



HERBS, FOOD AND HEALTH (2)

In this follow-up issue, herbs (and some spices) used in the Caribbean have been compiled into a table describing the herb as well as its culinary and medicinal uses. The information presented below is intended strictly for

educational purposes on the traditional use of herb as medicine to help the public better understand their potential benefits and purported biological or medicinal activities. This **Nyam News** issue is in no way promoting

or endorsing the use of herbs in a medicinal capacity. While there are many other herbs that are used for their medicinal purpose, emphasis is placed on those that are traditionally used in cooking or as food in the Caribbean.

Table 1: Description of Herbs and Their Uses in Food as Medicine

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
<p>Angelica</p> 	<p>All parts of Angelica are used, roots, seeds, stems and leaves. It may grow 6 ft tall by 2 ft wide with fragrant indented leaves, hollow leafstalks that support the umbels (heads of small flowers which are followed by aromatic seeds) member of the same family as fennel, parsley, chervil, carrots, parsnips caraway.</p> <p>All parts of Angelica are used, roots, seeds stems and leaves and may be available dried, candied or fresh from home gardens.</p>	<p>In omelet, trout and cream cheese; Vegetables and leafy vegetable salad; Cookies and sweets; Candied for decorating pastries; Fruit salad, jam and Orange marmalade; Sorbets; fruit syrups flavour liqueurs or aquavits;</p>	<p>Promotes perspiration; Stimulates the appetite; Treats ailments of the chest and digestion; Good for digestion; Calms nerves; Local anesthesia; Improves immune system; Effective against various bacteria, fungal infections and even viral infections.</p> <p>Small amounts of seeds and stem are safe but should be avoided by pregnant women and diabetics. Contact may cause sensitivity to sunlight or dermatitis; Large amounts of fresh root are poisonous.</p>

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
<p>Basil</p> 	<p>Round, often pointed leaves that looks like peppermint; member of mint family highly fragrant aromatic leaves. Available fresh or dried; broken, crushed or ground.</p>	<p>In lamb chops, egg and poultry dishes; Salads, raw or cooked tomato or mushroom dishes, squash, string beans; Pasta dishes; A main ingredient in pesto; Peas; Garnish for egg and poultry dishes, soups, stuffing, salad dressing and sauces.</p>	<p>Relieves pain; Prevents, slows or stops the growth of cancer; Prevents or relieves diabetes; Prevents reproduction; Destroys or inhibits the growth of fungi, Counters the effects of tissue injury, Prevents or relieves spasm; Serves to protect the heart; Protects the liver against damage from toxins; Expels worms.</p>
<p>Bay Leaves</p> 	<p>Stiff, dark green oblong and smooth leaves; with pungent aroma. Slightly bitter and strongly aromatic flavour.</p> <p>Available Fresh or dried whole, crushed or ground. Fresh leaves are shiny and dark green on top with lighter undersides. Dried leaves are a matte olive green.</p>	<p>In meat and poultry dishes, pot roasts; meat and fish dishes; Milk dishes; Vegetables dishes; pickles, marinades, stocks, soups stews, sauces; and stuffing.</p>	<p>Increase the secretion of urine; Prevent excessive gases in or expels gas from the stomach or intestines so as to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; Destructive to or prevent the development of microorganisms; prevent or relieve rheumatism and convulsions; have a soothing or tranquilizing effect; Repel insect and soothe insect bite.</p>
<p>Chamomile</p> 	<p>Dried leaves are narrow and spear-shaped, pale green. Flowers are prominent yellow disk and silver-white ray; stems are shades of brown. A member of the daisy family.</p> <p>Chamomile flowers are used fresh, or can be dried and stored for later use and are also available commercially in prepackaged tea bags.</p>	<p>As a tea.</p>	<p>Relieves intestinal cramping and relaxes the smooth muscles of the internal organs; Soothes menstrual cramps, Relieves premenstrual syndrome (PMS), Relieves headache and other stress-related disorders; Expels parasitic worms from the digestive tract; Expels gas from the intestines; Relieves anxiety and insomnia; Soothes the discomfort of gingivitis, earache and arthritis; Treats some oral conditions in cancer patients after chemotherapy treatment; Mild antiseptic with antibacterial properties used as a mouthwash or eyewash; Treats bruises or small cuts; Assists in the treatment of asthma and urinary incontinence.</p>
	<p>Long spiny spiky green grass like leaves; with delicate onion flavour.</p> <p>Available fresh, freeze-dried, chopped.</p>	<p>In omelettes; Cheese, egg, meat, fish or poultry dishes; Salads and other vegetables; As garnish for soups and, stews.</p>	<p>Lower blood pressure and have similar but weaker effects of those from garlic.</p>
	<p>Whole nailed shaped dried flower buds from the myrtle tree; pungent sweet aroma.</p> <p>Available whole or ground.</p>	<p>In meat and poultry dishes; Pork and ham roast; Braised meat; Vegetables; Breads, baked goods such as cookies, dessert cakes, pastries and puddings; Candies; Fruit drinks, pickled/spiced fruits; As garnish; Relishes, sauces, marinades, stocks, sauces, pickling, stews, barbecue sauces.</p>	<p>Treat indigestion, painful swallowing and diarrhoea; Antioxidant; Stimulant; Expel gas from the stomach or intestines; Relieve pain; Lower fever; Prevent or relieve spasms; Prevent infection; destructive to or prevent development of microorganisms.</p>
<p>Coriander/ Cilantro</p> 	<p>Coriander refers to the seeds while Cilantro refers to the leaves. The leaves are round and bear a strong resemblance to Italian flat leaf parsley. The seeds are light brown and hollow, almost spherical, one end being slightly pointed, the other slightly flattened. The flavour of the constituent parts varies. The leaves have a pungent soapy aroma, the stem has a strong odour and flavour; Seeds are sweet with a slight lemony aroma when ripe. The leaves, seeds and roots of this plant are all edible. The plant may be used whole or its constituent parts. Leaves are always used fresh. May be used fresh or dried. Seeds are available whole or ground.</p>	<p>Lamb, kid, ham and pork; meat stuffing; Sausage, pork; Smoked meats and game; black pudding; sausage; chili; cream or cottage cheese;</p> <p>In coating for spiced fish or chicken; Breads, gingerbreads, cookies and cakes and other baked foods; Stews and soups; Curries, pickles, and other spicy dishes; Consti-tuent of curry powder;</p>	<p>Treats colic and general nausea; Stops spasms; Improves appetite; Decreases lipid concentration in the blood; Stops hemorrhages or secretions by coagulating surface proteins; Infection countering agent used to treat pox measles.</p>

