

Spices [Derived from the bark, root, fruit or berry of perennial plants]							
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