



## Health benefits of everyday Herbs and Spices



The common herbs and spices found in our kitchens can offer surprising health benefits, says Nutritional Therapist Tegan Philp for CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine).

Almost all societies have traditionally used herbs for their amazing nutritional benefits as well as their therapeutic powers.

Here's a quick look at some of the herbs and spices which you may already have in your kitchen, or growing just outside.

- **Cinnamon** is not only a gentle aid to support digestion, it can help to balance blood sugar levels, evening out mood and energy swings between highs and lows. Sprinkle cinnamon powder on oats, and use whole cinnamon sticks in soups and stews
- **Rosemary** is a powerful antioxidant, protecting our cells. It is also good for circulation. Fresh rosemary is best, add it to your cooking, or to your salad dressing made with cider apple vinegar. Look up how to infuse fresh rosemary to create some effective hair care products.
- **Garlic** has antimicrobial and immune boosting properties and it's great in soups and stews. Allicin is the active component in garlic that helps to keep colds and flu at bay. Always use garlic freshly chopped or crushed as breaking the clove activates the allicin components.
- **Turmeric** is an anti-inflammatory powerhouse, and is used in everything from skin care, weight-loss and even arthritis protocols. Turmeric boasts an impressive nutrient profile, but watch out for its strikingly bright yellow colour when cooking. It leaves hard-to-remove stains.
- **Dandelion root** supports our detoxification pathways. It is a bitter herb, and can help to promote bile secretions, speed up digestion and reduce bloating. Sip dandelion tea 20 minutes before meals to support digestion.
- **Nettle** is excellent for detoxification. It is able to increase urine production and thus speedily remove the collected toxins. Nettle contains histamine that will block the body's own histamine production, slowly desensitizing the effects of the allergens. Drinking nettle tea can be a helpful preparation for the hay fever season. Nettle also has anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Chamomile** is anti-inflammatory and nervine, working as a calming relaxant. It's soothing on the digestive system, and a helpful sleep remedy as a bedtime drink. It is also used topically to help soothe skin disorders, such as eczema and dermatitis.
- **Echinacea** moderates the immune system, and is a popular home remedy for preventing colds and flu. Have echinacea drops and lozenges on hand during the winter months or ask a herbalist for a personalised immune-boosting tincture containing Echinacea.
- **Ginger root** is a powerful antiviral and antibacterial herb that can help

reduce fevers and relieve colds and inflammation. It can warm you from the core, as well as help to reduce nausea. It's best used freshly chopped with your food, or have it as a tea with half a lemon, and sweetened with a little Manuka honey or a pinch of cinnamon.

- **Lavender** is highly calming and supports the nervous system. As an essential oil, use lavender on your pillow to improve sleep quality, or add a few drops to a relaxing bath. Lavender flower extract can even be used in recipes adding a flavoursome twist to treats!

Herbs are very powerful and some of them are not appropriate for everyone. Liquorice root, for example, is not suitable for people with high blood pressure because of its active component (glycyrrhizin). Working with an accredited herbalist is the best way to ensure the right dose and form, and in a combination that addresses your specific needs most effectively.

You can train with CNM in Manchester for a career as a Naturopathic Herbalist.

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