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
<p>Dill</p> 	<p>Green leaves are wispy and fernlike. The seed is light brown, winged and oval, with one side flat, with two ridges. The other side is convex with three ridges and three oil channels. The leaves have a soft, sweet tangy taste; seeds are stronger and more flavorful than the leaves. Available as fresh or dried crush leaves call dill weed. Seed are available fresh or dried; whole or ground.</p>	<p>Fish, shellfish and cheese dishes; Casserole; Vegetables and salads; Sandwich fillings; Stews and bean soups; Pickles, salad dressings, cocktail dips, garnish for salads</p>	<p>Antioxidant; Stimulant; Helps to neutralize some cancer-causing agents; Expels gas from the stomach or intestines to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; Relieves pain; Prevents colic; Promotes reduction of lipid levels in the blood; Prevents or controls the elevation of blood cholesterol.</p>
<p>Garlic</p> 	<p>Whole bulb divided into cloves. Has a strong, aroma, belongs to the onion family. Available as fresh whole bulbs; also in dried, granulated, powdered form which may or may not be mixed with salt.</p>	<p>Meat, fish game and vegetables dishes; Joints of lamb and beef roasts; Pâtés, terrines, salamis and smoked spiced sausages; Pasta dishes; Bouquets garni; Sauces, salad dressings; Sparingly in stews, soups; salads; Butter and mayonnaise.</p>	<p>Kills microbes; Treats pain, diarrhoea, vomiting of blood, and coughing; Treats diabetes, asthma and hypertension; Helps to protect from harmful forms of cholesterol; Increases perspiration; Increases urine flow; Facilitates the removal of secretions from the airways leading to and in the lungs; Fights colds and flu Prevents or relieves intestinal spasms; Destroy harmful microbes in the body; Increases bile production; Reduces stomach gases; lowers cholesterol; reduces high blood pressure; Treats bronchitis and asthma; Inhibits or retards bacterial growth on wounds; Works against prostate and stomach cancers as well as breast, liver and colon cancers.</p>
<p>Ginger</p> 	<p>Often called "ginger root" but is an underground tuber. The skin varies in colour from brown to off white while the interior is pale yellow. Jamaican ginger is a pale beige colour and is regarded as the best variety. It has a warm to hot, sweet fiery, sharp and pungent flavour and aroma. Available as Whole fresh roots (referred to as a hand); Dried roots; ground, crushed, Powdered ginger; Preserved or 'stem' ginger; Crystallized ginger; Pickled ginger.</p>	<p>Pot roast; Oriental style meat, poultry, seafood dishes; Vegetable dishes, Cakes, baked goods, pies, puddings, bread, cookies, pies, desserts; Melon, dried fruit and with fruits in beverages. Jamaica does a ginger beverage (Ginger Beer). In chutneys, pickles, salad dressings.</p>	<p>Expels gas from the stomach or intestines so as to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; Prevents or relieves diarrhea and nausea (even with chemotherapy); Treats headache, rheumatism, colds, inflammation and menstrual cramps; Reduces fever; Destructive to platelets; Prevents or relieves diabetes; Stimulates the secretion of saliva from the salivary glands.</p>
<p>Mace</p> 	<p>Naturally mace is a bright crimson or yellowish brown lace or net encasing the brown nutmeg in irregular, fleshy lobes up to 35 mm in length. It loses some the bright colour when it is dried. Warm, sharp, intense Sweet and fragrant flavour and smell similar but stronger than nutmeg. Available still enclosing the nutmeg, flattened and sometimes roughly broken into 'blades' or ground.</p>	<p>Eggs, cheese, meat, poultry sausages, pork, fish; Vegetable dishes, spinach, squash; Baked goods, desserts breads, cookies and cakes, fruit pies; chocolate and chocolate dishes; Fruits; Soups, salad dressings, in spreads,</p>	<p>Expels gas from the stomach or intestines so as to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; May cause hallucinations; Stimulant; Facilitates the removal of the secretion from air passage leading to and in the lungs; Stimulates the secretion of saliva; Promotes or assists the flow of menstrual fluids</p>
<p>Mint</p> 	<p>Leaves of the two most widely used varieties in the Caribbean spearmint and peppermint are deep green, long, pointed and crinkled. Mint has a spicy, slightly bitter flavour. Available as whole sprigs fresh or dried; dried leaves or ground. Also available commercially in tea bags.</p>	<p>Roast lamb; Vegetables; Fruits; Desserts, Beverages; Water ices, Drink and fruit salads; Soups, stews, jellies, meat and fish sauces., relishes; In tea.</p>	<p>Stimulant; Expels gas from the stomach or intestines so as to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; Prevents or relieves spasms; Increases perspiration; stimulates the action of the stomach; good for colds, flu and fevers; helps digestion; rheumatism, hiccups, stings, ear aches, flatulence; Treats throat and sinus ailments; helps with motion sickness.</p>

