

Cooking with Cumin

There is an abundance of recipes that rely on cumin that you can try, and here are some other tips for adding it to your cooking repertoire:

- Stir cumin into soups and stews, especially those containing bean, meat, or poultry.
- Add it to the cooking water for beans and grains.
- Include a pinch in salad dressings.
- Add it to barbeque sauces and meat marinades.
- Stir it into tomato sauce.
- Mix it into meat loaf ingredients.
- Sprinkle it on eggs or tofu during scrambling.
- Include it in sausage ingredients.
- Add it to eggplant and potato casseroles.
- Add it to sandwich spreads.
- Stir into cottage cheese and cheese dips.

Cumin Trivia

- The Romans used cumin as a substitute for pepper.
- Roman emperor Antoninus Pius was nicknamed “the cumin splitter” because he was frugal in his personal life in order to help provide money for social projects.
- The Egyptians used cumin around 5000 BC to season meats, fish, and stews -- and to mummify the dead.
- In the Middle Ages, it was believed that cumin would ensure fidelity. Wedding couples tucked cumin, dill, and salt in their pockets, and soldiers would share a farewell wine powdered with cumin or carry a loaf of cumin bread baked by their sweethearts. Cumin was also thought to keep poultry from wandering away!
- Spanish explorers introduced cumin to Latin America, where it became a mainstay in cooking. Its use in the U.S. exploded much later -- along with interest in Mexican and other ethnic dishes.
- The major world suppliers of cumin today are Turkey, India, and China.



Cumin

Recipes for...

- » Fabulous Fajitas
- » Cumin Salad Dressing

... and more!



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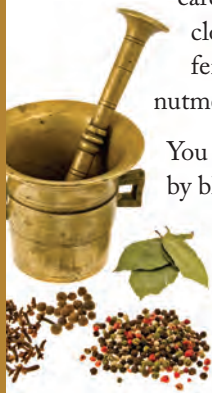
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Q&A

What is garam masala?

Garam masala is an Indian spice blend, literally a “hot mixture of spices.” Widely used in savory dishes, especially curries, it’s very aromatic, warm, and fruity. Like other spice blends, the ingredients vary according to the cook, but spices in garam masala might include bay leaves, black peppercorns, cardamom seeds, cinnamon, whole cloves, coriander seeds, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, fenugreek seeds, mace, nutmeg, and saffron.



You can make your own garam masala by blending and roasting the appropriate spices. For the fullest flavor, roast the whole seeds and then grind the roasted seeds using a spice mill, designated coffee grinder, or mortar and pestle.

Should I toast cumin seeds before using?

While not mandatory, it’s a good idea to toast whole cumin seeds (as well as cumin powder) before adding to recipes. In addition to enhancing the earthy flavor, roasting also helps reduce any bitterness in the spice. Simply toast the cumin in a dry frying pan, stirring constantly, for a few minutes. The aroma makes the task highly enjoyable!



To read more about cumin, find more cumin recipes, and purchase cumin (including organic cumin), visit www.frontiercoop.com.

Get Creative with Cumin

Cumin is one hard-working spice. Warm, nutty, spicy, aromatic, and earthy, it can easily take center stage. But it can also serve a unifying role, grounding and melding diverse flavors. No surprise that it’s the second most popular spice worldwide, after black pepper.

Native to the Mediterranean and long cultivated in China, India, and the Middle East, cumin seeds are the small dried fruit of the annual herbaceous plant *Cuminum cyminum*. It’s related to parsley and dill, with similarly slender branches and leaves, but it only grows to about 6 inches in height. About four months after planting, the entire plant is removed from the ground. Then seeds are typically harvested from the pods by threshing with sticks. The seeds are then further dried in the sun or using a dryer. With full sun, good drainage, and fertile soil, cumin can be grown in the garden, too.

Cumin shows up in ethnic cooking the world over. It’s used extensively in Mexican, Indian, North African, Cuban, Brazilian, Western Chinese, Middle Eastern, Portuguese, and Spanish cuisines. It’s also used in making some cheeses (such as Dutch Leyden, Swiss Edam, and German Munster) and French breads, and it’s a central ingredient in many chili powders, achiote blends, garam masalas, and curry powders. Cumin also appears in Moroccan couscous, and -- along with caraway -- the German liqueur Kummel. There’s an Indian drink called Zeera pani that’s made with cumin and tamarind water. Western cooks even use it -- in combination with other spices -- to flavor fruit pies and cookies.



Fabulous Fajitas

This recipe is a good illustration of how just a touch of cumin warms a dish and unifies a variety of flavors.

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1 small yellow squash, sliced |
| 1 tablespoon lime juice | 8 ounces baby bella mushrooms, sliced |
| ½ teaspoon chili powder | 1 avocado, sliced |
| 1 teaspoon oregano | 4 (10-inch) whole grain flour tortilla shells |
| ¼ teaspoon cumin | ¼ cup sour cream or plain yogurt (or a mixture of 2 tablespoons each) |
| ¼ teaspoon garlic powder | ½ cup salsa |
| ½ teaspoon salt | |
| 1 red bell pepper, sliced | |
| 1 small zucchini, diced | |



Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Combine oil, lime juice, and seasonings in a bowl. Add pepper, zucchini, squash, and mushrooms, and toss. Spread in a roasting pan and roast, stirring occasionally, until nicely browned, about 30 minutes.

Warm tortilla shells in dry frying pan or wrap in foil and warm in oven.

Place one quarter of the vegetables, one quarter of

the avocado slices, 1 tablespoon sour cream or yogurt (or mixture), and 2 tablespoons salsa on each tortilla. Fold one end over, and then roll from the side, leaving one end open.

Serve with fried rice seasoned with Mexican Seasoning.

Makes 4 fajitas.

Cumin Salad Dressing

Here’s an example of a recipe where cumin takes center stage. This dressing is perfect for wild edibles and garden-variety greens.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2 cloves garlic | 2 tablespoons ground cumin |
| ¼ cup water | 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast |
| ¼ cup apple cider vinegar | ½ cup olive oil |
| 2 teaspoons onion powder | |

Blend garlic, water and vinegar in a blender. Add remaining ingredients. Blend well.

Makes about 1 cup.