

PROCESSING, PREPARATION AND PRESERVATION OF SPICES & CONDIMENTS FOR READY USE

Although ground 'Masāle' (Spices and their mixtures) are available from grocers in the Indian Markets, yet in order to avoid adulteration, it is advisable to buy spices in unground state and powder these at home, or get these ground in a machine, under personal supervision. Nowadays 'Masāla' Electric grinding machines are common in the market. Some spices are used both in unground or in finely powdered form, according to the requirements in different preparations of dishes. Some are used in coarsely broken state, and some in the form of combinations of many ground and unground spices with binders, mixed in definite proportions and blended in a special way. Full details about preparation and preservation of these, are as under :-

A. List of ground, unmixed Spices.

1. Turmeric. (H. 'Halḍī', K. 'Ledier'.)
2. Dry Ginger. (H. 'Sōṅṭh', K. 'Shōṅṭh'.)
3. Aniseed. (H. 'Sōṅṭ', K. 'Bāiḍyānā'.)
4. Dry 'Kashmīrī' Red Chillies. (H. 'Kashmīrī Lāl Mirch.', K. 'Kāsheir Marchāvāngan.')
- Chilli is spelled as Chilli also.
5. Cinnamon. (H. 'Ḍālchīnī', K. 'Ḍālchīn'.)
6. Black Cardamom Seeds. (H. 'Ilāchī Ḍānā', K. 'Alā' Ḍānā'.)
7. Black Pepper Corns. (H. 'Kālī Mirch'. K. 'Marāḥ'.)
8. Coriander Seeds. (H. 'Dhaniyā', K. 'Ḍānival'.)
9. Cumin Seeds. (H. 'Safed Zīrā', K. 'Safed Ziur'.)

The above after cleaning are ground in a 'Chakkī' or by a grinding Machine, in the market. If required in smaller quantities, these are pounded at

home, using a pestle and a mortar ('Hāvan Ḍastā'), or a small Electric Grinding Machine or a 'Sil-Batta'. After sifting, by a fine-mesh sieve, or through a fine-mesh cloth, the powdered spices are kept in air-tight wide-mouthed glass jars, with screwed lids, or in tins with air-tight lids, and the containers are then labeled for identification.

Mixed Coriander and Cumin Seeds, and also mixed Cinnamon and Big Cardamom Seeds, are also ground for ready use sometimes.

Note :- H. stands for name in Hindī and K. for name in 'Kashmīrī'.

B. List of Spices etc. which are stored whole.

1. Cloves. (H. 'Louṅg', K-'Roang'.)
2. Caraway Seeds. (H. 'Kālā Zīrā', K. Kṛihun Ziur'.)
3. Cumin Seeds. (H. 'Safed Zīrā', K. 'Safed, Ziur'.)
4. Black Pepper Corns. (H. 'Kālī Mirch'. K. 'Marāḥ'.)
5. Cardamom Green (small) (H. 'Chhōṭī Ilāchī', K. 'Alā'.)
6. Cardamom Black (Big). (H. 'Badī Ilāchī', K. 'Baji Alā'.)
7. Ajvāin Seeds (Lovage). (H. 'Ajvāyin', K. 'Jāveṅḍ'.)
8. Asafoetida Powder or Granules (H. 'Hīṅg', K. 'Yāngā'.) (Used in Solution 10 gm. in 1/4 litre water, generally).
9. Aniseed. (H. 'Sōṅṭ', K. 'Bāḍyānā'.)

