

CINNAMON

Botanical Name:

Cinnamomum zeylanicum, *C. verum*

Common Names:

Cinnamon, Cassia, Sweet Wood, Gui Zhi, Tvak, Dalchini, Daruchini, Karuva, Vazhana, tamalapatra

Parts used:

Bark

Active Components:

Gum, tannin, mannitol, coumarins, and essential oils whose chemical components include: cinnamaldehyde, eugenol, beta-caryophyllene, linalool and methyl chavicol.

Looks like:

The cinnamon tree grows 10 to 15 m in height; its leaves are oval-shaped and 7 to 18 cm long; the flowers are greenish in colour and the fruit are purple berries that contain a single seed.

Where it's grown:

The tree is native to Sri Lanka and Southern India but is commercially grown in regions such as West Indies, Brazil, Egypt, Madagascar and Vietnam.

History:

Cinnamon is mentioned as early as 2700 BC in Ancient Chinese writings and it appears to have been highly regarded among ancient nations. It was imported into Ancient Egypt and Ancient Rome as early as 2000 BC.

Portuguese traders supplied the western world with Cinnamon all throughout the Middle Ages after establishing a fort on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) at the end of the fifth century. In the 17th Century the Dutch traders, who were later dislodged by the British, forced them out and took over the Cinnamon monopoly.

Use:

One of the main applications of Cinnamon is of course as a spice however its medicinal applications go back to the ancient times. In recent times, it has been used to treat diarrhoea, upset stomach and other conditions of the digestive tract. It is also known to be a strong antioxidant and is said to help clear up urinary tract infections and to relieve menstrual cramps. In addition, some studies have shown it effective in regulating blood sugar levels in Diabetics. The essential oil is used in aromatherapy to treat conditions such as fatigue, nausea and depression; and is also often used in massage oils to treat rheumatism.

