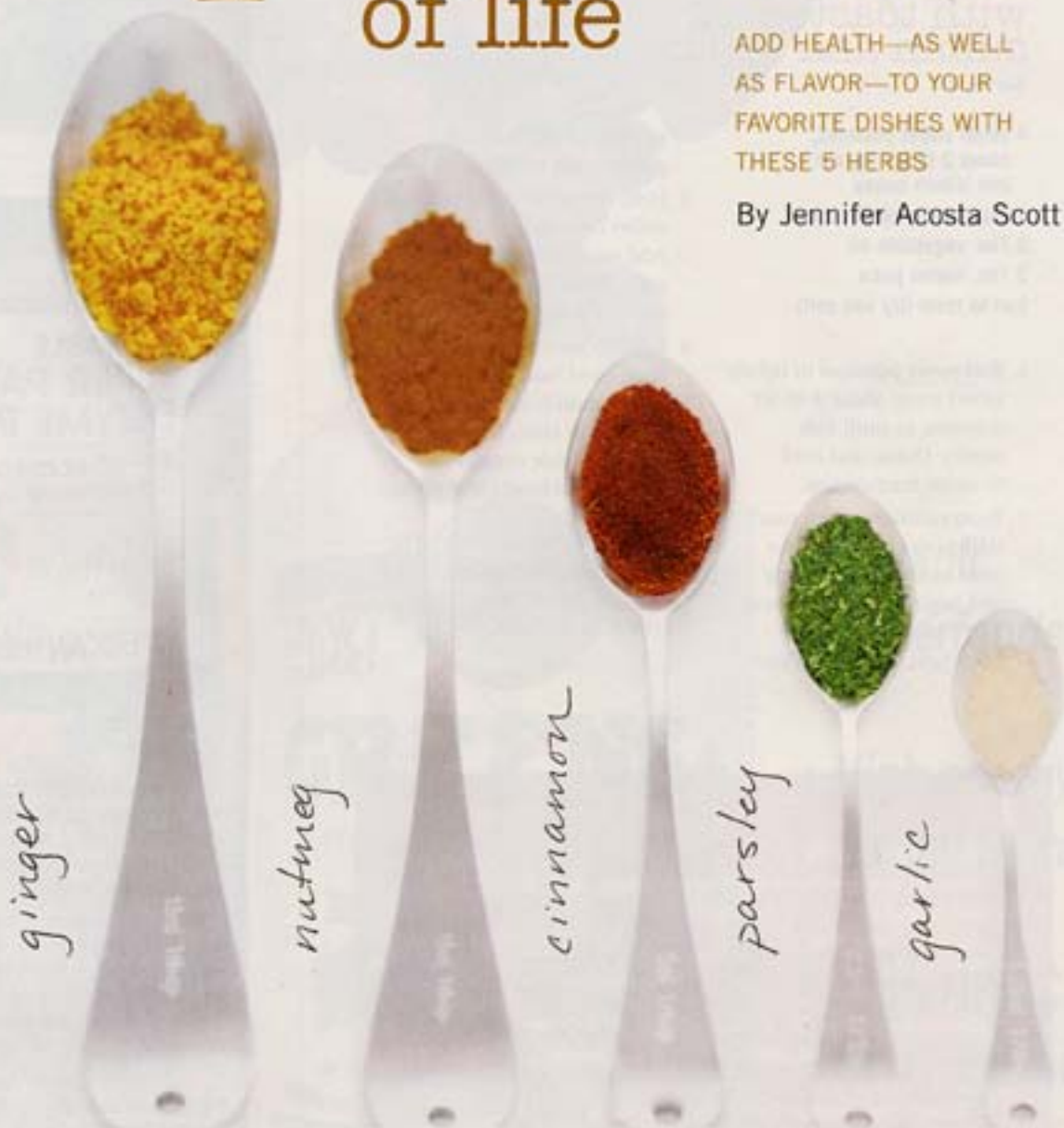


.the spice of life

ADD HEALTH—AS WELL AS FLAVOR—TO YOUR FAVORITE DISHES WITH THESE 5 HERBS

By Jennifer Acosta Scott



It's hard to imagine warm oatmeal cookies without cinnamon or an Italian dish that lacks the zing of freshly chopped garlic. But there's more to spices than just good taste. Many herbs contain beneficial compounds that can add health—as well as flavor—to your culinary concoctions. Use our guide ahead to find out why and how to incorporate these wholesome herbs into your diet.