10. Dry Ginger. (H. 'Sōṅṅh'. K. 'Shōṅṅh'.)
11. Coriander Seeds. (H. 'Ḍhaniyā'. K. 'Ḍānival'.)
12. Nigella Seeds. (H. 'Kalaunḡī'. K. 'Siyāh Ḍānā'.)
13. Fenugreek Seeds. (H. 'Mēṅhī Ḍānā'. K. 'Bṛēṅṅā'.)
14. Dry Fenugreek leaves (Crushed). (H. 'Sūkhī Mēṅhī'. K. 'Hoeḡh Mīṅh'.)
15. Nutmeg. (H. 'Jāyī Phal'. K. 'Zāfal'.)
16. Mace. (H. 'Jāvīṅṅī'. K. 'Jalvaṅṅī'.)
17. Soda bi-Carb. (H. 'Mīṅhā SōḌā'. K. 'Phul'.)
18. Dry Fruits. (H. 'Sūkhē Mēvē'. K. 'Hoeḡh Mēva'.)
19. Shelled seeds of Cucumber, Musk Melon, Water Melon and Pumpkin (H.K. 'Chār Magṅ'.)
20. Tamarind. (H. 'Imḡī'. K. 'ṅambar'.)
21. Mustard Seeds. (H. 'Rāyī'. K. 'Āsur'.)
22. Dry Crushed Mint Leaves. (H. 'Sūkhā PuḌīnā'. K. 'Hoeḡh PuḌānā'.)
23. Dry Garlic (H. 'Lahsan'. K. 'Rohan'.)
24. Dry Shallots. (K. 'Pṛān'.)
25. Essential Oils. (H. 'Phalōṅ aur Phulōṅ Kē KhushbūḌār Ruh'.)
26. Edible Colours. (H. 'Khānē Kē Raṅṅ'. K. 'Kheān Lāyaq Raṅṅ'.)
27. Poppy Seeds (H. 'Pōṅṅ Ḍānā', K. 'Khash Khāsh'.)
28. Cassia leaves. (H. 'ṅēj Pāṅṅ', K. 'ṅēz Paṅṅ'.)
29. Saffron. (H. 'Zāṅṅān'. K. 'Koṅṅ'.)
30. Dried Red Chillies (Kashmīrī). (H. 'Lāl Mīrch. Kashmīrī'. K. 'Kāshier Marḡhāvāṅṅan'.)

31. Cinnamon (H. 'Ḍālchīnī'. K. 'Ḍālchīn'.)

The above are properly cleaned and also preserved in labeled wide mouthed glass jars with screwed lids, or in tins with air-tight lids. Most of these, while cooking Dishes, are used whole, and some in broken or crushed form etc. according to their recipes.

C. Special mixtures of Spices.

'Garam Masālā', as this Mixture of ground Spices is called, is a highly prized ready flavouring agent, used for most of Kashmīrī Dishes.

RECIPE NO. 1

Preparing 1 kg. of 'Garam Masālā':-

INGREDIENTS :-

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| 1. Coriander Seeds ('Ḍhaniyā'), - | 250 gm. |
| 2. Cumin Seeds ('Safēḡ Zīrā'), - | 250 gm. |
| 3. Fenugreek Seeds ('Mēṅhī Kē Bīj'), - | 25 gm. |
| 4. Lovage ('Ajvāin Kē Bīj'), - | 20 gm. |
| 5. Cloves ('Louṅṅ'), - | 10 gm. |
| 6. Nutmeg ('Jāyīphal'), - | 10 gm. |
| 7. Mace ('Jāvīṅṅī'), - | 10 gm. |
| 8. Cinnamon ('Ḍālchīnī'), - | 50 gm. |
| 9. Black Cardamom Seeds, ('Badī ḡlāchī'), - | 50 gm. |
| 10. Cardamom (Green) Seeds, ('Chhōṅṅ ḡlāchī'), - | 10 gm. |
| 11. Cassia Leaves ('ṅēj pāṅṅ'), - | 10 gm. |
| 12. Dry Ginger ('Sōṅṅh'), - | 150 gm. |
| 13. Aniseed ('Sōunṅ'), - | 125 gm. |
| 14. Caraway Seeds ('Kālā Zīrā'), - | 10 gm. |
| 15. Black Pepper ('Kālī Mīrch'), - | 20 gm. |

Powder all spices together in a grinding machine. Sift through a fine-mesh sieve or cloth and keep in an air-tight glass jar with a screwed lid. May add to it, 5 drops each of Oil of Cloves and Oil of Cinnamon, and then mix with a spoon thoroughly in the very jar.

