

# Deck the Hall with Herbs and Spices

Bringing In Your Wishes and Shuffling Out of the Old

by  
Amy Sampsell

Ah the Holiday season is here!

The smells of the crisp snow, the food upon our tables, the gatherings of our loved ones, the decorations, the shopping, the wrapping...  
It is all the added fun and excitement that is the holiday season!

What about you during this Season, during this hustle and bustle?

What about your wishes? Something you want to bring in?

Let go of perhaps? Something to give yourself comfort and joy?

What about adding a little extra when your cooking up love, peace and family or wish to bring a little extra specials to the home>?

Well, today I am going to talk about some Herbs and spices that can brighten your holiday and your spirits. And give you some ideas of what they can be used for.

Then, you get to have either a bag or a glass bulb filled for bringing what you want for this time of year!

Cinnamon

Cloves

Nutmeg

Ginger

Rosemary

Sage

Mints

Lavender

Cranberries

Pomegranates

Allspice

Vanilla

## **CINNAMON**

(stick / powdered)

A spice that is now used worldwide and comes from a cinnamomun verum tree, it was a prized spice and given only to visiting dignitaries.

It is now a common household spice that is used in dishes to eat and is added to seasonal decorations.

Cinnamon is also good for combating nausea and indigestion.

You can use it in baking, cooking and teas.

Clairvoyance, consecration, divination, energy, good luck, love, money, passion, peace, prosperity, protection, psychic development, success Other magickal uses: communication, happiness, harmony, healing, inspiration, knowledge, meditation, purification, spirituality, tranquility, wisdom Lore: Paul Beyerl suggests that cinnamon be paired with tourmaline for best effect. Cinnamon is important as a purification incense in China. Do not use externally on the body, as it irritates the skin.

RECIPE: Mexican Hot Chocolate

### Ingredients

1/2 cup water

1/3 cup honey

5 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon salt

4 cups 2% reduced-fat milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Preparation

Combine first 6 ingredients in a large, heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Gradually add milk and extract, stirring constantly with a whisk. Heat to 180° or until tiny bubbles form around edge, stirring with a whisk (do not boil).

\*\* Today's Taste – Cinnamon – Ginger Butter

Cream 4 TBL butter well. Add 1 tsp cinnamon and 1/2 tsp Ginger. Mix until well blended and use.

## **CLOVES**

(whole / ground)

The buds of cloves has an anti-viral and anti-bacterial quality and can help ease digestion. But they are also used on hams, oranges, in teas, drinks and decorations and so much more throughout the holiday season .

Protection, banishing hostile/negative forces, and gaining what is sought. Also they are burned to stop gossip as well as to purify and to help raise the spiritual vibrations of an area. Use to bring a sense of kinship to a social gathering. Wear for protection and mental clarity.

Cloves can be added whole to many dishes. Traditionally, they are used as a mulling spice, they are steeped in warm wine, milk, juice or cider in combination with other herbs to make a complex and delicious warm beverage. Cloves are also used to stud a ham and lend their warm flavor it its saltiness.

But cloves can be used in many other ways. They can be added to stocks, fruit pies, and tea blends. They can be ground and mixed into baked goods.

Cloves are part of many spice mix including Chinese Five Spice Powder, Garam Masala, Curry Powder, Ras el Hanout and Worcestershire sauce.

It is best to buy whole cloves and grind them just before use for the best flavor or use them whole and cook them slowly to infuse the flavor and remove them before serving. The flavor of cloves is very strong, so it's best to use them sparingly.

## **Nutmeg**

(whole / ground)

Often used in baking, cooking, drinks and teas, nutmeg also helps settle and relax nerves.

Luck, Money, Health, Fidelity

You can burn the outer covering of the nutmeg to increase your psychic abilities and to improve one's intellect.

A whole nutmeg can be used for a Jovian good luck charm and many people use nutmeg as a replacement to High John Root.

Nutmeg butter can be extracted from the seeds. Simply break them up and cover them with water and simmer on a very low temperature overnight- a slow cooker is useful for this. Then strain the liquid into a container, allow to cool and skim off the fat that rises to the surface.

Use this as you would cocoa butter or as an aromatic balm, but be sure to test some on your skin first to make sure you're not allergic.

Please USE CAUTION with nutmeg – it can cause hallucinations if used in large amounts and can be toxic. Doses larger than 1 tsp are not recommended.

Pregnant women should not use nutmeg medicinally.

## Ginger

(whole / ground)

Ginger is energetic and fiery and adds power to any magical activity. It is used in spells to "speed things up" or to cause plans to come to fruition quickly. It can also be used in spells to add passion to an existing relationship.

Ginger is a warm, stimulating plant that triggers the immune system and is great for any cold conditions associated with shivering. Such as low grade fever or walking home from the bus stop in the rain.

