

| Spices [Derived from the bark, root, fruit or berry of perennial plants] | | | | | | | |
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| Allspice | | | | Whole dried berry; ground | Complex, with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves | Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, Middle East | Essential in Jamaican jerk seasoning |
| Anise | | | | Whole fruit (seed); ground | Sweet and very aromatic, similar to licorice | Mexico, Italy | |
| Annatto | | | | Whole seed; paste | Slightly sweet and peppery | Latin and Central America, Mexico | A.k.a. achiote; often used as a coloring, as well as a flavoring |
| Caraway | | | | Whole fruit (seed); ground | Warm and strongly aromatic | Turkey, India, North Africa | Indispensable in harissa |
| Cardamom | | | | Whole pod; ground | Aromatic, sweet, spicy | Mexico, Central America, India | Member of the ginger family |
| Cinnamon | | | | Stripped dried bark (sticks); ground | Mild to bittersweet | Caribbean, Mexico, India, Middle East | Cassia, native to Southern China and Indochina, is a close relative of cinnamon |
| Cloves | | | | Whole dried bud; ground | Strong, but sweet, aromatic | Caribbean, India, North Africa, Middle East | |
| Coriander | | | | Whole fruit (seed); ground | Warm, mild, sweetish, with lemony undertones | Latin America, India, SE Asia, China, Middle East, North Africa | The leaves of coriander are called cilantro |
| Cumin | | | | Whole fruit (seed); ground | Spicy and lemony | Latin America, Mexico, India, SE Asia, Middle East, North Africa | |
| Curry | | | | Blend of dried ground spices | Spicy and complex; often includes fenugreek, turmeric, cumin, coriander, etc. | Caribbean, India | Although curry powder is associated with Indian food, it is an American invention |
| Fennel Pollen | | | | Plant pollen | Subtle fennel flavor, somewhat piney | Italy | |
| Fennel Seed | | | | Whole fruit (seed); cracked; ground | Aromatic and sweet, similar to anise but less pungent | India, Italy, Portugal, Turkey | |
| Five Spice | | | | Blend of dried ground spices | Can include cinnamon or cassia, star anise, clove, Sichuan peppercorn, and/or fennel | China | |
| Galangal | | | | Whole fresh or dried rhizome or pieces; ground | Similar to ginger, with a somewhat piney flavor | SE Asia | |
| Garam Masala | | | | Blend of dried ground spices | May include cinnamon, toasted cumin, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, etc. | India | Garam masala means “warm spices”; there are many variations |
| Ginger | | | | Whole fresh or dried rhizome or pieces; ground | Fresh ginger is juicy, spicy and aromatic, with lemony undertones | Caribbean, Latin America, India, China, Japan, SE Asia, North Africa | Dried ground ginger is much more mild in flavor |
| Juniper | | | | Dried whole berry | Aromatic, bittersweet, piney | France, Italy, Spain | Gin gets its characteristic flavor from juniper berries |
| Mace | | | | Flat, branchlike pieces; ground | Warm and intensely aromatic, somewhat resinous | Caribbean, India, Tunisia, Morocco, Italy, France | Mace is the outer covering of a nutmeg kernel |
| Mustard Seed | | | | Whole seed; ground | Pungent and spicy | India, France, Middle East | Seeds can come from 3 different plants, affecting the color |
| Nutmeg | | | | Whole kernel (seed); ground | Aromatic, earthy, nutty | Caribbean, India, SE Asia, Middle East, Italy, France | |
| Paprika | | | | Dried, ground capsicum (pepper) | Ranges from sweet and mild to fiery hot | Spain, Portugal, Turkey | |
| Pimenton | | | | Smoked, ground capsicum (pepper) | Three varieties: sweet, bittersweet, hot | Spain | |
| Ras al Hanout | | | | Blend of dried ground spices | Complex; can contain as many as 30 different spices, such as cumin, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, etc. | Morocco | The name translates to “top of the shop”—the spice shop |
| Saffron | | | | Dried stigma (style) of a crocus-like flower; ground | Fragrant, warm, slightly bitter | Caribbean, South America, India, Spain, Greece, Morocco | Usually steeped in warm liquid before being added to a recipe, to release its flavor |
| Sichuan Peppercorns | | | | Whole outer pod of a fruit; ground | Aromatic, lemony, tingly-hot | China, Japan | Despite its name, Sichuan peppercorn is not related to either pepper or chiles |
| Star Anise | | | | Dried star-shaped fruit | Reminiscent of anise, but a little less harsh | China, India, Vietnam | A major component of both 5-spice powder and garam masala |
| Sumac | | | | Whole dried berry; ground | Sour, fruity and astringent | Turkey, Lebanon | |
| Turmeric | | | | Ground rhizome | Warm and aromatic, with a slight bitterness | SE Asia, India, Middle East | |
| Vanilla Bean | | | | Whole fruit or seed pod (bean) of an orchid | Rich, full, aromatic and powerful | Mexico | Other forms include powder (blended with sugar or starch); extract |