



Warm and Spicy

You know a warm spice when you meet one, whether you smell it wafting through the kitchen or taste it in a stew. That deep aroma and strong taste makes any dish richer. You'll often find warm spices — such as ginger, allspice, cardamom, cloves, and coriander — partnering in recipes and spice blends such as garam masala and curry powder. They're used extensively in sweets (pumpkin pies, gingerbread, spice cookies) but are important in savory dishes, too. In fact, warm spices can play a starring role in a wide array of dishes from, well, soup to nuts. Here are some suggestions for using these spices to enhance your cooking:

- Use to spice beverages, such as tea, coffee, eggnog, or hot cocoa. Add to warm milk for an evening toddy. Or use to make mulled beverages (wine, cider, juice).
- Add to puddings (rice pudding, tapioca, vanilla, and chocolate).
- Sprinkle in French toast batter.
- Add to eggplant recipes (as in moussaka, a classic Greek dish).
- Sprinkle on oatmeal or in granola.
- Add to sweet potatoes before mashing.
- Include in any recipe for baked fruits (pears, apples apricots).
- Sprinkle on lamb chops while cooking.
- Mix into meatloaf or chorizo ingredients before cooking.
- Sprinkle on popcorn (and add a sweetener, such as maple syrup or brown sugar).
- Add to cooked vegetables such as squash, cauliflower, red cabbage and sweet potatoes.
- Include in batter for quick breads (banana or pumpkin, for example) or yeast breads (such as raisin or egg bread).
- Fold into batter for bean or grain patties (chickpea or quinoa, for example).
- Add to potpies (chicken, beef, or veggie).
- Stir into cream sauces, especially for use on pasta or seafood.
- Add to soups and stews, such as tomato, carrot, lentil, bean, or beef.
- Toss with raw nuts (cashews, walnuts) and roast.

Any warm spice can be used individually as suggested above, but since they partner so well, consider combining. For example: Add cinnamon, allspice, ginger, and nutmeg to sweet potatoes while mashing. (Include a little maple syrup or agave nectar, too!)

There are many more warm spices, of course. In ayurvedic cooking, for example, chiles, black peppercorns, cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, cloves, coriander and cumin seeds are considered the warm spices. Mustard, cayenne, garlic, and horseradish are also warming.

notes from the field

Location: Cobán, Guatemala

Product Sourced: Cardamom

The Story: *We get our top-quality organic cardamom from our Well Earth™ partner deep in the mountains of Guatemala. It's a cooperative group made up of 36 smaller cooperatives that support 60,000 people, mostly indigenous Mayan. In addition to fair wages and legal services, the co-op provides free traveling health and dental clinics for the workers and their families, even in the remote regions. The co-op also offers scholarships, assistance with forest utilization and reforestation projects, and loans for expansion and production. And it trains growers in sustainable agriculture and organic certification.*

By working directly with the cooperative rather than going through middlemen, Frontier is able to ensure that the farmers receive the best prices for one of their most important cash crops. We also support the cooperative with market information and technical assistance.



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Q&A

What is garam masala?

Garam masala is an Indian spice blend of warm (but not too hot) spices. As with other spice blends, the ingredients and amount vary with the cook and recipe, but a typical blend might contain: cardamom, cinnamon, mace, nutmeg, cloves, black peppercorns, chiles, nutmeg, coriander, and/or cumin seeds. Garam masala is a traditional ingredient in Indian tandoori, samosas, kormas, and dahl. You might add it to soups and stews or blend with softened butter or sour cream or yogurt to use as a dip, raita, or vegetable topping. It's delicious in grain dishes, too.

How do I use dried ginger in place of fresh?

It might take a bit of experimentation, depending on your recipe. Many recipes rely on ground ginger, but when a recipe calls for freshly grated ginger, you may want to pick some up. That's because the flavor of ground ginger isn't as strong or quite the same as freshly grated ginger. In a pinch, though, you might try about ¼ to ½ teaspoon ground ginger for each tablespoon of fresh ginger.

Cut and sifted ginger is primarily used for making teas (although you could tie it in in cheesecloth or place it in a tea strainer for use in soupmaking). It's a delicious addition to many herbal teas, particularly those served after dinner. Its faint, sweetly warm aroma might also be useful in some potpourris.



What is chai spiced tea?

Chai tea is a blend of black tea and warm spices, such as cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, ginger, pepper, nutmeg, coriander, and cumin. An Indian beverage, it's also called masala chai, and in the U.S. it's often served with milk added. While chai spiced tea is traditionally drunk warm, it's now enjoyed iced, too.

To read more about warming spices visit www.frontiercoop.com

Warm it Up!

Winter doesn't have to be so cold! Cozy up to warm spice cooking.

Baked Cranberry Apples

Baked fruits are beautifully spiced with warm cinnamon and nutmeg. They also often successfully include dried fruits, such as the raisins in this recipe.

1 pound Golden Delicious or
Granny Smith apples
2 cups rinsed and sorted fresh
cranberries
¼ cup raisins
¾ cup orange juice

2 tablespoons melted butter
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon orange peel
4 cinnamon sticks

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cut ½-inch top off the stem end of the apples. Remove the stems, leaving a small hole into which you can insert a cinnamon stick. Core the apples with a melon baller. Discard cores. Scoop out the inside of the apples, being careful not to pierce the skin. Chop the flesh. Set aside.

Combine the chopped apple flesh, cranberries, raisins, orange juice, butter, nutmeg, vanilla, and orange peel in a medium bowl. Stuff this mixture inside the hollowed-out apples and place in lightly greased, ovenproof dish.

Replace cap on each apple, with a cinnamon stick through the stem opening. Spread any extra stuffing around the apples and bake in preheated oven until tender, about 45 minutes.

Makes 8 servings.



Chai-Indian Style Tea

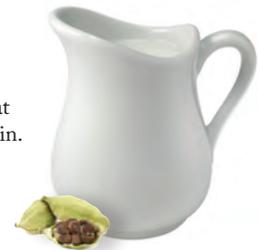
This mildly spiced tea is wonderful chilled or hot. For a spicier version, increase cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom proportionally.

5 cups water
2 rounded tablespoons of black
tea
3 cups nonfat milk, soy milk or
almond milk
½ cup honey
4 sticks cinnamon or ¼ teaspoon
ground cinnamon

5 whole cloves or ½ teaspoon
ground cloves
1 bay leaf
6 whole cardamom pods, green
or black or ¼ teaspoon ground
cardamom

Combine all ingredients in medium
saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat
and simmer, uncovered, 30 minutes. Strain.

Makes 8 servings.



Curried Potatoes

Curried dishes rely on warm spices such as coriander, turmeric, and ginger. This recipe also features garam masala, another warm spice blend.

4 medium raw potatoes
1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
2 teaspoons ground coriander
powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
½ teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon ground ginger root

½ teaspoon turmeric
¼ to ½ teaspoon cayenne
1 teaspoon garam masala
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 to 2 fresh mint leaves,
chopped or 1 teaspoon dried
peppermint

Peel and cut each potato in half. Prick each potato several times with a fork. Mix the rest of the ingredients, add to the potatoes, and cook over low heat in a heavy saucepan with a tight-fitting cover for 20 to 25 minutes.

Makes 4 servings.

Visit our recipe homepage at www.frontiercoop.com and type the name of your favorite warm spice in the search box. You'll find recipes featuring warm spices in over a dozen categories, from appetizers and snacks to vegetarian main dishes.