The most common use for ginger in healing is the treatment of upset stomach. Ginger tea, ginger ale, candy, tablets, and the curiously strong ginger Altoids are often kept on hand for sour stomachs, morning sickness and car sickness. It is also used to help combat nausea associated with chemotherapy. Studies have shown similar results between ginger and over the counter medicines for treating nausea. (These contain sugar and phosphoric acid and coloring, which is pretty much Caffeine Free Coca Cola. You decide.) People who tend to have sensitive stomachs and indigestion may find relief by developing the habit of drinking a cup of ginger tea after each meal.

Overdoing it, however, can stimulate your stomach too much and lead to indigestion and gassiness, so moderation is advised.

Ginger has also been rumored to help fight cholesterol and to prevent blood clots. Some research also suggests that ginger has cancer fighting properties.

Ginger candy is a favorite method of consumption (you can make this by soaking dried ginger in a sugar syrup and then letting it dry again, or buy it at a specialty shop.) but some people find the flavor of ginger to be just too strong. Ginger tablets or ginger extract might be better for these folks.

People who are taking blood thinners or who have bleeding disorders should be cautious of possible complications caused by ginger. (None have been reported, they are just theoretically possible.)

Pregnant women shouldn't use huge amounts of ginger for a long period of time because it can irritate the abdominal area. To reduce danger, use only fresh ginger rather than dried ginger

Used in all forms, ginger is mostly used in baking and cooking. It can be candied as well, and used in teas and popular holiday drinks. This spice helps to ease nausea, gas, congestion and inflammation

## Rosemary

Here is an herb that has many uses. It can be used for cooking, baking or decoration. You can find rosemary plants, including decorated ones, in garden centers, even during this time of year. It is a very popular herb to use with turkey or roasts, as well as in stews and soups. It is also a wonderfully fragrant plant to add to holiday centerpieces. Medicinally, rosemary has been shown to be helpful in reducing headaches and encouraging healthy skin and hair.

There is a Christian folklore story that says that when rosemary grows for a period of 33 years, then it will reach the same height the Christ was when he died, and then it will grow no more.

Another Christian folklore story says that the reason that rosemary's flowers are blue and their smell so intense is because Mary herself. While fleeing Egypt, Mary would lie her blue cloak over the bush to dry.

Rosemary was used to ward off evil spirits and nightmares. The wood was used to make musical instruments.

Rosemary was also given as a gift for New Year's Day, along with an orange, stuck with cloves and it was used with holly and mistletoe to decorate for Yule.

Rosemary is believed to attract the positive fey energies as well.

RECIPE: Creamy Rosemary Spread:

- 2 tbs nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 sprig rosemary, stem removed and very finely chopped

TODAYS TASTE – Rosemary – Sage Butter

3 small sprigs of dried Rosemary

3 small sprigs of dried Sage

2 tea butter (melted and cooled)

2 TBL of butter

Place herbs into a grinder – grind until powdered

Add the 2 TBL of butter, beat until well blended and smooth.

Tastes great mixed into or on top of potatoes

## SAGE

This herb is a well-known, fragrant anti-inflammatory. It reduces irritations in your intestines and stomach. It also helps with sore throats. It is often used in baking and cooking.

Sage will stop sweating no matter what the reason. Drink 3 cups of sage tea a day.

Use 1 teaspoon per cup, allow to steep for 5 minutes. Add a bit of honey if you don't find the taste palatable. Give it about a week and should see a reduction in sweating within approximately three weeks, you should find the sweating to be very minimal.

Sage is used in magical workings for immortality, longevity, wisdom, protection and the granting of wishes and it is also believed to help alleviate sorrow of the death of a loved one.

To make a wish, write your wish on a sage leaf and sleep with it under your pillow for three days and then bury it. Burn sage at funeral and remembrance ceremonies to help relieve the grief of the mourners.

Sage makes a nice rinse for dark hair.

### RECIPE: Spiced Herb Roasted Nuts

#### Ingredients

1 1/2 cups almonds

1 1/2 cups walnut halves

1 cup hazelnuts

1 cup pecan halves

1/2 cup maple syrup

1/4 teaspoon cayenne

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh savory leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh marjoram leaves

3 tablespoons olive oil

About 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Mix almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pecans, maple syrup, cayenne, oregano, sage, thyme, rosemary, savory, marjoram, and oil in a 10- by 15-inch rimmed pan. Sprinkle nuts with 1 teaspoon salt.

Bake in a 300° oven, stirring occasionally, until all liquid evaporates and nuts are golden under the skin (break open to test), about 45 minutes.

Let cool. Taste and add more salt if desired.

## Lavender

Lavender has a calming effect and soft fragrance and is symbolic of purity, immortality and cleanliness. Perhaps for this reason, it is often used in aromatherapy. It is also used for patients who suffer depression.

