

CINNAMON



Cinnamon

Cassia, Sweet Wood, and Gui Zhi

Latin names: *Cinnamomum Cassia*,
Cinnamomum Verum

Medicinal Action and Uses:

Carminative, astringent, topical stimulant, aphrodisiac, anti-fungal, antibacterial, diuretic, digestive stimulant, antiseptic.



Cinnamomum Verum Leaves

Interesting Facts:

In the Bible, Cinnamon is referred to as "Cassia." It is mentioned in a prophecy about Jesus Christ: Psalm 45:6-8 - Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom [is] a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

All thy garments [smell] of myrrh, and aloes, [and] cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. (Psalm 45:8)

The Dutch owned the monopoly of the trade of Cinnamon, and it was not cultivated until 1776, owing to Dutch opposition and the belief that cultivation would destroy its properties. Cinnamon is now largely cultivated. Between 60-80% of commercial Cinnamon

Story

Recently I had an upper jaw infection that quickly spread to inflame the whole side of my face, including my left eye. I tried garlic poultices and had some success, but continued to battle the infection. These types of oral infections can be life threatening, and I was seriously considering antibiotics for the first time in nearly a decade. But first I decided to try one more herb... I put a Cinnamon Cassia stick in my mouth, crunched it up, and kept the hot bark against my gums and palate until it lost its heat. Then I either swallowed or spit out the used bark. I repeated this treatment all day, even sleeping with a wad of "cud" in my mouth overnight. The heat of the cinnamon burned the skin on the side of my tongue, but the infection began to subside. A few drops of cinnamon oil folded on the INSIDE of a damp washcloth, held to my face began to heal the skin that had broken out with the infection, stimulating blood flow. The next week a friend commented that I was "practically glowing" and my complexion was "so rosy." Hopefully I didn't overdo it!

I was truly impressed with the health benefits of Cinnamon. Although I remain faithful to garlic, I may first try cinnamon the next time I need to kick an infection: The scent is so much nicer!

is grown and harvested in Sumatra, Indonesia. It is also grown in Ceylon, Malabar, Cochin-China, Brazil, Mauritius, India, and Jamaica.



Cinnamon bark

Cinnamon was used in ancient Egypt for embalming. In ancient times, Cinnamon was added to food to prevent spoiling. During the Bubonic Plague, sponges were soaked in Cinnamon and Cloves and placed in sick rooms. Cinnamon was the most sought after spice during explorations of the 15th and 16th centuries. It has also been burned as an incense. The smell of Cinnamon is pleasant, stimulates the senses, yet calms the nerves. Its smell is reputed to attract customers to a place of business. Cinnamon in sachets will repel moths.



How to Use Cinnamon:

For people with diabetes, 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon of ground cinnamon per meal may help control blood sugar levels.

To brew a stomach-soothing tea, use 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon of powdered herb per cup of boiling water. Steep 10 to 20 minutes. Drink up to three cups a day. To fight tooth decay and promote healthy gums and teeth, simply chew a small cinnamon stick occasionally, or add cinnamon to your oatmeal in the morning.

Cinnamon Toast Recipe

Slice bread and butter. Arrange buttered slices on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle all the bread slices liberally with Cinnamon powder. Drizzle with honey, or sprinkle with raw cane sugar. Place in broiler on high for about 5 minutes. Keep an eye on the process to make sure your toast does not burn. When toasted golden brown, remove from oven and serve with cold milk. Great for an immune boosting breakfast or snack!

Cinnamon Tea

To brew a stomach-soothing tea, use 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon of powdered Cinnamon per cup of boiling water. Steep for 10 to 20 minutes. Drink up to three cups day. I simply add cinnamon powder to our oatmeal in the morning - it tastes great!

Description:

Cinnamon grows best in almost pure sand; it prefers a sheltered place, heavy moisture, and warm, unvarying temperatures. The tree usually grows up to 30 feet high, has thick outer bark, and strong branches. The top side of the leaves is shiny, emerald green. The tree flowers in small white in panicles; the fruit is an oval berry which is bluish when ripe. The cinnamon root bark smells like cinnamon and tastes like camphor, which it yields on distillation. Cinnamon leaves, when bruised, smell spicy and have a hot taste; the berry tastes a little like juniper, and when ripe, bruised, and boiled it gives off an oily matter which cools and solidifies as "cinnamon suet."

The commercially bought and sold Cinnamon bark is the dried inner bark of young trees, usually one of the *Cinnamomum Cassia* strains.

"True" Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum Verum*) is said to hold the best and strongest health benefits, but is harder to obtain. This type of Cinnamon is very sweet and rich in flavor, but not as hot. The bark has many thin layers, rather than one thick layer, like the more common Cinnamon *Cassia*(s). True Cinnamon is so wonderfully sweet and flavorful, you may find yourself wondering how something that tastes so good can be a medicine.

