



the
VEGAN RESET
THE BENEFITS OF
SPICES



the benefits of spices

In the culinary arts, spices refer to any dried part of a plant other than the leaves which is used to season or flavor food during its preparation without being the main ingredient. This can include the seeds, fruits root or the bark. The green leafy parts of plants, herbs, can be used in the same way.

Extracts and flavorings are typically used for baking or to create any other kind of sweet dish, but can be used in savory dishes as well. Thanks to their very intense flavor, a small amount goes a long way. We recommend starting with just a couple of drops and then increasing the amount if needed.

Almond extract is generally used in cake recipes, but it's becoming a more popular everyday flavoring as well. Here are a number of ways you can enjoy it: You can mix it into your morning oatmeal and in combination with fruit, as the subtle nutty flavor would complement this well. It also tastes great in oatmeal cookies and sweet rice pudding. Simply add a few drops and mix them right into your dough or bowl. We also love adding almond extract to both sweet and savory rice dishes like sweet rice pudding or a Middle Eastern rice dish adding it with saffron, almonds and raisins. Last but not least, adding a few drops to your coffee, gives it an incredible transformative taste that we highly recommend!

Peppermint Extract tastes great and can enhance the flavor of a wealth of desserts and drinks. You can make peppermint cream by mixing it into whipped coconut cream or simply add a few drops to a frozen banana and almond milk smoothie, followed by a small handful of cocoa nibs. You'll be left with a vegan mint chocolate chip shake that will satisfy any sweet cravings. One of our other favorites is green nice cream for which you'll need to blend frozen banana chunks with kale or spirulina powder and peppermint extract in a food processor.

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While vanilla extract is delicious in many baked goods, you can also include it in smoothies, plant based milkshakes and popular breakfast foods like oatmeal. There are many varieties of vanilla extract depending on the region. Madagascar Pure Vanilla Extract is one of our favorites as it has a slightly buttery flavor.

Used in Mexican/Middle Eastern and Indian dishes, it is hard to find a curry dish that does not include this spice. With its warm earthy flavor and aroma, cumin is a superstar in the spice world. It comes from Turkey and India and pairs well with other spices such as chilies, coriander, and garlic. Use it to add an earthy depth of flavor to lentils, rice, hummus. We use it as a secret ingredient in salsa and guacamole.

Ancho Chili Peppers are a dried, deep reddish brown chili pepper with a sweet hot flavor. When you buy Ancho powder, it is made of 100% ancho chilies, compared to other chili powders that can be made using a number of different chilies and other spices like cumin. A sprinkle of chili pepper can really perk up a salad or add heat to a black bean and sweet potato soup.

As mentioned above, most traditional chili powders use powdered ancho or jalapeño chilies as their base, then add other spices like cumin, oregano, garlic and salt. The type of chili used in chili powder, as well as the amount of other spices, is what determines how hot it will be.

Cinnamon, one of the more well-known and popular spices, is one of the most delicious and healthiest spices on the planet. Use it to add a depth of flavor to sweet and savory dishes alike. It comes in a variety of different forms:

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A holiday favorite, cinnamon can be used throughout the year to make mulled cider and apple cinnamon oatmeal (simply include a cinnamon stick in the pot during cooking), or to spice up your coffee. Cinnamon sticks make for a great herbal tea by steeping a stick in a pot of hot water.

Ceylon Cinnamon, also known as True Cinnamon or Real Cinnamon, is a true gem. Its botanical name is *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*. It comes from Sri Lanka and India. It's buff-colored and mild, rather than intense like cassia cinnamon, which is more commonly known.

Cinnamomum cassia (grown primarily in Vietnam) is reddish-brown and pungently sweet – it's the cinnamon we all know and love. A great way to enjoy it is mixed into a cup of warm plant milk during the winter or an ice cold vegan milk shake during the summer.

Mustard is an all-round powerhouse, with all aspects of the plant being used for some level of good. How to enjoy it? Try adding just half a teaspoon to your curries or use it to boost the flavor of soups, sauces and dressings. Dried mustard is often paired with nutritional yeast to enhance the flavor of vegan "cheez" dishes.

Paprika comes from Spain and Israel. It is widely associated with Indian, Spanish, Turkish and Moroccan cuisines, but it works well with a variety of other dishes. Try a dash of paprika in marinara sauce, on potatoes, in lentil soups and on tofu scramble.

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Smoked paprika is a Spanish cousin to the more widely used sweet Hungarian paprika. It's made from pimiento peppers that have been dried and smoked over an oak fire, then ground into a fine powder. You can use smoked paprika in the same way that you would use paprika, while adding a smoky taste to it. We love it in vegan mac'n cheese or with grilled mushrooms or coconut "bacon".

Most crushed red pepper mixtures contain a variety of different peppers such as bell, jalapeño, ancho and cayenne peppers, which range from mild and peppery to hot and spicy. This spice is a great way to spice up anything from salads to pizzas or the more obvious dishes, chilies and curries. A somewhat unexpected but very delicious combination is cinnamon and crushed red pepper, which makes roasted root vegetables taste even more delicious. Simply cube carrots, sweet potatoes or butternut squash, add an olive oil drizzle, sea salt, cinnamon powder and some crushed red pepper flakes and bake them in the oven at 400F/200C for 40-45 minutes. Extra tip: add some whole almonds to the mix.