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
<p>Nutmeg</p> 	<p>The oval shaped seed of nutmeg fruit inside a Dark shiny nut-like pit. Nutmegs are about 1 inch in length, lightly wrinkled and dark brown on the outside, and lighter brown on the inside. Has a slightly sweet, aromatic nutty and warm aroma and flavour.</p> <p>Available as whole nuts or ground.</p>	<p>Chicken, veal milk based puddings and dishes; Vegetable dishes such as spinach, mushroom, Moussaka, squash; Potato; Porridge, Egg custard, Sweet baked products; Beverages, Soups, cream sauces, cheese sauces,</p>	<p>Expels gas from the stomach or intestines so as to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; May cause hallucinations; Stimulant; Facilitates the removal of the secretion from air passage leading to and in the lungs; Stimulates the secretion of saliva; Promotes or assists the flow of menstrual fluids.</p>
<p>Oregano</p> 	<p>Dark green, fragrant leaves. Flavour and smell like marjoram Available as fresh or as dried leaves; whole; crushed or ground.</p>	<p>Meat loaves, marrow, poultry, seafood, cheese; Bean; Vegetables such as stuffed green peppers and tomato dishes; Pizza and pasta dishes. In Italian, Greek and Mexican dishes.</p>	<p>Protects against the general inflammation of the respiratory mucus membrane; Destroys or inhibits the growth of fungi and other microorganisms.</p>
<p>Parsley</p> 	<p>Dark green curly or flat leaves. Delicate sweet flavour. Available as fresh whole sprigs with leaves and stems in bunches. Also as dried flakes.</p>	<p>Meat, fish; Stuffing, sauces, soups and salads; Flavour and garnish any savoury dish raw or cooked.</p>	<p>Antioxidant; Laxative; Promotes the reduction of lipid levels in the blood; Delays or prevents blood clotting; Prevents damage to the liver; Inhibits the growth of fungi; Prevents or cures anemia; Causes tension or contraction; Promotes or assists the flow of menstrual fluids.</p>
<p>Pepper – sweet or bell red and green</p> 	<p>Sweet peppers are plump, bell-shaped vegetables featuring either three or four lobes. They usually range in size from 2 to 5 inches in diameter, and 2 to 6 inches in length. Inside the thick flesh is an inner cavity with edible bitter seeds and a white spongy core. Bell peppers are not 'hot'. They have a delightful, slightly watery crunch. Green and purple peppers have a slightly bitter flavor, while the red, orange and yellows are sweeter and almost fruity. Pimento and paprika are both prepared from red bell peppers. Used fresh or pulverized into paprika.</p>	<p>Used raw in salad and filling for sandwiches and taco; Vegetarian meals; Stir-fry's casseroles and omelets, may be stuffed; in vegetables dishes, stews, sauces, may be blanched and frozen. In the powdered form as paprika it is used as garnish sprinkled on eggs, hors d'ouvres and salads; In .cheeses and cheese spreads; Marinades and smoked foods; Coating for chicken and other meats; Salad dressing; Soups, stews, casseroles; Vegetables; Sausages; and In Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Indian and Hungarian cuisine especially paprikash, goulash, tandoori chicken and chorizos.</p>	<p>Antioxidant; Counters the effect of tissue injury; stimulates circulation; Reduces the sensitivity to painful stimuli; Reduces the risk of diseases of the heart and blood vessels; Protects against colon, cervical, prostate and lung cancer; Protects against certain diseases that may cause blindness in the elderly; Protect against cataracts.</p>
<p>Pepper – Cayenne</p> 	<p>Many different peppers are called cayenne pepper. The most common are the small-fruited varieties of pepper with a thin long tapered seed pods (up to 12cm x 2.5cm). The ripened fruit, varying from red to yellow, are dried and pulverized or ground to powder. Cayenne may also be used fresh. It has a hot and fiery flavour. Some cayenne preparations include the ground seeds and are hotter than those with the flesh of the fruit only.</p>	<p>Used sparingly in meats, fish, eggs, shell fish and cheese dishes; Sauces, stews and soup.</p>	<p>Stimulates the secretion of saliva; Stimulates circulation; Counters the effect of tissue injury; Reduces pain and the sensitivity to painful stimuli.</p>

