blood clotting and strengthens bones.

8. Basil

Basil has been touted as a powerful antioxidant

with the ability to contribute to healthy skin and to protect against premature aging. This strongly aromatic herb has also been used to treat gastrointestinal problems such as constipation and stomach cramps.

The antibacterial properties of basil have been shown to stop the growth of some bacteria. Basil has been applied to wounds to prevent bacterial infections. Adding basil to salad dressing may help to ensure that your vegetables are safer to eat. If you have a small garden at home, growing your own herbs can be both *rewarding* and *economical*.

How to dry herbs!

- Wash the herbs well.
- Tie in a bunch at the stem end using a rubber band or thin yarn.
- Hang the herbs with the stem ends up, in a warm, dry, ventilated area of the kitchen .
- Wait one to two weeks, crumble, and store the dried herbs in a sealed glass or plastic container.

Recipe Corner

Light and Spicy Tailgate Treats

Tailgate treats don't have to wreck your diet! In fact, with a little planning you can have a healthy variety of snacks for you and your guests. This month's Recipe Corner features a spicy Remoulade sauce for dipping, a colorful canapé using fresh basil, and two naturally sweet items, one featuring cinnamon.

Shrimp Remoulade Sauce

Turmeric is one of the ingredients in Creole mustard. This remoulade sauce is typically used as a dressing with shrimp but can also be drizzled over crab cakes or salmon croquettes.



1/3 cup olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 tsp. dry yellow mustard
1/2 cup chopped green onions
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
2 Tbs. prepared horseradish
1 cup or 1 ten ounce jar of Zatarain's® Creole Mustard
3 Tbs. catsup
2 tsp. lemon zest
1/3 cup chopped parsley
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

Combine olive oil, vinegar, garlic, and dry mustard and mix with a wire whisk. Allow to sit for half an hour while other ingredients are being prepared. Combine rest of ingredients in a bowl. Add oil and vinegar mixture and blend well. Can be kept several days in refrigerator. Flavors develop if stored overnight.

(This recipe is an adaptation of a recipe from Emeril Lagasse with a reduced amount of oil and increased amount of mustard for a lower fat version.)

Tomato Basil Canapés



Ingredients:

Whole wheat English muffins, sandwich rounds or crusty French bread slices

Prepared **Basil Pesto** (see recipe below)

2-3 Roma tomatoes, sliced

Fresh mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced

Fresh basil for garnish



Cut English muffins into quarter-sized pieces or use cookie cutter for rounds. Spread each piece with 1 teaspoon prepared Basil Pesto. Place thinly sliced

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tomato over pesto and top with slice of mozzarella cheese. Garnish with basil



leaf if desired.

Fresh Basil Pesto

Ingredients:

5-6 cups basil leaves, cleaned and drained

5 cloves fresh garlic

½ cup grated Romano



cheese

1 cup pecan halves

4 Tablespoons olive oil

Prepare basil leaves

by removing them from stems, washing and draining. Place in blender or food processor; process leaves into small pieces. Add garlic and pulse until finely chopped. Add nuts and cheese, blending again. Finally, add just enough olive oil to make the mixture a smooth and spreadable paste, about 4 Tablespoons. Refrigerate this mixture for



up to a week or freeze for up to two months in an air tight container. Makes about three cups.

Cinnamon Spice Cookie Bites



Here's a whole grain cookie

that is lower in fat and sugar!

2 cups Kashi® GoLean Crisp!™ Cinnamon Crumble cereal

1 cup oats

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ cup brown sugar

½ cup peanut butter

1 egg plus 1 egg white



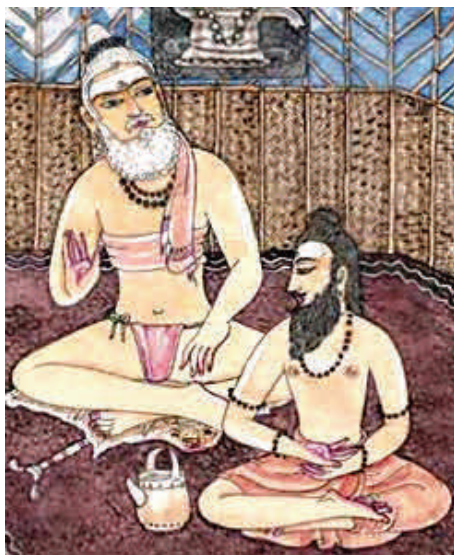
½ cup craisins (sweetened dried cranberries)