Turmeric comes from Sri Lanka and is one of our favorite spices, as it tastes great with so many dishes. From a tofu scramble to a coconut milk and veggie stew or the increasingly more popular turmeric latte (use coconut, cashew or almond milk to keep it vegan), turmeric is both a health and flavor booster you won't want to miss in your spice cabinet.

One of the benefits of using dried herbs is that you can have them readily available all year round, even if you only use small amounts every once in a while. Rosemary adds a wonderful flavor to hot vegetable soup or oven roasted side dishes like garlic and olive oil potatoes. Even when dried, rosemary keeps its color and amazingly fresh smell.

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Oregano comes from Turkey and is mainly associated with Italian dishes. Dried oregano is a common preparation of the herb as it often has an even stronger flavor than the fresh leaves. Best known for its use on pizzas, oregano goes well in just about any tomato dish. It also compliments vegetables with dominant flavors such as chili, spaghetti sauce, pizza, zucchini, broccoli and cauliflower. When using dried oregano, crush it in the palm of your hand before adding to the food. This helps release the essential oils and revive flavor.

Basil and tomatoes are a match made in heaven. While fresh basil is amazing, dried basil is an ideal way to use this delicate herb in dishes that are cooked and would otherwise make the basil lose its intensity. The ideal way of combining fresh and dried would be to cook (a tomato sauce, for instance) with the dried herb and then add the fresh herb at the end to garnish.

If you don't have much time to cook, or are just getting started and don't want to experiment with different spice combinations on your own yet, spice blends are an excellent way of adding a variety of flavors all at once without having to think about it too much.

This blend is ideal in stews, pasta sauces, and soups and the perfect way to make "ordinary" food a little more exciting.

This blend is perfect for those looking to regulate or reduce their sodium intake. It combines onion, garlic, black pepper, tomato, bell pepper, carrot, orange peel, celery, sage, cumin, thyme, oregano and rosemary and adds natural flavor without resorting to salt. You can add this to salads and just about any dish that would otherwise taste a little bland. While sautéed vegetables can taste amazing on their own, it can seem like they lack in taste if you're usually used to more processed foods that contain a lot of additives. Adding a blend like this one can therefore help you incorporate more greens and other veggies without needing salt or other aids that are commonly used to make vegetables tastier, like cream or cheese.

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The “Herbes De Provence” mix is a traditional French blend of aromatic and savory herbs like thyme, rosemary, basil, tarragon and lavender flowers. It’s amazing in creamy veggie soups, used as a marinade for tofu when mixed with a little oil or added to grains, baked root vegetables or any pasta dish. Our personal tip: sprinkle it on a tofu cream cheese bagel or hummus toast.

Absolutely delicious!

As its name suggests, this spice blend is ideal for all your Italian favorites, from marinara sauce to pizza or vegan eggplant parm, but it’s also a wonderful addition to grains or garlic bread.

Black sesame seeds have a nutty, slightly sweet flavor and aroma that is enhanced by lightly heating them. They can be added to your favorite granolas, energy bars, crackers, soups, sauces, dips, or breads. Sprinkle them on salads, pasta, and more for a unique nutty flavor! Some of our favorite ways to incorporate black sesame seeds include adding them to homemade vegan sushi and sprinkling them over steamed plain rice or Japanese noodle soups.

Last but not least, here are some essentials that we believe belong in every kitchen as they make it very easy to enhance flavors and make practically any savory dish even more delicious.

Minced onion comes in the form of dehydrated onion flakes, adding both texture and flavor. Minced onion, as well as onion powder, is not only delicious, but also extremely practical when you’re short on time as you don’t have to sauté or cook the fresh onions and can still add the same taste.

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Garlic powder and garlic salt can be used both instead of and in addition of fresh garlic cloves. To make garlic bread, mix a little garlic powder and garlic salt (by using both you'll get a hint of salt with an intense garlicky flavor) with vegan butter, margarine or olive oil and then spread it on baguette or any other kind of bread and bake it for about 10 to 15 minutes at 400F/200C.

Nutritional yeast is somewhat of a vegan superstar. It's particularly popular because of its distinctly cheesy flavor, making it an excellent and healthy alternative for cream and cheese. You can sprinkle it on virtually anything (and most vegans do!) from salads to soups and stews and use it as is. Also try blending it with soaked cashews, a little water, garlic salt and lemon juice to make a creamy cheese-like sauce.

While salt and pepper are probably the most well-known spices and number one essentials in most kitchens worldwide, ground peppercorns nonetheless often seem a little undervalued or under appreciated. A pinch of freshly ground pepper can really bring out the best in a dish and deserves to be celebrated for its unique qualities. Simply Organic offers a variety of different peppercorn blends sourced from India and Vietnam, from the Daily Grind, to Get Crackin' (our personal favorite!) and already ground black pepper. For a deliciously healthy yet simple soup recipe, blend roasted carrots and butternut squash with some coconut milk and then serve it with an olive oil drizzle and a generous amount of freshly ground pepper on top. You won't be disappointed!