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
Pepper - Chili 	<p>Chilies are the smaller and hotter varieties of bell or sweet pepper. They are more elongated in shape. Fresh chilies have a distinct heat and sweetness; dried chilies carry a full-bodied, fruity, raisin sweetness with varying degrees of tobacco and smokiness. Chili leaves are used in Filipino, Korean and Japanese cuisine. Available in Fresh and ground form. Powdered form may include blend of other spices.</p>	<p>Used in eggs, cheese, seafood and meat dishes especially Mexican and Spanish cuisine; Snack foods; Hot pickles, curries, spicy dishes; chili and tobasco sauces; barbecue sauces; Chili con carne; Cocktail dips; salad dressings.</p>	<p>Helps to protect the heart; Helps control diabetes; Reduces pain and the sensitivity to painful stimuli; Inhibits the growth of microorganisms. High consumption associated with stomach ulcers; Chronic ingestion of chili products may induce gastro-esophageal reflux; Increase bowel movements and forbidden after some gastric surgeries.</p>
Pepper – Scotch Bonnet 	<p>A variety of chili that is similar in shape to sweet peppers but much smaller in size. This size and shape vary from long and slender to short and obtuse; may be wrinkled, elongated, pendant, lantern-shaped, flattened bell shape. The ends are often flattened and inverted resembling a bonnet (hat). As these peppers gradually ripen, several colors can be found on from green to bright orange. It is extremely pungent and aromatic, with persistent pungency when eaten. Is one of the hottest peppers in the World.</p>	<p>Used in jerk dishes (chicken, fish and pork); Hot pickles, curries, spicy dishes; Used sparingly in all other meat dishes, stews, soups and gravies.</p>	<p>Helps to protect the heart; helps control diabetes; Reduces pain and the sensitivity to painful stimuli; Inhibits the growth of microorganisms. May cause dizziness, numbness of hands and cheeks as well as severe heartburn to some persons High consumption associated with stomach ulcers; Chronic ingestion of chili products may induce gastro-esophageal reflux; Increase bowel movements and forbidden after some gastric surgeries.</p>
Rosemary 	<p>Light green needle like leaves. Strong piney, lemony flavour. Available fresh or dried</p>	<p>Meat dishes especially lamb stew; poultry, fish, lamb, beef, veal, pork, cheese, eggs and game; tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms, squash; Peas, lentils; Gentle soups like potato and eggplant, marinades, salad dressings, bouquet garni, and cream sauces; Casseroles.</p>	<p>Used for upset stomachs and nausea; Topical agent for relieving sore muscles and increase circulation; Protects against infection; Stimulant; Relieves pain; Prevents or relieves rheumatic discomforts.</p>
Saffron 	<p>Delicate and thread-like stigmas of the saffron crocus measuring 2.5 - 4 cm (1 - 1.5 inches); bright orange-red in colour. It has a strongly perfumed, aroma of honey. Mild distinctive bitter-honey flavour. Available as whole thread and ground.</p>	<p>Gives bright yellow colour to foods. Whole threads should be steeped in hot liquid before use. Poultry, seafood; Rice dishes; baked goods.</p>	<p>Prevents or relieves spasms; Promotes or assists the flow of menstrual fluids; Increases perspiration; Expels gas from the stomach or intestines; Serves to protect the heart; Decreases lipid concentration in the blood; Antioxidant; Soothing or tranquilizing effects; Memory enhancing agent..</p>
Sage 	<p>Sage leaves are about 8 cm X 12 mm wide, gray-green, fuzzy (rough yet silky and pebbly-textured on top). The underneath is deeply veined and delicately ornamental-with a wing like shape. Sharp slightly bitter taste. Pungent leaves. Available fresh or dried leaves, rubbed (mixture of broken leaves) or ground.</p>	<p>Sage Derby cheese; pork, pork products, sausages, other meats, fish and poultry; Cheese; Salad and tomatoes; Beans; Milk pudding; Stuffing; Sage and onion sauce; Soup.</p>	<p>Reduces salivary secretions; Treats cardiovascular diseases, swelling, infection, bleeding, turbid (cloudy) urine and night sweats; Relieves oral cavity and throat inflammation.</p>

