

Fluvanna County Public Library

Spice of the Month Club

Cinnamon

Flavor Profile: Sweet, Aromatic, Warm



Cinnamon is one of the oldest spices known to humankind. Powerful in preservative properties, it was, like many other spices, even used as an embalming agent – from 1600 BC, ancient Egyptians used a type of cinnamon for incense and as an embalming spice, importing it from Asia via African traders. From the 8th century, Arab merchants dominated the trade and invented tall tales to protect their sources and high prices. In one such myth, giant birds were said to gather the bark from an unknown land, using it to make nests on high cliffs, and the only way to collect it was to lure the birds away with large pieces of meat. The real source remained a mystery to Europeans until the Portuguese found cinnamon trees growing in Sri Lanka in the early 1500s, and promptly occupied the island. They in turn were ousted by the Dutch, who then fought the British for centuries over control of the territory and lucrative trade.

It's important to know that there are actually two types of cinnamon. The more common variety comes from the inner bark of the cassia tree grown in Indonesia and Vietnam and is probably the one you have in your cupboard. The second variety, native to Sri Lanka and known as Ceylon cinnamon, is the cinnamon recently recognized for its ability to lower blood sugar and fight diabetes. A half-teaspoon a day can even lower cholesterol. Ceylon cinnamon has a sweeter, more delicate flavor than cassia cinnamon, which is slightly more astringent. So if you find it, choose Ceylon cinnamon over the cassia variety. A useful fact about both types, however, is that they are a deterrent for ants – a little cinnamon sprinkled in their path will make them change course.

Region of Cultivation – Cinnamon is native to the island of Sri Lanka and is now also notably cultivated in Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the islands of the Seychelles off the coast of East Africa.

Use – The warming characteristics of cinnamon make it an excellent winter spice for baking during the holidays. The aroma alone boosts brain activity, Cinnamon sticks can be added whole to hot cider, mulled wine, or rice. You can add ground cinnamon to ginger, allspice, cardamom, nutmeg, and cloves for a pumpkin pie spice blend, which you can add to additional desserts like dried figs, prunes, fried bananas, or baked figs with port. And cinnamon is not just for sweet dishes. Add it to braised meats, pickles, sweet potatoes, beans, and squash.

Regional Star - Add cinnamon with onions, ginger, garlic, and almonds for a simple delicious Indian chicken curry, or dust it on top of a spicy Moroccan bistilla. Mexico imports cinnamon to add to hot chocolate. Cinnamon accompanies many Iranian stews as well as Indian masalas and chutneys, while cassia cinnamon is used in the Chinese five-spice powder blend to cook meat and chicken.

Complements – apples, baked goods, chocolate, coffee, curries, figs, lamb, mulled wine, oranges, pears, port, poultry, prunes, rice, squash, and sweet potatoes.

Pairs Well With – allspice, cardamom, cloves, ginger, mace, nutmeg, and turmeric.

Healing Power - Cinnamon acts as an anti-inflammatory, lowers blood sugar and cholesterol, helps prevent tooth decay, fights cancer, enhances mood.

Banana-Cinnamon Smoothie (Serves 1-2)

Ingredients

- 1 cup milk (any type)
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 2 bananas
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, plus more for garnish
- ½ tsp. vanilla

Instructions

1. In a blender, blend together the milk, yogurt, bananas, cinnamon, and vanilla.
2. Pour into 1 or 2 glasses and serve with a sprinkle of cinnamon on top.
3. Tip: Try substituting 1 cup of frozen berries for the bananas.



Texas Roadhouse Butter Copycat (Cinnamon Butter)

Ingredients

- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ cup good honey
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

Instructions

1. Combine the ingredients in a bowl and mix with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes.
2. Serve
3. Note – Best served at room temperature. Butter will keep at room temperature for 1-2 days and in the refrigerator for 30 days or frozen for 6 months.



<https://www.theslowroasteditalian.com/2020/08/texas-roadhouse-cinnamon-butter-recipe.html>

Cinnamon Milk

Ingredients

- 8 oz. milk of choice
- ¼ tsp. pumpkin spice or cinnamon
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- Sweeten to taste

Instructions

1. Warm milk in a small saucepan over medium heat till just beginning to bubble.
2. Pour into mug and top with cinnamon or pumpkin spice and vanilla extract. Stir.



<https://thedizzycook.com/warm-cinnamon-milk/>

Cinnamon Sugar Chickpeas

Ingredients

- 2 (15 oz.) cans of chickpeas, drained, rinsed, and dried
- 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 4 tablespoons of granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons of cinnamon
- ½ tsp. salt.