Preheat oven to 400°. Blend first five dry ingredients together. In a separate bowl, blend sugar, peanut butter and egg whites. Stir soft ingredients into first bowl then add craisins. Drop by spoonfuls onto tray

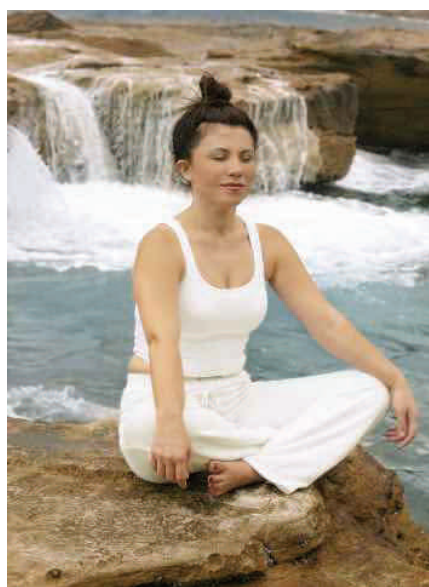
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Take Two Yogas and Call Me in the Morning!

Yoga has been associated with general well-being for centuries. A 5,000 year



old tradition, yoga is thought to have originated in India. In its original sense, yoga was used to describe physical, mental and



spiritual discipline. In modern times, yoga is recog-

nized for its ability to help reduce stress and alleviate health problems.

Yoga was introduced in the US around the mid 19th century but was mostly associated with Hindu philosophy. Today, yoga in the US is recognized as a form of exercise and relaxation, unconnected to any religious domination.

Although yoga is not considered treatment for any specific illness, it has been shown to benefit many conditions, particularly those associated with stress, tension, and pain, such as high blood pressure, arthri-



tis, sciatica, and fibromyalgia. Yoga can also be used to treat musculoskeletal injuries that lead to pain and

disability.

Morris K. Bowie, M.D., a rheumatologist at Bryn Mawr Hospital in PA advises that yoga's slow movements and gentle stretches are very effective in relieving arthritic pain. They are especially good when combined with deep



breathing and relaxation to relieve tension that “binds up muscles and tightens



joints”.

Yoga is particularly effective in helping back, neck, and shoulder pain. The stretching and postures

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of yoga improve muscle strength, flexibility, and circulation.

Researchers at UCLA



found that people age 60 and over who suffered back pain were able to reduce pain and increase walking speed when they performed yoga two times per week.



Using yoga, especially relaxation poses, helps decrease stress and tension. This, in turn, helps to relieve pain and promote healing anywhere in the body.

Because yoga practices emphasize relaxation and slow, controlled breathing,

studies have been done to consider yoga as an adjunct treatment for breathing problems such as asthma. A 2002 study published in Thorax suggested that meditation helped to decrease hypersensitivity in the airways of asthmatics and also reduced anxiety. The American Lung Association says



that yoga should not be used as a substitute for conventional care with medications but that persons with lung disease can benefit from yoga's relaxation techniques.

The Dr. Dean Ornish Program for Reversing Heart Disease teaches yoga poses, relaxation, and meditation for stress management. Studies have shown that yoga reduces blood pressure, improves the symptoms of heart failure, enhances cardiac rehabilitation, and lowers cardiovascular risk factors.



There are several different types of yoga, some more strenuous than others. If you want to add yoga to your exercise routine, begin with a class that offers gentle stretching, modified poses, relaxation and meditation.



Be sure to listen to your body and do the stretches and poses only to the limits of your ability. Stay within your comfort zone and enjoy a new way to relax.

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that has been lined with parchment paper or sprayed with cooking spray. Bake in preheated oven 10 to 12 minutes until brown around the edges. Remove and cool; store in airtight container until ready to enjoy.

Fruit Nut Cheese Snack



This is simple, beautiful and healthy, too!

Small wedges of reduced-fat cheeses, such as mozzarella and light versions of Gouda and/or Jarlsberg

1 cup blueberries

1 cup raspberries

12 fresh
figs or strawberries, halved

¼ cup toasted pecans

Arrange fruits and cheese wedges on serving plate. Top with a sprinkle of nuts and garnish with strawberries or figs. Serve with whole grain crackers or breadsticks.

