

# Culinary Medicine

## Herbs and Spices

Every time you add herbs and spices to a meal you are adding another beneficial layer of antioxidants which gives your body extra cancer-fighting properties. You can incorporate them into tea, soup, salad dressing, sauces, stir-fry, water, and smoothies.

### Dried vs. Fresh

Dried are much more concentrated and should be used in the beginning of the cooking process. Fresh herbs should be saved and used at the end of the cooking process.



### Allspice

Digestion aid, antimicrobial. Allspice is great if you're feeling bloated or gassy, as it relieves indigestion and soothes discomfort, especially in the upper (small) intestine. Possesses antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anticancer, and anti-tumorigenic properties.



### Cloves

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Cloves are kaempferol-rich; human studies show that a higher kaempferol intake lowered ovarian cancer risk. As with cinnamon, cloves aid digestion. Cloves also contain wonderful oil, eugenol, which may protect against digestive cancers, offering anti-inflammatory benefits while attacking toxicities from environmental pollutants. Another phytochemical, rhamnetin, kicks up cloves' antioxidant factor.



### Cilantro and Coriander

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Cilantro packs a punch in the lab; its antibacterial and antimicrobial properties have taken out salmonella under the microscope. Cilantro is also good at relieving an upset stomach and nausea. It also helps with general anxiety. Antitumorigenic properties. (Antitumorigenic: inhibition of the development of a tumor.)



### Cumin

Digestion aid, antimicrobial, NF-kB regulator\*. Studies suggest that cumin seeds may slow the growth of stomach and cervical tumors. Other studies found they're good for an upset stomach and to relieve cramping, especially when the seeds are toasted.



### Cinnamon

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Cinnamon's cinnamaldehyde lessens inflammation associated with certain cancers. Cinnamon also helps keep blood sugar levels balanced, while its antioxidant and calcium/fiber combination lowers cholesterol, and reduces colon cancer risk.



### Garlic

Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antibacterial. Allicin gives this food its pungent smell and cancer-protective punch. Allicin is a strong antibacterial and antiviral agent that appears to keep carcinogens from affecting healthy colon cells.





### Ginger

Nausea reducer, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Ginger is renowned for easing nausea and an upset stomach; that effect increases when it's consumed with some protein. Ginger's active component, spicy gingerol, controlled the growth of bowel cancer cells in animal models.



### Oregano

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Two antioxidants in oregano, thymol and rosmarinic acid (also found in rosemary), scavenge for potentially cancer-causing oxygen molecules. Oregano is also a good source of antibacterial and antimicrobial agents.



### Mustard Seed

Digestion aid. Mustard seed contains sulfur and nitrogen compounds known as glucosinolates, which break down into isothiocyanates that slow down GI tract and colon cancer growth. Mustard seed also contains abundant selenium, which may protect against prostate cancer. It can also help prevent indigestion.



### Rosemary

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, NF-kB regulator\*. A rosemary antioxidant, carnosol, inhibited skin and breast tumor development in animals. In people, rosemary improves digestion, circulation, immune function, and blood flow to the brain.



### Nutmeg

Digestion aid, nausea reducer, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, NF-kB regulator\*. Nutmeg's myristicin, also found in parsley, may prompt tumor-fighting in the body.



### Thyme

Antimicrobial, antibacterial. Think of thyme as nature's version of a throat lozenge. Soothing to the mouth and oral cavity, it's also helpful with nagging coughs and congestion. It also has antiseptic and antibacterial properties.



### Turmeric

Digestion aid, anti-inflammatory, NF-kB regulator\*. When turmeric is consumed with a cruciferous vegetable, the curcumin in turmeric lowered the growth and spread of prostate tumors. Curcumin is also an anti-inflammatory. When combined with pepper, absorption of curcumin is increased.

\*NF-kB regulator: NF-kB is a pathway that helps control the body's immune response. When NF-kB is improperly regulated, chronic inflammation that may lead to cancer can occur.

[culinary.medicine@spectrumhealth.org](mailto:culinary.medicine@spectrumhealth.org)