SPICE: Parsley
FORMS: Dried flakes, powder, fresh leaves
HEALTH RUNDOWN: Parsley contains myristicin, an antioxidant that has been linked to cancer prevention in animal studies. It's also a good source of iron and vitamins A and C.

RECIPE 411: Add to beef, fish and pasta; it's hard to go wrong with this herb. Opt for fresh parsley to get the most benefits and flavor. The curly leaf version is also a popular garnish.

SPICE: Ginger
FORMS: Ground, dried, fresh gingerroot
HEALTH RUNDOWN: Feeling queasy? Ginger has



a centuries-old reputation as a great stomach settler. Its two main compounds, gingerols and shogaols, are being studied for their specific anti-nausea properties.

RECIPE 411: Add a few slices of fresh gingerroot to a glass of water for help with morning or motion sickness. It also goes well in Indian curries and Asian dishes—anywhere a shot of sharp spice is needed.

SPICE: Nutmeg
FORMS: Ground, kernels
HEALTH RUNDOWN:

Like parsley, nutmeg contains the antioxidant myristicin, which helps cells resist inflammation. Nutmeg is also linked to the protection of liver function. But don't go overboard with this spice. Large amounts of nutmeg can affect the nervous system, causing hallucinations, says Judith Rodriguez, PhD, RD, chair of the public health department at the University of North Florida.
RECIPE 411: Include aromatic nutmeg in breads, pies and even meat dishes.



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SPICE: Garlic

FORMS: Powdered, minced, crushed or whole fresh cloves

HEALTH RUNDOWN: Garlic has antibiotic properties and boosts the immune system. Add it to your food when you're suffering from a cold or sore throat. Research has also linked two compounds in garlic, ajoene and allicin, to the improvement of cardiovascular health. Garlic has antiplatelet properties and thins blood, so don't overindulge if you're about to have surgery.

RECIPE 411: Virtually any Italian dish is better with garlic. Try it in sauces, soups, dips and stews. To get the maximum benefit, use fresh cloves, and avoid browning and overcooking. Garlic cooks very quickly in oil, so use only medium heat when sautéing.

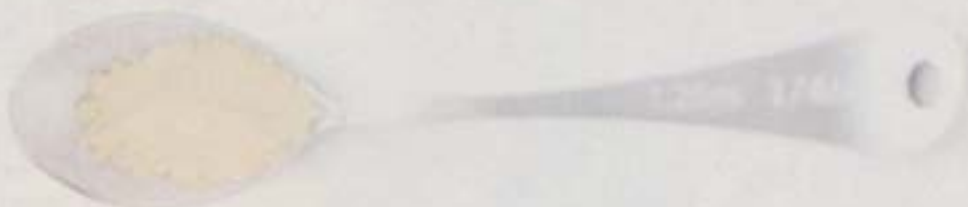
SPICE: Cinnamon

FORMS: Ground, bark (aka sticks)

HEALTH RUNDOWN: The warming effect of this spice helps relieve the pain of stiff muscles and arthritis. Chinese medicinal theory also touts cinnamon as a treatment for impotency and infertility, says licensed acupuncturist and herbalist Kristen Burris. Like nutmeg, cinnamon has anti-inflammatory properties.

RECIPE 411: Sprinkle cinnamon in cookies, cakes, sweet rolls and other baked goods. For a healthful wintertime beverage, grate a bit of cinnamon bark into your favorite hot tea.

By regularly including these five herbs in your diet, you will not only stimulate your taste buds, but give your health a boost too. ☐



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