



ROLE OF INDIAN SPICES IN INDIAN HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

The food of India and its taste is famous all over the world, the delicious aroma of the food with great taste and unique color is famous all over this makes Indian food a perfect blend and is found in India only. The primary function of the spices in Indian food is to improve the flavor of the dish. Spices play a very important role in some of the home remedies. Every spice used in the making of a curry is a preservative. The therapeutic value of spices is well known, to enhance the flavor as well as aroma of food spices may be used whole or in pieces for various dishes like Pulao, Biryani etc. Due to the various new techniques followed in today's world moist spices such as Onion, garlic and ginger are now available in the market in powdered form. The Liquid spices now available in the market are in the form of straight liquid spices such as liquid red chillies, green chillies etc. India is one of the largest exporters of spice all over the Globe. Masala is a word very commonly used in Indian cooking and is simply the Hindi word for spice. Some of the spices used are as follow cumin seed, coriander seed, black mustard seeds, turmeric ,chilli powder, asafoetida, garam masala, fennel seeds fenugreek seeds, nigella seeds, carom seeds, black cardamom, green cardamom, mace, saffron etc. Spices have been closely connected to magic, preservation, medicine since early Human History. Spices were also a key component of India's external trade with China, Egypt and Arabia. It has been found that cloves has a mention in the Ramayana as well as in writings dating back to Roman Empire. A part from above spices also prevents the rotting of food as well as they slow down the growth of bacteria and also helps in the prevention.

Keywords: Spices, Flavours, Aromatic, Culinary.

INTRODUCTION AND ORIGIN OF SPICES:

All the spices of India are closely connected to the culture, traditions and preservation since early Human History. For India's external trade spices were a key component such as Egypt, Arabia & China. The clove find a mention in the Ramayana one of the prestigious Holy book of Hindus as well as in the writings dating back to 1st Century AD of the Roman Empire. In the ancient times caravans of Camels on a regular basis moved from Calicut, Goa to transport the supply of spices to Destinations such as Rome, Alexandra etc. In Today's time these spices are very easily available whereas in earlier time people risked their lives to have the access to Indian Spices.

Early documentation suggests that Hunters used to wrapped meat in the leaves of the bushes, accidentally it was discovered that this process has given taste to the meat as it is given the

seeds, berries. This brought the spices in use for the cooking at a very large scale. Over the years spices and herbs are used for medicinal purposes also to keep the food fresh. Spices were also valuable as items of exchange and trade, the traces of spices are also found in the Bible. Queen Sheba in 1000BC visited King Salomon in Jerusalem and offered him 120 measures of gold, many spices and precious stone.

The Indian spices are categorized into three main groups

1. The Basic Spices
2. Complimentary Spices
3. Aromatic or Secondary Spices

1. The Basic Spices:

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

S. No	Spices & Herbs	Other Name	Uses
1.	Cumin Seed	Jeera	Used mainly in North Indian food
2.	Coriander Seed	Dhaniya	Used as a whole spice in powdered form
3.	Black Mustard Seed	Mohri	Used as a 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:

S. 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	Jaivritri	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	Tejpat	Used for the flavouring of the dish

OBJECTIVES

To find the origin of the spices

To find the role of spices for medicinal purpose

To find the role of spices in Indian food

To find the cultivation of spices in different States of India

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The primary function of spices in Indian food is to improve the flavour of the dish. Besides enhancing the flavour and aroma of food spices have a physiological action beneficial to our system (Modern cookery Volume-1 for Teaching & Trade). Some flavour elements in spices are soluble in water many are soluble in oil or fat. As a general rule the flavours from a spice take time to infuse into the food so spices are added early in preparation. (Host: Alton Brown January 14, 2004 Spice capades good vats Season 7 episode). Spices and herbs (i.e black pepper, cinnamon, turmeric, cardamom) have been used by Indians for thousands of years for purposes like Health, Culinary etc (Sinha 2003 Tapsell, 2006). According to Plated's Head Chef Elana karp, the key to successful Indian dishes is using the right spices and the most important step is to blooming them. She says that home cooks shouldn't be intimidated by that process, 'Blooming' just means cooking them in some oil or butter.

