

CARDAMOM

Common Names:

Cardamon, Lesser Cardamom, cardamome, Kardamom, cardamone, cardamomo, kapulaga, enasal, elam, grawahn, kravan, chhoti elachi

Botanical Name:

Elletaria Cardamomum

Parts used:

The plant of cardamom is gathered from October to December and is typically sold in fruit pods, split or whole and the seeds are either loose or ground into a fine powder.

Active Components:

The seeds contain a volatile oil, which give cardamom its aroma as well as medicinal value.

History:

In ancient times, cardamom had various uses. For example, in ancient Greece and Rome it was used as a scent in perfume, whereas in ancient Egypt it was chewed as a tooth cleaner. Its medicinal value as a digestive aid is recorded as early as 4th century B.C. It is also mentioned in the Arabian Nights as an aphrodisiac.

Looks like:

Cardamom grows from 6 to 12 feet in height. It has large, wide, dark green leaves and flowers that vary in colour (one example is white flowers with purple tip). It is its thick stem, which flowers and bears the fruit. Enclosed in the fruit pods are small, brown aromatic seeds.

Where it's grown:

Cardamom is native to India and Southeast Asia but today it is cultivated in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand and Central America.

Use:

Cardamom is a very popular but also very expensive spice. In the culinary realm it is often referred to as the "Queen of spices". It is known for its pungent taste and highly aromatic flavour. Cardamom is a natural stimulant and carminative, but it is often used in synergy with other agents to relieve flatulence and indigestion. Due to its aromatic flavour, it makes a powerful breath freshener and a fusion of cardamom and cinnamon can be gargled to relieve a sore throat. When crushed with mint leaves in boiling water it makes an effective hiccup remedy and when boiled with tea it can be used for depression. Another application for cardamom is as a diuretic.

