



SPICE CLUB: CINNAMON

ABOUT

Cinnamon's botanical name: *Cinnamomum Verum*.

Found in tropical regions, Cinnamon is a small evergreen tree in the laurel family, it grows up to 30 feet in height. Although it grows wild in places such as the Seychelles and Indonesia, true cinnamon comes from Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon). Cinnamon is harvested from the rolled layers of inner bark that curls naturally into quills to form a cylinder. Cinnamon is often confused with cassia., which grows mostly in Asia. Cassia's flavor is stronger and slightly bitter.

Cinnamon can be found ground as powder or in whole quills or sticks, ranging from 3 inches to 3 feet. The cinnamon powder's perfume is sweet and pleasantly woody. The whole cinnamon is used to flavor broths, ciders, hot chocolate, hot drinks, chutneys, and dishes in which the sticks are easy to remove before eating.

Cinnamon flavors both sweet and savory preparations, it often helps bridge the flavor between meats and fruits. It's combined with saffron in North African dishes and with garlic and lamb in Greek moussaka. Cinnamon is a spice that can be found in most Indian curries to not just add taste to the dish, but a strong, sweet aroma as well.

Cinnamon has been known to reduce cholesterol, blood sugar, and triglyceride levels. It is very beneficial for diabetes patients. While eating cinnamon may help lower your blood sugar, eating too much may cause it to fall too low, especially if you're on medication for diabetes.

Regular cinnamon contains high amounts of coumarin. Studies have shown that eating too much coumarin may increase the risk of liver toxicity and damage. Some people are allergic to a compound in cinnamon called cinnamaldehyde, which can cause mouth sores. However, this seems to mostly affect people who use too much cinnamon oil or chewing gum, as these products contain more cinnamaldehyde.

This fragrant spice is also known to help treat diarrhea. Chinese traditional herbalists suggest that it is helpful, too, for those who are in their 70's and 80's suffering from mild coughs

If eaten in large amounts, cinnamon may interact with medications for diabetes, heart disease, and liver disease. It may either enhance their effects or increase their side effects.

FUN FACTS

- In former days, cinnamon sticks were coated with sugar and sold as lollipops.
- There have been multiple uses of cinnamon over the centuries. In ancient Egypt, the spice was used in the embalming process as a preservative.
- In medieval Europe, cinnamon was one of the major spices.
- In England, it is illegal to sell cassia as cinnamon.

Ninety-Minute Cinnamon Rolls

Ingredients

- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup margarine, softened
- 3 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 1 (.25 ounce) package instant yeast
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup water
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- ½ cup margarine softened
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- ½ cup raisins (optional)



Directions

- Heat milk in a small saucepan until just hot to touch or a few bubbles form around the edge. Remove from heat and stir in margarine until melted; set aside.
- Combine 2 ¼ cups flour, white sugar, yeast, and salt in a large bowl. Add milk mixture, water, and egg; beat well. Add remaining 1 cup flour, ½ cup at a time, stirring well after each addition.
- Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 10 minutes.
- While dough is resting, mix together brown sugar, margarine, and cinnamon in a small bowl. Set aside.
- Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease a 12-cup muffin pan
- Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface into a 12x9-inch rectangle. Spread brown sugar mixture over dough, sprinkle with raisins. Roll up dough and pinch seam to seal. Cut into 12 equal rolls and place cut-side up in the prepared muffin cups. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes.
- Bake in the preheated oven until browned, about 20 minutes. Remove rolls from muffin cups to cool on a wire rack. Serve warm.

Moroccan Carrot and Orange Salad

Ingredients

- 4 medium carrots, peeled and finely grated (about 1.5 cups)
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice, or more to taste
- 1 tsp orange blossom water
- 1 tsp sugar (if the oranges and carrots are not very sweet)
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon



Directions

- Mix all ingredients. Place in the fridge for at least 1 hour.
- Serve cold. Garnish if desired with extra cinnamon and sugar.
- You can also blend the carrots or press them with a juicer, collect the pulp and the juice then add the rest of the ingredients. Adjust the consistency from thick to soupy to your liking.