However, the health benefits, flavor and scent of the various types are similar enough most people do not make a differentiation between the various types of Cinnamon.

The constituents of Cinnamon are 0 to 10 % of volatile oil, tannin, mucilage and sugar.

- **Fights tooth decay:** The antibacterial properties of Cinnamon kill the harmful bacteria that cause tooth decay and gum disease. It also combats oral fungal/yeast problems, and is great for fighting halitosis (bad breath.) Cinnamon oil is commonly used in chewing gums for this very reason. My kids enjoy chewing/sucking on cinnamon sticks, and so do I.
- **Soothes upset stomach:** Like many culinary spices, Cinnamon helps calm the stomach. The stimulating properties of Cinnamon increase circulation and healing in the GI tract, help to get the gastric juices flowing, and kill foreign bacteria. A Japanese study revealed that this spice may also help prevent ulcers.
- **Clears up urinary-tract infections:** One German study showed that Cinnamon "suppresses completely" the cause of most urinary-tract infections (*Escherichia coli* bacteria) and the fungus responsible for vaginal yeast infections (*Candida albicans*). The tea recipe above can be used to combat urinary and vaginal yeast infections. Sweeten with honey and pour over ice to drink the tea all day long if you are fighting a bacterial or fungal infection.
- **Allows diabetics to use less insulin:** Some studies have shown that Cinnamon helps people with Type II diabetes metabolize sugar better. In adult-onset diabetes, the pancreas produces insulin, but the body can't use it efficiently to break down sugar. Researchers discovered that Cinnamon reduces the amount of insulin necessary for glucose (sugar) metabolism. "One-eighth of a teaspoon of cinnamon triples insulin efficiency," says James A. Duke, Ph.D., a botanist retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and author of *The CRC Handbook of Medicinal Herbs*. Taking 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon of ground Cinnamon with each meal may help control blood sugar levels.

• *Other Benefits:* Chinese herbalists tell of older people, in their 70s and 80s, developing a phlegmy cough. A helpful remedy, they suggest, is chewing and swallowing a very small pinch of powdered cinnamon every day. This remedy can also help people with cold feet and hands, probably because of improved peripheral circulation. It is also said to relieve nausea and vomiting, and, because of its mild astringency, is said to be particularly useful in infantile diarrhea.

Topical applications of Cinnamon include use as a hair rinse for healthy scalp (may also stain hair cinnamon color), and as a toothpaste flavoring to freshen breath. As a wash (tea), it is said to prevent and cure fungal infections such as athlete's foot. It is also used in massage oils because of the scent, and because it stimulates local circulation. Its prolonged internal use is known to beautify the skin and promote a rosy complexion.

NOTE: If applied topically to your face, it can cause burning. If this occurs, immediately wash your skin with soap and water.

Warnings: The amounts of Cinnamon normally used in food are non-toxic, although some people experience allergic reactions after eating this spice. Cinnamon oil is a different story. Applied to the skin, it may cause redness and burning. Taken internally, the pure oil can cause nausea, vomiting and possibly even kidney damage. **Never ingest pure Cinnamon oil.**

Cinnamon Quiz:

Where is most of the world's Cinnamon grown? _____

What are some of the names for Cinnamon? _____

What are the characteristics of "True Cinnamon?" _____

What is the name for Cinnamon in the Bible? _____

What part of the Cinnamon tree is commonly used? _____

List the healing/health benefits of Cinnamon: _____

How does Cinnamon promote tooth and gum health? _____

Should pure Cinnamon oil be ingested? _____ List the ways Cinnamon will be useful to your family: _____

While researching this herb, I "met" a girl who lives in Indonesia where 60-80% of the world's Cinnamon is harvested. She has documented the Cinnamon harvesting process with beautiful photography and informational comments, and uploaded her collection for us to enjoy. To visit Le Minah's Cinnamon album online, go to:

<http://flickr.com/photos/johari/sets/72157594380819034/>



Resources:

<http://www.viable-herbal.com/herbdesc/1/cinnamo.htm>

<http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/c/cinnam69.html>

<http://www.newstarget.com/001074.html>

<http://www.organicfood.co.uk/herbs/cinnamon.html>

<http://www.henriettesherbal.com/blog/?p=21>

<http://flickr.com/photos/santheo/5586643/Cinnamon Tree by santheo>

<http://flickr.com/photos/johari/299860065/20 year old tree by le minah>

[http://flickr.com/photos/tim-waters/181389541/Cinnamon verum \(true cinnamon\) by Tim Waters](http://flickr.com/photos/tim-waters/181389541/Cinnamon verum (true cinnamon) by Tim Waters)

<http://flickr.com/photos/dennisylvesterhurd/266887411/cinnamon verum bark by Dennis Sylvester Hurd>