Herbs	Description	Use as Food	Use as/in Medicine
<p>Tarragon</p> 	<p>Delicate green herb with straight pointed leaves, undivided; 1-4 in. long; borne singly at top of plant, in groups of three below. Has a Tart minty flavour.</p> <p>Available fresh or dried as crushed leaves.</p>	<p>Fish, shellfish, pork, beef, lamb, game, poultry, cheese and egg dishes; Pâtés; Vegetables such as leeks, tomatoes, carrots, onions, artichokes, asparagus, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli, beets; peas; potatoes, rice, and barley; oranges; flavour vinegar, mayonnaise, butter, cream sauces, mustards, salad dressings, sour cream, yogurt. and soups</p>	<p>Prevents or reduces malaria; Defends against hepatitis; Relieves pain; Counters the effect of tissue injury; Counters infection; Treats cancer.</p>
<p>Thyme</p> 	<p>Thyme leaves are very small curled, and oval shaped, about 2mm long x 1mm. Appears as tiny brownish-green leaves with the top side of the leaf green-grey on top, and the under side brownish - grey. Very aromatic subtle minty flavour. Available as fresh whole sprigs with leaves and stems in bunches. Also as dried crushed or rubbed leaves, or ground.</p>	<p>Seafood, egg, cheese poultry, meat and fish dishes; Croquettes; Vegetables such as chopped beet and tomatoes; vegetable dishes; Soups, stocks, clam and fish chowders; Stuffing, stews, herb sauces, and salad dressings.</p>	<p>Topical prevention or treatment of infection; Counters the effect of tissue injury; antioxidant; Stimulates digestion in stomach; Increase the secretion of urine; Suppresses coughing; Expels gas from the stomach or intestines to relieve flatulence or abdominal pain or distension; Treats mild inflammatory condition of the urinary tract..</p>
<p>Tumeric</p> 	<p>Tuber or underground stem of plant related to ginger with a rough segmented skin; Fresh plant has yellowish-brown exterior with a dull orange interior. Has an Intense brilliant yellow colour when powdered. Fragrant, mild pepper-like and bitter flavour.</p> <p>Available fresh or ground.</p>	<p>Egg, cheese, chicken and fish dishes; Pickles, relishes, salad dressing; Used in curry powder and mustard preparation.</p>	<p>Counters the effect of tissue injury; Antioxidant; Increases the flow of bile into the intestines; Removes waste matter from the body; Increases the secretion of urine; Stops bleeding; Protects the liver against damage from toxins; Increases the secretion of milk; Stimulates the action of the stomach; Supports tensions and contractions; Used to treat cancer; Assists in wound healing; Reduces or interferes with the substances that may cause mutation (changes in form, quality or some other characteristics).</p>

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