It may be used as an asperging herb (to sprinkle water for purification purposes) and dried lavender sticks or wands can be burnt like incense.

It is also useful in spells to sharpen the mind, to encourage or strengthen pure love and to encourage fertility.

Lavender deters fleas and moths. Place sachets of lavender buds or lavender wands in cupboards and closets or stuff them into pet bedding to help deter pests from these areas. Also put sachets of lavender in your dryer to scent your laundry. These can be reused several times.

The scent of lavender is relaxing and uplifting all at once making it a great aromatherapy for stressed out or depressed individuals. Try adding some lavender oil to your bath or add it to a mild oil for a relaxing massage at the end of a hard day.

Stuffing a pillow with lavender buds may help insomniacs relax and fall asleep and soothes headaches.

Add a half dozen flower spikes to several cups of granulated sugar and seal for a week to make delicious lavender sugar to sweeten hot or iced green or black tea.

Add a subtle lavender essence to custard filled fresh fruit tart by infusing the warmed milk for the custard with 1/4 cup chopped lavender flowers to each 2 cups of liquid. Steep the mixture for an hour or two, then strain out the lavender and proceed with the custard filling recipe.

Make a delectable lavender syrup for fresh melon, berries or stone fruits by combining 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 cup water, 1/4 cup sweet dessert wine and 2 tablespoons of orange juice. Heat the mixture to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes. Add 3 tablespoons of chopped lavender flowers and remove from the heat. Steep for 1 to 2 hours, then strain out the lavender. Pour this fragrant syrup over freshly cut up fruit and garnish with fresh mint leaves.

It can be used as a substitute for Rosemary

## Allspice

Allspice is very uplifting and increases energy and determination making it useful in many different types of spells, especially healing spells.

The dried berries, oil, or allspice incense can be burned to aid in spells for attracting money and/or luck. The berries can also be added to sachets for attracting the same and it is used in all healing mixes.

Allspice can be used in a paste to soothe toothache (much like cloves) and a mouthwash to freshen breath. It stimulates the gastro-intestinal tract, so it can be used in teas to encourage the appetite or aid in digestion. Allspice can also be added to tonics and purgatives. Two or three drops of the essential oil with some sugar has been used to cure flatulence.

Allspice is also listed as a rubefacient, which means that it increases circulation to the skin, so it can be used in treating acne and cold limbs. Allspice contains tannins, which provide a mild anesthetic making it useful for the treatment of arthritis and sore muscles either in a soak or a poultice.

Allspice berries have a combined flavor of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves, with a hint of juniper and peppercorn. Some enterprising spice companies sell a mixture of spices as allspice, so be sure to check the ingredients on the label to make sure you're getting the real thing.

### RECIPE – Allspice String Beans

#### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed and snapped
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 teaspoons ground allspice
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook and stir garlic until lightly browned. Mix in green beans and water, and bring to a boil. Stir in allspice, salt, and pepper. Cover, and simmer 20 minutes, until green beans are soft.

## Mint

Money, healing, strength, augment power, luck, travel.

Mint in tea form aids upset stomachs, flu, and can be used to ease hiccups. Inhalations of the leaves in boiling water is recommended for head colds and asthma. Mint tea used instead of aspirin is great for headaches, particularly pre menstrual headaches. Nervous headaches can be relieved if you lie in a dark room with fresh peppermint leaves on the forehead. Aids the respiratory and circulatory systems. An anti-inflammatory and an antiseptic. Ideal for treating indigestion, flatulence, varicose veins, headaches, migraines, skin irritations, rheumatism, toothache, and general fatigue.

There are many other types of mint including, apple mint, water mint, horsemint, pineapple mint, orange mint, pennyroyal and spearmint. Pennyroyal is toxic if taken internally, causing severe liver damage, but it can be rubbed onto the skin to repel insects and prevent them from biting.

Relieve symptoms of indigestion, heartburn and irritable bowel syndrome by relaxing the muscles in and around the intestine.

Act as a powerful antioxidant, protecting the body against the formation of cancerous cells, inhibit the growth of many different types of bacteria and fungus, ease and unblock the breathing and respiratory passages and airways, relieves the symptoms of colds and flu, nasal allergies, relieve congestion, head colds and headaches, act as a mild sedative and has calming properties, relieve minor aches and pains such as muscle cramps and sprains, combat bad breath, provides a cooling sensation to the skin and can help to treat minor burns, itching and skin irritations, a very good cleanser for the blood, and Mint tea can help clear up skin disorders such as acne.

Below are some other ideas on how to use mint, whether it is peppermint or spearmint, in your cooking.

