

Did You Know?



Cinnamon, *Cinnamomum* spp.

- The spice cinnamon is obtained from the inner bark of several different tree species from the genus *Cinnamomum*.
- Some types of cinnamon are sold in rolled bark segments known as quills. It is commonly sold as a powder made from the grinding the bark or in pieces. Essential oils are made from the bark, leaves and root of the cinnamon tree. Extracts are made by soaking the quills in ethanol alcohol.
- There are two primary types of cinnamon produced commercially.
 - *Cinnamomum verum* - Ceylon cinnamon, also known as “true” cinnamon. Only the thin inner bark is harvested, yielding a finer and more crumbly texture. It is light brown in color. This cinnamon is more aromatic, yet more subtle in flavor than *C. cassia*. It is sold in quills or powdered.
 - *Cinnamomum cassia* – Cassia or Chinese cinnamon, which is the most common commercial type. It has a strong, spicy flavor and is most often used in baking baked goods where the cinnamon flavor is the dominant or featured flavor as in cinnamon rolls. It is generally a light to medium light reddish brown color. It is a hard woody texture which is thicker than other types because all layers of the bark are harvested and used. It is sold ground or as broken pieces of bark since it is not flexible enough to be rolled into quills.
- Other species that are also sold as cinnamon are:
 - *C. burmannii* – known as Korintje, Padang cassia or Indonesian cinnamon
 - *C. loureiroi* – known as Saigon cinnamon, Vietnamese cassia or Vietnamese cinnamon. Also sold as broken pieces of bark as well as ground.
 - *C. citriodorum* – known as Malabar cinnamon
- Cinnamon is used for its fragrance and for flavoring sweet and savory foods all over the world.
- The uses of cinnamon include as a seasoning, medicine and embalming tool at least as far back as 2000 B.C.E.
- Some cultures have used cinnamon in preserving meat, due to its phenol content that inhibits bacterial growth.
- Medicinal uses in ancient times included treating coughs, colds, arthritis, as well as circulatory and digestive issues. Modern uses include digestive issues, appetite loss, bacterial and fungal infections, and lowering blood sugar.
- Research continues using extracts from the bark on inhibiting Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis and treating HIV.

Did You Know?



- In the garden, powdered cinnamon can be used as a rooting hormone to stimulate root growth in cuttings. And the antifungal properties of cinnamon can be used to prevent damping off, a fungal disease of seedlings.
- Cinnamon sticks and cassia make up the nest of the phoenix bird in the legend of the phoenix.
- Cinnamon was used as currency by the Romans as it was considered to be so valuable. Pliny the Elder described cinnamon as being worth 15 times more than silver.

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