

# Did You Know?

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## Cardamom, *Elettaria cardamomum*

- Chewed by ancient Egyptians, including pharaohs to clean their teeth.
- Esteemed as a perfume and worn by Greeks and Romans.
- Cardamom comes from the seeds of several plants which are both in the Zingiberaceae or ginger family.
- Black cardamom, *Amomum subulatum* and *A. costatum* are dried over an open fire and have a strong smoky, pine and camphor-like flavor.
- Black cardamom is used in bold flavored dishes such as those in Indian, Szechuan and Vietnamese cooking.
- Black cardamom is in the spice blend garam masala, meaning warming mixture, which is used as a rub or marinade. Cinnamon, cloves, black pepper and coriander seeds are also traditionally part of that blend.
- Green cardamom is most commonly the one referred to in recipes comes from the plant *Elettaria cardamomum*.
- Green cardamom has a spicy sweet flavor and is used in sweet and savory dishes from India to Scandinavia and around the world.
- Indian masala chai is a tea with a blend of spices in which green cardamom is a primary distinctive flavor.
- For centuries, cardamom oil has been used in Eastern medicine to treat digestive issues.
- Cardamom oil today is used to treat tooth and gum pain, indigestion, and bad breath. It is also used to flavor pharmaceuticals, and as a fragrance in body care products like soaps and perfumes as well as detergents.
- Most flavorful when seeds are removed from the seed pods and are freshly ground.
- Considered queen of the spice world and one of the most expensive, following saffron and vanilla.