



Unit 1 – Topic 1

Spices – uses – properties and classification – importance of spice industry in India

Spices:

Spices are those plants, the products of which are made use of as food adjuncts to add aroma and flavour (ex. Pepper, Cardamom, Clove, Nutmeg etc), while condiments are those plants, the products of which are used as food adjuncts to add taste only. Both spices and condiments contain essential oils, which provide the flavour and taste. They are of little nutritive value. They are used as whole, ground, paste or liquid form, mainly for flavouring and seasoning food. Most spices increase the shelf-life of food.

Uses of spices:

The principal use of spices is to season the insipid foods to impart flavour, aroma and taste.

They are also used as preservatives and fumigants.

Spices also find use in pharmacy and indigenous medicines.

Spices are also used in perfumery, soaps, cosmetics, tooth paste, confectionery, insenses, dyes, etc.

Properties of spices:

Spices are well known as appetizers.

They add a tang (taste) and flavour to otherwise insipid foods.

Some of them also possess anti-oxidant properties.

Some of them have preservative qualities (clove and mustard)

Some have strong anti-microbial and antibiotic activities.

Several of them possess medicinal properties.



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Classification of spices:

There are about 70 spices grown all over the world, which are classified in different ways.

I. Botanical classification (family wise)

Piperaceae - pepper.

Zingiberaceae – Ginger, Cardamom, Turmeric

Apiaceae – Coriander, Fennel, Cumin.

Myrtaceae – Clove, Nutmeg

Fabaceae – Fenugreek

Lauraceae – Cinnamom

Plant part useful as spice:

Root Spice -Angelica, Horse radish.

Rhizome spice – Turmeric, Ginger.

Bulbous spices – Onion, Garlic.

Bark spice – Cinnamom, Cassia

Leafy spices – Mints, Coriander, Methi

Aril spices – Mace.

Seedy spices – Coriander, Celery, Methi

Fruit spice

i) Capsules – Cardamom, Chillies.

ii) Berries – Pepper, All spice.



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Importance of spice industry in India:

India is often referred as “Home of spices”. This is because many of the 70 spices grown in the world, are native to India. Further, since antiquity, India pioneered in growing spices and exported. India has enjoyed virtual monopoly in the International Spice trade since ancient times. Out of the 70 spices, several of them can be grown in India, whereas in other countries a few spices are only grown. This is because, India has a great extent of diversity in the climate and soils, which enables to grow a variety of spices. Spices were always export – oriented crops not only in India, but also in other spice producing countries. India produces annually about 5.1 million tones of different spices valued at about Rs. 10200 crores, contributing to 25 to 30 per cent of the world production. India is the biggest exporter of spices and annually exporting about 2 million tonnes of different spices and spice products earning a foreign of about Rs. 5240 crores.