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Toss the chickpeas with olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
2. Roast them in the oven for 40 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, mix the sugar and cinnamon together.
4. After 40 minutes, remove the chickpeas from the oven and sprinkle on the sugar mixture, making sure to coat all the chickpeas evenly.
5. Place them back in the oven and roast them for another 8-10 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and allow to dry completely.
7. Note – Make sure you remove as much moisture as possible after rinsing the chickpeas. Use paper towels to remove any surface moisture, and if you have time, let them air-dry for 30 minutes.



<https://colavitarecipes.com/recipe/cinnamon-sugar-chickpeas/>

Homemade Cinnamon Sugar Tortilla Chips

Ingredients

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 15 small 6 ½" flour tortillas
- 6 tablespoons melted butter

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a small bowl combine sugar and cinnamon and stir to combine.
3. Spry a baking sheet(s) with nonstick cooking spray.
4. Place tortillas onto the baking sheet.
5. Brush each with melted butter and sprinkle generously with cinnamon sugar mixture.
6. Cut the tortillas into triangles.
7. Bake for about 8-10 minutes until light, golden brown. Allow to cool.



<https://cincyshopper.com/homemade-cinnamon-tortilla-chips/>

Fiction Books

Cinnamon Roll Murder – by Joanne Fluke – F Fluke

Old Fashioned Soft Molasses Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- ¼ cup dark molasses
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup granulated sugar, for rolling



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Prepare a large baking sheet with parchment paper or non-stick cooking spray, set aside.
2. In a large bowl using a hand mixer, or in the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment beat together the brown sugar, butter, molasses, egg, and vanilla until well combined.
3. Mix in the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, and salt.
4. Shape the dough by rounded tablespoon full into 1 ½ inch balls. Dip the cookies into the granulated sugar and place 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheet.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 13-15 minutes just until set. Remove cookies to a wire rack to cool immediately.

<https://thesaltymarshmallow.com/old-fashioned-soft-molasses-cookies/>

Baked Sweet Potato Fries with Parmesan and Cinnamon

Ingredients

- 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled, and cut into 2-inch thick wedges
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees.
2. Arrange the sweet potato wedges on a baking sheet in an even layer and top with the oil, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Use your hands to toss the fries with the seasonings and oil to make sure all are evenly coated.
3. Reposition in an even layer on the baking sheet.



4. Place the sheet in the oven and bake for 35-40 minutes, or until the fries are fork-tender. Once the fries are finished baking, remove from the oven and evenly sprinkle the Parmesan cheese over the top.
5. Once they have cooled slightly, transfer to a serving dish.

<https://www.thedailymeal.com/recipes/baked-sweet-potato-fries-parmesan-cinnamon-recipe>

Maple Cinnamon Popcorn Recipes

Ingredients

- 1 package (60 g) Microwave popcorn (or equivalent amount of popcorn)
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. salt (sea salt)

Instructions

1. Make the popcorn.
2. Melt butter in a small pot over medium heat. Stir in the maple syrup and bring to a boil.
3. Add the brown sugar. Let the mixture bubble for 3-4 minutes.
4. Remove from heat. Stir in cinnamon powder and vanilla extract.
5. Transfer popcorn into a large mixing bowl. Slowly pour in the hot syrup mixture, stirring at the same time to coat the popcorn.
6. Sprinkle a pinch of salt into the popcorn mixture and toss to combine.
7. Preheat oven to 270 degrees. Transfer popcorn onto a lined baking tray and bake for 25-30 minutes. Note – baking the popcorn in the oven helps to keep the popcorns crunchy and prevents them from getting soggy. It also crystalizes the syrup and creates a lovely glaze over the popcorn.

<https://www.etfoodvoyage.com/maple-cinnamon-popcorn-recipe/>



Apple Spice Pork Chops

Ingredients

- 4 pork chops
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Pinch salt and pepper
- 1 medium onion
- 2 apples (fuji)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 cup chicken broth



Instruction

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. While the skillet is heating, open the pork chops and season each side with a pinch salt and freshly ground pepper.
2. Once the oil is hot and shimmering, place the chops in the pan. Cook the chops undisturbed for 5-7 minutes or until the bottoms form a nice brown crust. If your chops are sticking to the pan, that means they have not formed a crust yet. They will “let go” once the crust forms. Flip the chops and cook the second side in the same manner. It should take 5-7 minutes for each side.
3. While the chops are searing, thinly slice the onion and slice the apples into wedges. Once the chops have browned on both sides, remove them to a clean plate (they do not need to be cooked through at this point). Add the apples, onions, and butter to the skillet and sauté until the onions are softened. Allow the moisture from the apples and onions to dissolve the browned bits from the skillet as they cook.
4. Add the broth, brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg to the skillet with the apples and onions. Stir until everything is combined, then return the chops to the pan, along with any juices that may have collected on the plate. Nestle the chops down in the mixture, making sure some onions and apples are on top of the chops.
5. Simmer the chops in the apple and onion mixture for about 10 minutes, or until the liquid has reduced by half, the apples are soft, and the pork chops are cooked through. Stir occasionally, moving the apples and onions around so they all have a chance to simmer and soften. Serve each chop with apples, onions and sauce spooned over top.

