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NAAC Accredited Grade—A



Topic: Spices and Condiments

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SPICES AND CONDIMENTS

Spices and **condiments** are culinary **flavourings** in the form of **aromatic** natural plant products of **tropical** origin, or their **mixtures**, that are used in **whole** or (**moist** or **dry**) **pulverized** state for imparting or enhancing strong **flavour**, **aroma** and **pungency** to, and for seasoning and garnishing, **food** and **beverages**. **Spices** and **condiments** are difficult to distinguish. **Spices** are usually added **during cooking** and **condiments** (including spices, sauces, preserves and others) are added **after cooking**. **Flavourings** in the form of **fresh** or **dry** (culinary) **herbs** are similar to these but are usually **leafy** and **temperate** in origin (*e.g.* basil, caraway, celery, dill, mint, oregano, parsley, sage, rosemary and others).

Spices and **condiments** are the most important group of **aromatic** agricultural products. In addition to their primary use as **flavourings** these are also used as **incense**, **perfumes**, **cosmetics**, **preservatives** and **medicine**. These contain **essential oils** and the **alcoholic extracts** of these aromatic plant products are called **essences**, *e.g.* vanilla essence. These **essential oils** add **flavour**, **aroma** and **pungency** to foodstuff, boost **appetites** and even provide relief to the **monotony** of eating. They also cool the body by increasing the **perspiration rate** as well as prevents **deterioration** of preserved foodstuff and heals the body with **anti-septic**, **anti-oxidant** and many other bioactive properties.

There are around 40 to 50 spices of economic and culinary importance at the global level. Spices are classified according to their: **economic importance**, **cultivation method**, **botanical affinity** and **plant part used**. These are usually extracted from a **hard** (fresh) or **hardened** (dried) plant parts of economic importance such as **root** (*e.g.* asafoetida), **rhizome** (*e.g.* ginger, mango ginger, turmeric and garlic), **bulb** (*e.g.* garlic and onion), **bark** (*e.g.* cinnamon), **leaf** (*e.g.* bay leaf and coriander), **inflorescence** (*e.g.* long pepper), **flower** (*e.g.* clove and saffron), **fruit** (*e.g.* black pepper, cardamom, carom, chilli pepper, star anise, tamarind and vanilla), and **seed** (*e.g.* anise, black cumin, caraway, celery, coriander, cumin, fennel, fenugreek and mustard). These are obtained from taxonomically diverse plants such as the **apiaceous** or **umbelliferous** spices that include those from the members of **Apiaceae** (**Umbelliferae**) *e.g.* asafoetida (**root**), carom (**fruit**), anise, caraway, celery, cumin, fennel (**seed**), coriander (**leaf and seed**) and many others.

Table: List of Common Indian Spices and Condiments

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Family	Part Used
1	Onion (<i>Piaj</i> B.)	<i>Allium cepa</i>	Liliaceae	Bulb (Stem)
2	Garlic (<i>Rashun</i> B.)	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Liliaceae	Bulb (Stem)
3	Large/Black Cardamom (<i>Boro Elach</i> B.)	<i>Amomum aromaticum</i>	Zingiberaceae	Fruit
4	Celery (<i>Radhuni</i> B.)	<i>Apium graveolens</i>	Apiaceae	Seed
5	Black Mustard (<i>Kalo Sorse</i> B.)	<i>Brassica nigra</i>	Brassicaceae	Seed
6	Chilli Pepper (<i>Lanka</i> B.)	<i>Capsicum annum</i>	Solanaceae	Berry (Fruit)

B = Bengali Name

Table: List of Common Indian Spices and Condiments (contd.).

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Family	Parts Used
7	Caraway (<i>Sojeera</i> B.)	<i>Carum carvi</i>	Apiaceae	Seed
8	Bay Leaf (<i>Tejpata</i> B.)	<i>Cinnamomum tamala</i>	Lauraceae	Leaf
9	Cinnamon (<i>Darchini</i> B.)	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>	Lauraceae	Stem Bark
10	Coriander (<i>Dhone</i> B.)	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Apiaceae	Seed and Leaf
11	Saffron (<i>Jafran</i> B.)	<i>Crocus sativus</i>	Iridaceae	Stigma (Flower)
12	Cumin (<i>Jeera</i> B.)	<i>Cuminum cymium</i>	Apiaceae	Seed
13	Mango Ginger (<i>Amada</i> B.)	<i>Curcuma amada</i>	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome (Stem)
14	Turmeric (<i>Halud</i> B.)	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome (Stem)
15	Small/Green/True Cardamom (<i>Choto elach</i> B.)	<i>Elettaria cardamom</i>	Zingiberaceae	Fruit
16	Asafoetida (<i>Hing</i> B.)	<i>Ferula asafoetida</i>	Apiaceae	Root Gum Resin
17	Fennel (<i>Mouri</i> B.)	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Apiaceae	Seed
18	Star Anise (<i>Ada</i> B.)	<i>Illicium verum</i>	Schisandraceae	Fruit
19	Nutmeg (<i>Jaiphal</i> B.)	<i>Myristica fragrans</i>	Myristicaceae	Kernel (Fruit)
20	Mace (<i>Jaitri</i> B.)	<i>Myristica fragrans</i>	Myristicaceae	Aril (Fruit)
21	Black Cumin (<i>Kalo Jire</i> B.)	<i>Nigella sativa</i>	Ranunculaceae	Seed
22	Anise (<i>Sulpha</i> B.)	<i>Pimpinella anisum</i>	Apiaceae	Seed
23	Black Pepper (<i>Pipul</i> B.)	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Piperaceae	Berry (Fruit)
24	Long Pepper (<i>Gol Morich</i> B.)	<i>Piper longum</i>	Piperaceae	Inflorescence
25	Clove (<i>Labanga</i> B.)	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>	Myrtaceae	Flower (Bud)
26	Tamarind (<i>Tentul</i> B.)	<i>Tamarindus indicus</i>	Fabaceae	Lomentum (Fruit)
27	Carom (<i>Jawan</i> B.)	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>	Apiaceae	Fruit

B = Bengali Name

Table 1: List of Common Indian Spices and Condiments (contd.).

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Family	Part Used
28	Fenugreek (<i>Methi</i> B.)	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Fabaceae	Seed
29	Vanilla (<i>Vanilla</i> B.)	<i>Vanilla planifolia</i>	Orchidaceae	Pod (Fruit)
30	Ginger (<i>Ada</i> B.)	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome (Stem)

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Further Reading:

Kochhar, SL (2016) *Economic Botany: A Comprehensive Study*. Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Mitra, D, J Ghua & S Chowdhury (2010) *Studies in Botany* (Vol. 2). Moulik Library, Kolkata.

Mukherjee, SK (2016) *College Botany* (Vol. 3). New Central Book Agency, Kolkata.

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