

Cloves (Syzygium aromaticum)

Use according to taste

Description

Cloves are the dried, unopened flower buds of a small evergreen tree.

They have a strong sweet, pungent flavour.

Cloves can have an overpowering flavour if used to excess and are often combined with other spices, as in Chinese Five Spice, Garam Masala and Mixed Spice, where they give warmth and body to dishes.

Did you know?

The name Clove is derived from the French word clou meaning nail, which is the shape that the bud and stem resemble. In Indonesia half of the Clove production is mixed with tobacco to produce Kretek cigarettes. Cloves are known to have antiseptic properties and their smell is often associated with the dentist. Their use as a preservative in pickles and spiced dishes is well documented. At the time of the early Chinese civilisation commoners chewed Cloves to sweeten their breath before talking to the emperor. The chinese also used Cloves as a mild anaesthetic for toothache.

Quality

Cloves should be large, plump and oily with a warm, reddish brown colour. The majority of the flower buds should be intact. Eugenol is the principal flavour-giving volatile oil.

Usage

Cloves complement - ham, gammon, onions, rice, apples, cakes, biscuits, desserts, mulled wine, Chinese and Indonesian dishes. Add Whole Cloves to mulled wine with Cinnamon Sticks and Coriander Seeds.

To combat the chills of winter, warm a tot of Irish whisky with 2 Whole Cloves, a dash of lemon juice and a pinch of sugar. An onion studded with one or two Cloves gives steak & kidney pie, beef casseroles and bread sauce a warm, full flavour. Stud baked or roasted ham with Whole Clove and spread over a mixture of honey, sugar and mustard before finishing in a hot oven



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