

THE COMPLETE IDIOTS GUIDE TO SPICES AND HERBS (COMPLETE IDIOTS GUIDE TO) pdf

1: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Spices and Herbs

*The Complete Idiot's Guide to Spices and Herbs [CMB, Leslie Bilderback] on www.enganchecubano.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Zest it up! Using spices and herbs "the key to any delicious meal" can be daunting with so many to choose from.*

When you dine out, do you ever wonder what makes a particular dish taste the way it does? This book unlocks those mysteries and emboldens you to experiment with spices, herbs, tastes, and flavors like you never have before. Spices and herbs have an ancient and honorable history. The search for, and marketing of, spices has been creating wealth for centuries. Spices were so valuable that in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, they were used as currency. Herbs were also coveted for their medicinal and magical properties. Many of these ancient remedies are still in use today. But more than an interesting past, spices and herbs have changed eating from simply providing sustenance into an art form. Seasoning is no longer for preservation or palatability. It is done for fun. Modern cookery has not only advanced technologically, but culinarily as well. And thanks to television and the Internet, even if you live in the middle of nowhere, your neighborhood is global. Within a 5-mile radius of my house not counting fast food, I have several Mexican restaurants, 2 barbecue restaurants, 2 Thai restaurants, an Indian restaurant, 3 Chinese restaurants, 2 Japanese restaurants, 2 Italian restaurants, a Jamaican restaurant, and a classic French restaurant. Each of these establishments serves chicken, but thanks to spices and herbs, not one is the same. They are defined by the seasonings, the cuisine, the culture, and the chef. The cuisine of a particular country is first defined by the regional availability of foods and the way people utilized what they had on hand to fulfill their basic nutritional needs. For instance, corn, beans, and chiles are native to Central and South America, and so these foods are utilized in many of their regional specialties. Coastal civilizations utilize the bounty of the sea. Inland people learned to hunt. Agriculture took hold, and people learned to grow what they needed. As civilizations progressed, and basic needs were met, taste gained importance. Spices and herbs, fruits, and vegetables were gathered or cultivated and used to add interest to food. Chiles from the New World ended up in Europe and became a vital element in the cuisines of Hungary and Spain. Citrus moved from Asia to Europe, to the New World, where it thrived. Melons, yams, and sesame came from Africa to the New World with the slaves and became an integral part of the American culture. Consequently, we have developed a global palate. Demand has increased for foods from far-off lands. We want to learn how to cook like the peasants of Germany and Argentina and Morocco. We want to eat like the kings of Russia and Persia and Siam. Through the Internet, and a global market that brings the weird and wonderful foods of the world to our local markets, we can experience the wonders of international cuisine in the comfort of our own homes. There are recipes, too, for flavoring vinegars, oils, butters, and even potpourri, all designed to preserve the flavor and aroma of spices and herbs. This first section also delves into the how and why of taste and flavor. It discusses the basic elements of taste and how they combine to give each food its unique qualities. It explains what they look like, taste like, and how they are used. It also provides sources for the more unusual, hard-to-get entries. Scattered throughout the list are a few ingredients that do not fall into the category of spice or herb, such as baking soda. The recipes illustrate how the spice or herb is classically used, or give some ideas for more unusual ways to use the flavor. The appendixes contain recipes for spice and herb blends. Some are interpretations of commonly available mixes, like Italian Herbs or Cajun Spice. Others are exotic blends from far-off lands. They provide just a little more information you might find useful. Chefspeak Tidbit These sidebars include tips and general notes about a spice or an herb. These boxes explain culinary-specific terminology you might not be familiar with. What better name for these warning boxes that alert you to potential problems or hazards. You have reawakened my desire to travel afar and taste the world. Is there ever too much, really? Thanks to Mom, for teaching me that one should never be without cardamom. Use of a term in this book should not be regarded as affecting the validity of any trademark or service mark. At least they did years ago. It was for want of spice that the great Portuguese mariners set out on

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quests for riches. They spread their spice lust throughout Europe, and a New World was discovered. Why did flavor carry so much influence, and how does it influence us today? Why do we crave something sweet at one time and something salty another? Why does one person love a flavor, while another avoids it like the plague? And what makes one flavor complement another? These mysteries of taste will unravel before you in the following chapters. In Part 1, you learn how to choose and use herbs and spices to their best advantage, in traditional ways as well as recipes and food pairings you might not have considered. But throughout human history, spices and herbs have meant much more. For centuries, spices and herbs have defined cultures and ethnic diversity. They displayed wealth and civic pride. They were the impetus of modern trade, the rationale behind decisions of settlement, and reasons for the discovery of new worlds. WTS the Sumerians documented medicinal uses of a few herbs. Four thousand years ago, the Chinese used more than herbs for their healing properties. Three thousand years ago, the Egyptians expanded use from the merely pharmaceutical including mummification to culinary and cosmetic use. The Greeks used herbs to adorn the heads of their heroes, and the ancient Romans used herbs for magic and sorcery. The Old Testament includes much about herbs, and the Middle Ages saw herb cultivation, with studies revolving around the monasteries. Superstitions surrounded herbs well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, until modern chemistry and the study of the physical sciences began to advance. In the ancient world, herbs were largely medicinal and spiritual and were grown or gathered easily. That, combined with their multiple uses, made spices a hot commodity. And while we still use spices for dyes, medicines, and cosmetics, their most beloved characteristic is their flavor. If large animals were not consumed soon after a kill, the meat had to be preserved. With no refrigeration, poorly preserved meat began to rot. It was once thought that spices were used to mask foul flavors and increase palatability. However, most scholars today agree that spices were luxury items, and those who could afford them could certainly also afford fresh meat. While black pepper appears profusely in the fifth century C. Alexander the Great began exchanging rice and cotton for spices to please the Greeks. The Muslims controlled the overland spice route from approximately to C. Crusaders passing through brought the desire for spices home to Europe. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese began searching for ways to get in on the spice-trade action. Thus began the age of exploration. All this, spurred on by the love of spice and the promise of wealth. They count amongst their rank the familiar, such as cinnamon, mustard, ginger, licorice, juniper, and cloves. Also included are the strange and exotic, including asafetida, nigella, silphium, and grains of paradise. Many can be found at your neighborhood market, and some can only be obtained on the other side of the globe. In the ancient world, spice merchants held all the cards. In a time when a human being could be traded for a handful of pepper, you can bet it was a competitive business. Before the age of exploration, spice sources were closely held secrets. Spices spread more than flavor and wealth. The prophet Mohammed used spice trade as a platform from which to spread his message, capturing attention with his spices and then captivating with his words. And three kings are said to have traveled to Bethlehem bearing at least two spices, frankincense and myrrh. Tidbit Early records give us a glimpse into the practice, ethical or not, of cutting spices with sawdust, dirt, and rocks. They also show penalties for such behavior, which often included a toasty death. They begin to lose their flavor and aroma as soon as they are ground, and the longer they sit on the shelf, the weaker they get. The most economical and flavorful way to purchase spice is in whole form. Spices kept whole will last for years with little loss of flavor and can be ground as needed. Otherwise, your coffee will start tasting weird. In centuries past, a mortar was used to grind whole spices. There are special spice graters and grinders at every gourmet gadget shop. But perhaps the easiest way to grind spices today is with a coffee grinder.

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