MEDICINAL ROLE OF SPICES

In our society we don't wait for too much if we are suffering from stomach, muscles or head ache and immediately go for drugs in order to get relief from it but there are plenty of things in them that thin lining of the gut add a burden to the liver or kidneys. Instead of all this we should go for natural relief. Within our kitchen we possess all that is needed to calm, soothe and relax whatever minor ailment may arise.

1. Cinnamon

Half tea spoon can reduce blood glucose level in patients with type 2 diabetes. It also reduces triglycerides, LDL and total Cholesterol. Both cinnamon and Ceylon have anti blood clot property.

2. Basil

For various types of skin infections and insect bites we can use basil. Vitamin A, Vitamin C, phosphorus and Calcium is present in huge amount in Basil. It is also a source of Iron, Magnesium and Potassium. It helps in the cardiovascular system and also improves the health of the Human being. Basil Tea soothes the headache and calms the nerves.

3. Cloves

Clove is famous for its anti fungal and anti microbial properties. While it has a fantastic taste when used in Chai/Tea we can also use it for Dental pain or add it to a foot bath to get rid of athlete's foot

Parsley

Parsley is herbs we have used externally to get relieve from Itching. When taken inside it is one of the most nutrient rich detoxifying herbs we have. It can be added to green Juice.

4. Thyme

A very important one to improve stomach cramps diarrhoea and poor appetite. For hangover thyme is a cure and doubles an aid to alleviate symptoms from Colds and Bronchitis.

5. Cardamom

The most valued spices in the world and also known as the “King of Spices”. In the Ancient Ayurvedic tradition, the cardamoms seeds are chewed sweeten the breath and simultaneously reduce acid affects of caffeine in coffee.

6. Cumin

Cumin is high in minerals like Iron, Copper, Calcium, Potassium and Zinc and contains high amount of B complex. Cumin is also used to help with sleeplessness and has many antiseptic properties.

7. Ginger

The root of ginger has a stellar reputation for controlling nausea of all types. It is effective in curbing motion sickness post operative and chemotherapy. Ginger is an excellent digestive, aiding in the absorption of food and elimination of gas .It is also good for cold hand and feet.

8. Turmeric

There is one example of the longest living people in the world in Japan (Okinawa) who gives the credit of his long life to turmeric tea daily for his good health. It is fantastic source of indirect antioxidants which boosts and stimulates the body owns production of antioxidants for hours after consumption.

ROLE OF SPICES IN INDIAN FOOD

Spices are known as one of the most remarkable ingredients of the Indian Cuisine. In the absence of spices, the exotic flavours of the Indian food don't come out as such. The Indian food is getting so much popularity these days because of the remarkable taste of the Indian Spices so 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 colours. The common spices which are used to cook the Indian dishes are Golden turmeric, Ginger root, Cardamom. The spices are added during the cooking times depending upon the type of dish like Vegetable, Chicken, Fish or Red Meat.

Most common Spices used to prepare Indian Food are:

Cloves

It comes with warm and strong flavours. It is cooked in the 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 gives a strong flavour to the dish.

Carom Seeds

These are mainly used for tampering in oil before seasoning any dish.

Cumin

It is popular because of its earthy aroma. Popularly it is also known as Jeera.

These are few spices used in the Indian Cuisine. The usage of these popular spices and herbs are as follow.

Curry

In this process different types of spices are mixed together with the vegetables and then cooked together.

Bhuna

This is popularly known method of using Indian Spices where the spices are cooked in the hot oil while preserving and releasing their authentic flavours

Tadka

This method is quite similar to Bhuna. The only difference is that in Tadka, whole spices are used to extract the flavours

Cultivation of Spices-

India has a glorious past, pleasant present and a bright future with respect to 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 Mizora

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, Uttrakhan

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. Tejpat Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh

13. Aniseed Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh

14. Herbal & Exoctic Spices Tamilnadu

15. Cinnamon Kerala, Tamilnadu

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