

Cloves are the aromatic dried flower buds of a tree in the family Myrtaceae. Cloves are native to the Maluku islands in Indonesia and used as a spice in cuisines all over the world. Cloves are harvested primarily in Indonesia, India, Madagascar, Zanzibar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. They have a numbing effect on mouth tissues.

The clove tree is an evergreen that grows to a height ranging from 8–12 m, having large leaves and sanguine flowers in numerous groups of terminal clusters. The flower buds are at first of a pale color and gradually become green, after which they develop into a bright red, when they are ready for collecting. Cloves are harvested when 1.5–2 cm long, and consist of a long calyx, terminating in four spreading sepals, and four unopened petals which form a small ball in the center.

Cloves are often used in Asian, African, and Middle Eastern cooking in adding flavor to meats, curries, and meat marinades. They are also used to create sweet dishes, such as with fruits like apples, pears, or rhubarb.

In Mexican cuisine, cloves are best known as clavos de olor, and often used together with cumin and cinnamon.

Considered a very strong spice due to the eugenol chemical that makes up most of the clove's taste (85 percent), the quantity of clove used in recipes is usually small.[4] It pairs well with cinnamon, allspice, vanilla, red wine, and basil, as well as with uncommon combinations like onion, citrus peel, star anise or peppercorns.

### Non-culinary uses

The spice is used in a type of cigarette called kretek in Indonesia.[1] Kreteks have been smoked throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. In 2009, clove cigarettes (as well as fruit and candy flavored cigarettes) were outlawed in the US.

Clove also works as an ant repeller. Cloves are used in Indian Ayurvedic medicine, and dentistry where the essential oil is used as an anodyne (painkiller) for dental emergencies. Cloves are used as a carminative, to increase hydrochloric acid in the stomach and to improve peristalsis. Cloves are also said to be a natural anthelmintic.[7] The essential oil is used in aromatherapy when stimulation and warming are needed, especially for digestive problems. Topical application over the stomach or abdomen are said to warm the digestive tract. Clove oil, applied to a cavity in a decayed tooth, also relieves toothache. Western studies have supported the use of cloves and clove oil for dental pain. However, studies to determine its effectiveness for fever reduction, as a mosquito repellent and to prevent premature ejaculation have been inconclusive. Clove may reduce blood sugar levels.

## Cloves and its use in Indian Cuisine

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