

from the supermarket

by Sue Visser (Nature Fresh customer services : www.naturefresh.co.za)

TURMERIC



Better known as borrie, turmeric is a very versatile spice. Its distinctive yellow colour adds a warm, spicy texture to rice and curry dishes. Medicinally, it is used both internally and externally. It is chiefly a liver remedy, especially for jaundice, indigestion or weakness and fatigue. Traditionally mothers were given turmeric after the birth of their babies to build their strength. It's easy to take turmeric if you mix it with equal quantities of molasses or honey and a few drops of water. For indigestion, take a teaspoon of this paste an hour before meals, with a cup of herb tea or boiling water. People also take it for coughs, colds and fevers. This paste can be applied to boils, rashes, eczema and scabies. For cleaning eye infections, boil a teaspoon of pure turmeric powder in a cup of water for 10 minutes. Moisten some cotton wool in this mixture and gently clean the eye, working from the nose, outwards. Turmeric is also a good remedy for pets.

CORIANDER

Strong-tasting coriander seeds have many medicinal uses that date back as far as 3000 years ago. It is used for poor circulation, water retention, colic, diarrhoea, nausea, headaches, nervous tension, exhaustion and neuralgia. In the old days a mixture of coriander, cumin and vinegar was used to preserve meats and is still used today in the preparation of boerewors and biltong. Coriander was also added to love potions due to the legendary belief that it was an aphrodisiac. Coriander seeds can add a distinctively refreshing, pungent flavour to herb tea, curries, chutney, pickles, bread, fish, soups and even marmalade and milk puddings. The flavour can be enhanced by first crushing the seeds. You can also buy coriander powder, called Koljana.

LIQUORICE

Liquorice is 50 times sweeter than sugar and has been used to sweeten and flavour medicines like tonics and cough mixtures for centuries. It also contains aldosterone, a hormone balance for sodium and potassium in the body. This helps prevent dehydration and was given to soldiers before they marched through the

desert. It encourages the flow of saliva and is a popular remedy for sore throats and gastric ulcers, especially in Europe. Liquorice is a great stress remedy as it improves the flow of adrenalin, prevents hypoglycemia (lack of glucose in the blood stream). It also has estrogen-like hormone effects, so ladies who need extra estrogen can eat salted liquorice (Dutch "Zoute Drop"), black liquorice strips or take some Lennon's Borsdruppels. Some cafés sell a breath freshener called "Sen Sen". They're liquorice-based and are good for dry mouths and sore throats, especially for singers and teachers. Liquorice is a medicine disguised as a sweet that should be treated with respect. **PEOPLE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE SHOULD NOT TAKE LIQUORICE.**

CARDAMOM



In traditional Indian medicine, cardamom seeds are used as a cure for vomiting. The little seeds inside the green pod are chewed repeatedly until the vomiting stops. It is also used to promote digestion and to prevent bloating from gas formation. In some regions it is a popular spice used for women's ailments such as menstrual problems, headaches, water retention, depression and nausea. Cardamom adds a distinctive flavour to nougat, cakes, milk desserts and almond biscuits. Ground up as a powder, it is popular in coffee and tea, especially in the Middle East where you are served with sweet black cardamom coffee.

MUSTARD

Mustard, used to flavour hotdogs, clears your sinuses at the same time, depending on how strong you make it. Many years ago, teachers punished children for swearing by giving them a teaspoon of mustard – it certainly cured their asthma! Mustard is extremely soothing for tired muscles, creaking joints and aching feet. A detoxifying bath can be made by putting two tablespoons of Epsom Salts and a tablespoon of mustard powder into a hot bath, and adding some crushed lavender, rosemary or eucalyptus leaves for a nice fragrance. This mixture helps draw toxins out of the body whilst it soothes and relaxes you. Rinse off with cold or lukewarm water and dry yourself briskly with a rough towel. You can also use a little of this mixture to make a foot bath.

NUTMEG

Mace is the yellow stringy fruit that grows around the pip or dark brown seed we know as nutmeg. Both these spices are used as medicines and spices. Mace is an ingredient used in self-defence sprays, so it is valuable for preventing crimes and against dogs as well. Nutmeg is a traditional remedy for diarrhoea, especially for children. A pinch of powdered nutmeg can be mixed with molasses and given alternately with mint or cardamom tea three times a day, but consult a doctor if the symptoms are serious and the child has a fever. Grated nutmeg is delicious in a white sauce for fish or on cauliflower, so many people grate their nutmeg freshly to get the full aroma. It's available in powdered form or as whole or powdered mace. Nutmeg should not be taken in large quantities because it has a dulling effect on the nervous system.

