



SUPER SPICES

There's a whole world of nose-tickling, taste bud-perking spices, and they may come with amazing health benefits. Let's get shaking.

These little hot-ties add some fierce to veggies and much more.

red pepper flakes

WHEN WAS THE LAST time you went on a shopping spree in the spice aisle? Or just poked around in the back corners of your spice cabinet? Chances are, it's been a while. Seasonings spark up flavor in a big way—so why do we forget, beyond the usual chili pot, to break out those toasty, zippy wonders, much less finish a jar's worth?

We gotta start raising our spice game, says Lisa Young, Ph.D., R.D., an adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University, because with the right seasonings, we can “minimize the need for excess salt, fat, and sometimes even sugar.”

Research, including investigations funded by the National Institutes of Health, also suggests that specific spices may help fight diseases such as cancer and arthritis. “Many spices contain concentrated levels of beneficial compounds that possibly rival the effectiveness of certain drugs,” says Tieraona Low Dog, M.D., fellowship director for the Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine and author of *Healthy at Home: Get Well and Stay Well Without Prescriptions*. Scientists aren't sure yet how those benefits carry over into the kitchen, but spices are definitely a mouthwatering essential in any stay-healthy eating plan, Low Dog says.

So flip open those little jars and tins, everyone. Our booklet will get you started, but you don't even need a recipe—just *play*.

turmeric

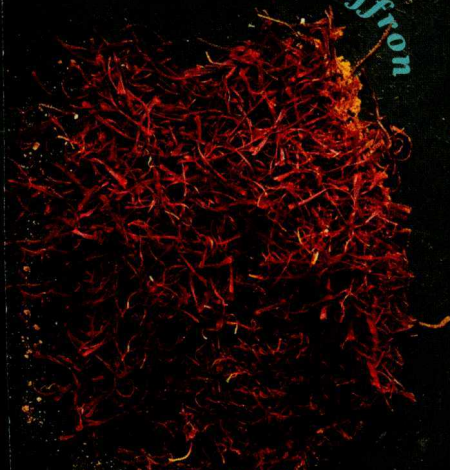
Nicely tangy and a touch sour, kind of like citrus.

black pepper

An everyday staple with a still-serious hit of heat.

cinnamon

Sweet, cozy—this can even sub for sugar in coffee.

saffron

A little flowery, a little bitter—in a good way!

cumin

Deliciously earthy and a smidge exotic, too.

fennel seeds

The slightly sweet seeds are super in Italian dishes.

nutmeg

Smells like Christmas, but use it anytime.

paprika

The smoked version is like grilled yum in a jar.

ginger

As with fresh, ground dried ginger's got fire.