D. Kashmirī 'Varī masālā' Cakes.

These 'Masālā' Cakes are famous all over India, and are even exported abroad, mostly for Indians living there. Those, with Asafoetida flavour, are used mostly for Vegetarian Dishes, by Pandīts mainly. Those containing Garlic and Shallots are mainly used by Muslims in both Vegetable and Meat preparations.

'Varī Masālā' plays an important role in the daily domestic cooking in Kashmir, and is a quick flavouring agent for many Dishes.

RECIPE NO. 2.

(a) Making about 2 Kgs. of 'VARI MASALA' CAKES. With Asafoetida :-

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| 1. Black Gram, ('Urad'), | 500 gm. |
| 2. Coriander Seeds ('Dhaniyā'), | 250 gm. |
| 3. Fenugreek Seeds ('Mēṭhī Dānā'), | 250 gm. |
| 4. Cumin Seeds ('Safēḍ Zīrā'), | 100 gm. |
| 5. Dry Ginger ('Sōupth'), | 100 gm. |
| 6. Aniseed ('Souṅḡ'), | 100 gm. |
| 7. Lovage ('Ajvāin'), | 50 gm. |
| 8. Turmeric Powder ('Halḍī'), | 100 gm. |
| 9. Kashmirī Red Chili Powder, ('Lāl Mirch'), | 250 gm. |
| 10. Caraway Seeds ('Kālā Zīrā'), | 10 gm. |
| 11. 'Garam Masālā' Powder, | 25 gm. |
| 12. Salt ('Namak'), | 50 gm. |
| 13. Asafoetida ('Hīṅḡ'), | 50 gm. |
| 14. Mustard Oil ('Sarsōṅ Kā Ṭel'), | 250 gm. |

Finely grind items 1 to 7, by a grinding machine in the market, or by a hand 'chakkī' at home. Mix nicely with items 8 to 12, in a basin. Rub in mustard

oil with hand, till the whole forms into a homogenous, slightly 'wet', mass.

Before hand, Asafoetida is kept soaking in half a cup of hot water and left overnight. It is then well mixed with the water, by macerating it with fingers, to form a curdy emulsion. It is now slowly added to the above 'wet' mass and kneaded well into a stiff dough. From it small compact, cakes, of about 3" diameter and 3/4" thick, are made by hand and spread on plates, or on a plastic sheet to dry in shade. When moisture evaporates and the cakes become stiff, store in wide mouthed glass jars, or tins with air-tight lids, for future use.

RECIPE NO. 3.

(b) 'VARI MASALA' with Garlic and Shallots:-

Recipe No.2 'VARI MASALA' CAKES are usually made by Pandīts. Muslims use, in the above Recipe, Garlic and Shallots, instead of Asafoetida. These require less of oil. Instead of mixing with Asafoetida solution, all the other, slightly oiled, ingredients (1 to 12), after having ground items 1 to 8 as before, are further pounded in a stone or iron mortar with a wooden pestle (H. 'Hāvan Ḍasā'), along with 200 gm. of peeled Garlic cloves and 100 gm. of peeled Shallots, to form a stiff dough, and are made into cakes as in (a). These cakes are also dried and stored like the other 'Varī Masālā' Cakes.

From a Cake of this 'Masālā', break a small piece, say of about 10 gm., and crush it into a coarse powder between the palms of hands, and add to, and mix with the desired Dish, when it is almost ready after cooking. 10 gms. of 'Varī Masālā' are sufficient to flavour a kg. each of cooked, Vegetables or Fish Curry, or in the case of certain Meat Preparations.