<https://www.budgetbytes.com/apple-spice-pork-chops/>

Chicken Kapama – Greek Braised Cinnamon Chicken

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken (about 4 lbs.), cut into 8 spices (skin left on, bones in)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups canned or jarred whole stewed peeled tomatoes (about 28 ounces)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 cinnamon sticks (see note)
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon (plus more for the chicken)
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

For serving:

- Fresh lemon wedges
- Parsley
- pasta, zucchini noodles, rice, cauliflower rice
- Myzithra, Kasserri or Romano cheese, grated



Instructions

1. Rinse and pat dry the chicken parts. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle of ground cinnamon. Heat the olive oil and butter in a dutch oven or other large pan over a high heat. When the oil is hot, add the chicken parts (working in batches if necessary, so as not to crowd the pan, which steams the chicken instead of browning it), brown the chicken about 4-5 minutes per side, when nicely browned on all sides, remove the chicken from the pan and continue browning the rest. Pour off any excess oil, leaving about 2 tablespoons in the pan.
2. Lower the heat to a medium-high and add the onions. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until soft, then add the garlic, cook for another minute. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, cinnamon sticks and ground cinnamon. Season with salt and pepper. Add the chicken pieces back to the pan. The chicken should be submerged in the liquid, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, or so. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan and allow to simmer for 1 hour, stirring gently or shaking the pan from time to time, to move the chicken around. After 1 hour, remove the lid, and allow to simmer another 30 minutes, so the sauce can reduce slightly. If the sauce gets too thick at any point, you can add a little water. Cook until the chicken is tender thoroughly cooked and nearly falling off the bone.
3. Serve over pasta, noodles or zucchini noodles tossed with brown butter, if you'd like, garnish with fresh parsley, a squeeze of lemon and grated cheese of your choice.
4. NOTES: You can use all olive oil, if you would prefer not to use butter – Substitute for Cinnamon sticks – If a recipe calls for a whole cinnamon stick or quill, but you only have ground cinnamon, use $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 tsp. of ground cinnamon for one stick. You could also use ground allspice to substitute cinnamon sticks.

<https://tasty-yummies.com/chicken-kapama-greek-braised-cinnamon-chicken/>

Roasted Fall Vegetables with Cranberries and Maple Walnuts

Ingredients

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 3 cups butternut squash, cubed
- 1 medium shallot, sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup walnut halves
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cranberries
- 1 ounce goat cheese, crumbled, optional



Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Add the Brussels sprouts, butternut squash, and shallots to a large bowl. Pour in the olive oil and toss to coat.
3. Spread the vegetables onto a baking sheet and season with salt, pepper, and cinnamon.
4. Roast for about 30 minutes, tossing halfway through, or until tender and just starting to caramelize.
5. Meanwhile, add the walnuts and maple syrup to a small skillet over medium-high heat. Cook for 2-4 minutes, stirring frequently, until the syrup thickens and coats the walnuts. Remove to a plate to cool.
6. When the vegetables are done roasting, mix in the cranberries and top with the maple walnuts and goat cheese, if using.

<https://deliciouslittlebites.com/roasted-butternut-squash-brussels/>

Baked Eggs in Spiced Tomato Sauce

Mediterranean-North African twist on eggs in purgatory.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 (28 ounce can) whole tomatoes in juice, drained (reserving juice) and finely chopped
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- ½ tsp. sugar
- salt and ground pepper
- 8 large eggs
- 12 long shavings (about 1 ½ ounces) pecorino Romano cheese
- Slices of crusty bread, for serving



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat; stir in onions and saute until translucent, about 10 minutes.
2. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, several minutes.
3. Stir in tomatoes; add red pepper flakes, ground cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and sugar. Turn heat down to low, then simmer until tomatoes have further broken down, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Using a ladle, transfer sauce to four 6-inch shallow gratin or cazuela. Crack 2 eggs into each dish. Bake until whites are set, about 25 minutes, rotating halfway through (yolks will still be running.)
5. Top each dish with three long pecorino shavings; serve immediately with grilled bread.

<https://www.popsugar.com/food/Baked-Eggs-Spiced-Tomato-Sauce-21475170>

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Spice Resources at Fluvanna Library

The Science of Spice: Understand Flavour Connections and Revolutionize Your Cooking by Dr. Stuart Farrimond – 641.3383 FAR

Spiced: Unlock the Power of Spices to Transform Your Cooking – America's Test Kitchen – 641.6383 AME

Teens Cook Desserts – by Megan Carle - YA 641.8 CAR

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