

AYURVEDA AND TRAVELS TO INDIA

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AROUND THE WORLD

For the next few months, our Care Homes and residents are travelling 'Around the World with Nellsar Cruises'. The virtual travel adventure will lift our spirits and immerse us into a menagerie of different countries, cultures and culinary delights.

As we whisk our lovely ladies and gentlemen away, across the Seven Seas and around the globe, our next stop on **Wednesday 10 March in India!** This wonderful country has so much to offer in terms of food, and the ancient practice of '**Ayurveda**' has incorporated the philosophy of food as medicine for more than 5,000 years.

Ayurveda is an ancient wellness practice. It places great emphasis on preventing illness and poor health while encouraging us to maintain good health through close attention to balance in one's life, right thinking, diet, lifestyle, and the use of herbs.

*Knowledge of **Ayurveda** enables one to understand how to create a balance of body, mind, and consciousness according to one's own individual constitution and how to make lifestyle changes to bring about and maintain this balance. (1)*

India is famous for its cuisine. The use of herbs and spices are a staple in the cooking of most if not all the dishes. Not only do the spices and herbs offer an exquisite flavour and vibrant colour, they also offer health benefits as listed below by Medical Daily. (2)

Turmeric

This bright orange spice and member of the ginger family is harvested from the root of a *curcuma longa* plant. For thousands of years, **Ayurvedic medicine** has used turmeric for a variety of health reasons. The National Institute of Health has found that turmeric aids in helping to treat arthritis, heartburn, stomach pain, diarrhoea, intestinal gas, stomach bloating and loss of appetite. Turmeric is also used as a topical treatment for issues like skin inflammation, infected wounds and ringworm.

Black Pepper

Black pepper is not a spice that many people associate with Indian cooking. However, these little peppercorns have their most ancient roots in India. By now, they are one of the most traded spices in the world and are commonly found in many European dishes, often paired with salt. Black pepper aids in digestion, congestion, an upset stomach and can also help to stop the bleeding on a cut when applied topically.

Cardamom

Native to the forests in India, these green pods are commonly used not only in Indian cooking, but also in **Chai – Indian tea**. To get the full benefits of this spice, the outer shell needs to be broken to expose the tiny pods inside. It can be used to counteract several digestive problems including, bloating, gas, heartburn, and loss of appetite. It can even treat bad breath and is commonly used as an after-meal breath freshener. In preliminary studies it has also been shown to have cancer-fighting effects against non-melanoma skin cancer. However, more research is needed before cardamom can be recommended for cancer prevention.

Clove

The little bud resembles a tiny flower used not only in Indian cuisines, but in African and Middle Eastern as well. In cosmetic uses, clove is found in toothpastes, soaps, and perfumes. Indian healers have used the oils, flower buds and stems from the plant in an array of medicine. Clove oil can also help with pain when applied topically, especially toothache, and can help with stomach issues like gas, diarrhoea, nausea and upset stomach.

Cinnamon

This bark-like spice originates from Sri Lanka and was originally harvested by Arabian traders from a tall tree and ground to create the powder form of cinnamon. According to the Mayo Clinic, research suggests that cinnamon might help to regulate treatment for people with type 2 diabetes. The theory is that cinnamon increases insulin action.

Here is a recipe for a Masala Chai Tea which is a spiced Indian tea full of flavour and health

benefits.

Masala Chai

Ingredients

- ½ litre to 1 litre of milk (use an almond milk or other dairy free alternative of your choice)
- 2 black tea bags
- 6 cracked cardamom pods
- 1 cinnamon stick
- a grating of fresh nutmeg
- 2 cloves
- 2 to 3 inches of cut or crushed ginger
- 2 to 4 tsp light brown soft sugar

Method

- Heat the milk in a saucepan over a very low heat.
- Put the tea bags into the pan, add the ginger, cracked cardamom pods, cinnamon stick, nutmeg, and cloves.
- Add the light brown soft sugar or white sugar to taste, leave to infuse, simmer but not boil, for 10 mins.
- Strain into your favourite mug and enjoy.

Namaste!