

SPICE UP YOUR LIFE (AND YOUR HEALTH) WITH THESE 3 SUPER SPICES

Long before there were drug companies, people used plants to treat and prevent illness. Today, most of the world still uses herbs and spices to improve health and manage symptoms of disease. Did you know that many everyday spices have therapeutic properties?

Here are three super spices that may already be part of your diet, and the benefits of each.

1. Cinnamon

A favorite among bakers, especially in the fall, [cinnamon](#) is a **natural fat burner**. Its effects on metabolism have been studied widely, and the results are a pleasant surprise for anyone who already loves the warm, aromatic spice.

Cinnamon, it seems, can help **lower levels of both LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and sugar in the blood**. This is welcomed news for people with heart disease or diabetes as well as those who may at risk for either condition. As an added benefit, when cinnamon lowers blood sugar, it does so by **regulating insulin levels**. Since high insulin levels are associated with weight gain, cinnamon can also help you **lose weight** and keep it off. Try getting ½ to 1 tsp. of cinnamon in your diet each day. You can stir it into coffee, mix it with your morning oatmeal or add it to yogurt. And of course, you can bake with it!

2. Turmeric

If you enjoy Indian cuisine, you’re probably familiar the super spice turmeric. While it’s a staple of Indian food, turmeric is also used medicinally in both Indian and Chinese medicine. The spice has strong **antioxidant, antibacterial, and antifungal** properties. In a nutshell, this means turmeric may pack a 1-2-3 punch against all kinds of illnesses, including cancer.

Turmeric contains [curcumin](#) a potent phytochemical (which means *substances in plants*) that help protect and even strengthen the liver, the organ that removes toxins from the body. Turmeric also helps **boost immunity** and protects the body from free radical damage. Simply put, take your turmeric (or better yet, cook with it), and may find you get sick less often.

3. Cayenne

Cayenne (hot pepper or chili pepper) is an acquired taste, but if you acquire it, you’re ahead in the game of health. Cayenne is a popular spice in Mexican and Latin American cuisine. As rich in nutrients as it is hot, cayenne acts on both the **digestive and immune systems**. It helps food move through the digestive tract, and even though it may “burn” going down, [cayenne may help heal stomach and intestinal ulcers](#).

Like turmeric, cayenne also has **antibacterial** and antifungal **properties**. Add a bit to your food, and you can reduce the chances of getting food poisoning, as this spice can destroy bacteria.

And if spicy foods aren’t your thing?

If you’re not inclined to cook spicy meals, you may still get some of benefits by taking these spices in supplement form. You’ll be missing out on some tasty dishes, though!