- Add chopped mint to sauces for red meat particularly lamb.
- Add several sprigs of mint to peas, green beans or new potatoes whilst boiling.
- Use dried peppermint leaves, added to boiling water to make a refreshing and digestive tea.
- Make a yogurt dressing with chopped mint leaves, natural yogurt, garlic and salt and pepper for salads especially cucumber salad.
- Add to cold soups or hot tomato soups.
- Use to make a marinade for lamb.
- The Middle Eastern salad dish, Tabbouleh contains mint, bulgar, parsley, red onions, tomato and lemon juice.
- Add chopped mint to rice, chickpea, couscous or bean dishes.

## Vanilla

(whole bean)

In magickal folklore, uses of vanilla include love, lust, passion, and restoring lost energy. A vanilla bean can also be carried to increase energy and to strengthen mental abilities.

Have Spiders in your home or space? Hang vanilla around as they do not like vanilla or rather allergic to it.

Vanilla is an antacid and heat neutralizer, hence it can be used to reduce the acidity and the spiciness and add sweetness to very hot and spicy food.

It is a powerful scent which can be used to mask other unpleasant odors.

In the old medicinal literature, vanilla was described as aphrodisiac and it is also used for the treatment of fevers. But, all these are not scientifically proven. Vanilla is also considered as mildly addictive. The essential oils present in them are used in aroma therapy.

RECIPE: Creamy Vanilla Fruit Salad

Ingredients:

Halved straw berries – 2 cups

Blue berries - 1 cup

Pineapple chunks – 1 cup

Sliced kiwis – 1 cup

Mango cubes – 1 cup

Fresh cream – 1 cup

Vanilla essence – 2 tsp

Mix all the fruits together.

Add vanilla essence now mix thoroughly so that it is evenly spread all over.

Finally top it with fresh cream and refrigerate for sometime.

Serve chill.

## Cranberries

These little berries provide protective energy and fight off negative influences.

In modern rituals, the juice is sometimes substituted for wine and some evidence suggests the deep red berries prevent bladder infections

Cranberry's medicinal properties have been recognized for centuries. Native Americans used raw cranberries as a wound dressing. Early settlers from England learned to use the berry both raw and cooked for a number of ailments including appetite loss, digestive problems, blood disorders, and scurvy (vitamin C deficiency that causes weakness, gum disease, and spontaneous bleeding in the skin).

### RECIPE: Cranberry Butter

Serve this bright pink spread with toasted bread, bagels, or muffins.

Combine half of a 12-oz. bag of fresh cranberries with about 2 Tbsp. maple syrup in a medium saucepan; cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until the cranberries break down and thicken to a jamlike consistency, 8-9 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool completely. Using an electric mixer, beat about 1 cup softened butter with the cooled cranberries until combined. Use chilled or at room temperature.

You can serve this as an autumn-flavored side dish or a vegetarian main course.

Halve an acorn squash lengthwise and scrape out the seeds. Brush the flesh with 1 Tbsp. melted butter, then sprinkle with 1 Tbsp. dark brown sugar. In a medium bowl, mix 1/4-cup cranberries, 1/2-cup 1/2" cubes peeled apple or pear, 1/4-cup old-fashioned oats, 1/4-tsp. ground cinnamon, 2 tsp. dark brown sugar, and 1/8-cup toasted sliced almonds. Spoon mixture into squash halves, dividing equally, and dot with 2 Tbsp. butter. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 55 minutes, then cover with foil and bake until squash is tender, 15-20 minutes longer. Let cool slightly.

The tartness of fresh cranberries pairs well with sweet or buttery baked goods, such as banana bread and pound cake. Just toss the cranberries with flour to keep them from sinking during baking, then stir into the finished batter before transferring it to the baking pan.

(Credit: All, Yossy Arefi-Afshar)

## Pomegranates

This fruit is sacred to Persephone and Ceres, both are gods of growth and fertility. Pagans regarded the fruit as a symbolic womb, and the red juice of the pomegranate is used as ink in modern magical rituals.

Eating a pomegranate with a desire strong in mind is considered a magical act that will grant your wish

Most parts of the pomegranate (*Punica granatum*) tree is useful to remedy many common day to day ailments. It is said to be a 'cure for all ills'. The pomegranate is valued as a powerful medicinal plant and used in folk medicines. Its uses also find mention in ancient pharmacological manuscripts. Its value as a wonderful 'polycrest' is too well known. Here are some of its potentials and medicinal uses of this humble tropical fruit. This shrubby little tree is quite easy to grow in home gardens.

The bark of the branches and decoction of the roots which contain an alkaloid pellatierine and tannic acid is a highly useful medicine to get rid of helminthes, the intestinal parasite worms in the human intestine. This decoction is reported to be effective also in the treatment of tuberculosis. It is also employed in the control of dysentery and diarrhea.

Pomegranate seeds can help prevent cancer, ease the affects of aging, and prevent unwanted pregnancy.

Maybe this is why Persephone used those seeds, helping her to draw on the energies necessary to solidify the shape of her life and marriage.