

Major spices of Kerala

1. Pepper

Pepper is known as the King of Spices because of its excellent medicinal value and popularity. It is also known as Black Gold. It is one of the earliest known spices. It is the world's favorite spice. It was



the demand of pepper that finally led to colonial conquests, war and eventually suppression. Europeans came to know about pepper through Arab traders and when they discovered Kerala's huge potential in pepper they started their trade here. This spice is grown in both low lands and high ranges of the state.

Use:

- Widely used in food, soups, beverages, and medicines. Peppercorns are used as whole or ground and added to dishes or fries. It gives food a distinctive aroma and flavor along with its piquant heat.
- Stimulates digestion, relieves constipation and improves blood circulation.
- It is used for its medicinal properties. It helps to cope with cold, cough, infections, etc. It helps to deal with muscle pains.

2. Cardamom

Cardamom is known as Queen of spices. It is the highly-priced spice and is grown on the slopes of Western Ghats in Kerala. Its unique taste and flavor make it one of the most popular spices in the world. Cardamom is used to spice both sweet and savory dishes. It is widely used in Indian, Arabic, and European

cuisine. It comes in two types and is used as whole pods, seeds, or ground. Cardamom is found in the



garam masala spice mixture that seasons meat and vegetable dishes, and in hot beverages

Uses

- Cardamom is a famous
- It is also used for making perfumes and breath fresheners.
- Cardamom is a much-loved spice for its flavor and unique taste. It is intensely fragrant and aromatic and is an indispensable ingredient in biriyani and pulao.
- Other than Kerala, Arabs and Africans also use cardamom.

3. Clove

Cloves as one of the main ingredients in gingerbread baked goods or a staple spice in Indian cuisine. In addition to their sweet, aromatic flavor, cloves are known for their potent medicinal properties. Studies have found that the



compounds in cloves may have several health benefits, including supporting liver

health and helping stabilize blood sugar levels. Clove is extensively cultivated in Kerala. It is known as grambu or karayambu. Clove is one of the key ingredients of *garam masala* (spices in varying proportions, roasted and powdered and used for cooking).

Uses

- It is added in its ‘whole form’ in meat dishes for added flavor. Clove, wholly or powdered is also used to enhance the taste of payasam (sweet dishes used as deserts).
- It helps to improve dental hygiene. It has excellent medicinal properties.
- Clove is used to make perfumes, soaps, and toothpaste as well. Clove oil is used as a balm for toothache and it is effective in the treatment of acidity and indigestion. It is also a beneficial remedy for chest pains, fever, digestive problems, cough, and cold.

4. Nutmeg

Nutmeg is very popular in Kerala. The nutmeg tree is known as ‘jathi’ in Malayalam and its fruit, Jathikka. The nutmeg tree gives two ‘fruits’ – mace and nutmeg. This spice is mentioned in the Vedic literature of India.



Uses

- This mild baking spice adds both flavor and aroma to cakes, muffins, sweetbreads, fruit pies, cookies, meats, soups, puddings, and sausages.
- Nutmeg is an essential condiment used in sauces, soaps, confectionaries and several baked goods.
- Nutmeg has high medicinal value with its aphrodisiac, stimulant, carminative and astringent properties.
- Nutmeg oil is used in manufacturing cosmetics.

5. Star Anise

Star anise is a lovely looking fruit that comes from an evergreen tree. It is shaped like a star, hence the name and its color can range from white to red. The seeds themselves are shiny, brittle, smooth and ovoid.



Uses

- Aromatic and flavourful spice mostly used in various spice blends. It can be used in Pulaos, biryani, and other special gravies. It imparts a delicate flavor to the dish.
- It helps in curing rheumatism, helping in digestion and so on. The fruit is antibacterial, carminative, diuretic and stomachic. It is considered useful in flatulence and spasmodic.
- It is used to flavor vegetables, meat, and marinate meat. It is used as a condiment for flavoring curries, confectionaries, spirits, and for pickling.
- It is also used in perfumery. The essential oil of star anise is used to flavor soft drinks, bakery products, and liquors.

6. Ginger

Ginger is the most important spice. Ginger grown in Kerala is to be of very high quality. Both processed and raw ginger is high in demand and many tourists take it back to their homeland.



Uses

- Ginger is used in food processing, for curried meats, cocktails, carbonated drinks, liquors, and soft drinks.
- It is both a flavoring agent and a stimulant. Pickled ginger in vinegar is very popular among the folks of Kerala. Ginger as candy is extremely popular among children as well. It is used to make masala chai.
- In medicine, it is used as carminative and stimulant. It has wider applications in indigenous medicines.
- Ginger reduces all symptoms associated with motion sickness including dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and cold sweating.

7.Turmeric

Turmeric belongs to the ginger family. This plant is used in the dried or powdered form. It is a flavorsome spice.

Uses

- It is known for its medicinal value, culinary uses and antioxidant properties. It is used in Ayurvedic medicines.
- It is an essential spice for Indian cuisines. Turmeric is a spice used in curries. Turmeric is also used to add color in fruit drinks, cheese, and butter.
- Turmeric is good for health. It is also a cleanser for the human body. It is a good blood purifier. Turmeric is used in the manufacturing of cosmetics and used as a textile dye. Colour enhancer and Anti-Bacterial ingredient in different marinades.



8. Vanilla

It is one of the popular cash crops. In Kerala, Vanilla is cultivated in Wayanad, Idukki, and Ernakulam. Vanilla is mainly responsible for the fragrance, flavor, and aroma of vanilla essence. It has brought to the state by the west. Humid weather is ideal for Vanilla plantation. It is a member of orchid family. Three common types of Vanilla beans are Bourbon Madagascar, Mexican, and Tahitian. Vanilla is the second most expensive spice traded in the world market.



Uses

- It is an important element in cakes, sweets, ice creams, milk, beverages, candies, confectioneries, and bakery items
- It is used in pharmaceutical products. It is a subtle component of perfumes.

9. Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a spice that is made from the inner bark of trees scientifically known as *Cinnamomum*. Cinnamon is grown in one or two locations in the state. This spice is light brown in color and is also milder in flavor in comparison to other spices. It has high antioxidant activity and, it also has medicinal properties.



Uses

- It is used in a number of dishes. The spice is also used for making spices as well as other perfumes and cosmetics.
- It can be used for curing a number of ailments including nausea, sickness and so on. The delicate fragrance and agreeable taste, adds to the overall appeal of this particular spice.

10. Tamarind

Tamarind is known as Indian Date. These spice trees grow excellently in tropical areas in Kerala. It is an important ingredient in a number of Asian and Latin American dishes.



Uses

- The pulp is used in traditional medicine and as a metal polish.
- Trees wood can be used for woodworking. Tamarind seed oil can be extracted from seeds.
- Its tender young leaves are used in Indian cuisine. Tamarind is used in seafood, other non-vegetarian, cool drinks, snacks, desserts, and vegetarian dishes. It has medicinal and other uses also.