

Fluvanna County Public Library

Spice of the Month Club

Garam Marsala (Spice Blend)

Spice Blend Includes: cumin, coriander, cardamom, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg
(Brand: Naturevibe Botanicals Organic Garam Masala)

Garam masala is a blend of ground spices used extensively in Indian cuisine. The spices for garam masala are usually toasted to bring out more flavor and aroma, and then ground. The word “masala” simply means “spices,” and garam means “hot.” However, garam masala doesn’t necessarily constitute a particularly spicy blend. The powdered form is typically gluten-free, vegan, and vegetarian, while you will need to check the label for garam masala paste to see what is included.



Indian vegetable or meat dishes often include garam masala for seasoning. In Northern Indian cuisine, garam masala is typically in powder form, while in the southern part of the country, garam masala is often formed into a paste with coconut milk, vinegar, or water. It is made year-round. Garam masala is sometimes used on its own, but it can be mixed with other seasonings as well.

Garam masala is believed to have originated in Northern Indian cuisine, where it is especially found in traditional Mughal dishes. In Ayurvedic medicine, the spices in garam masala are warming, meaning that they increase the metabolism (rather than being hot in flavor). Northern India has more areas that have cold seasons, so warming spices are welcome. Garam masala spread throughout the Indian subcontinent and as far west as present-day Iran.

There is no single garam masala recipe. The ingredients differ according to the region as well as each chef’s individual preferences. Garam masala from Northern India, including the Punjab region, often has only black pepper for a hot element and mostly focuses on aromatic and sweet spices. This garam masala will be quite mild, and any heat will come from adding hot peppers.

The farther south you go in India, the hotter the garam masala is likely to be as red chiles are likely to be part of the blend. The spices also change, based on what is more common locally.

Recipes are not only regional but also passed down through families. Learning to mix spices (to be a masalchi) is a matter of pride in India, and each cook strives to make the best garam masala blend.

Garam masala will usually consist of coriander, cumin, cardamom, cloves, black pepper, cinnamon (or cassia), nutmeg – in variations of garam masala, ingredients may include turmeric, saffron, fennel seeds, ginger, garlic, mustard seeds, mace, star anise, tamarind, fenugreek, bay leaves, Malabar leaves, or dried red chiles.

Garam masala is usually added near the end of cooking so that it not only seasons the dish but adds to the aroma. Some additional garam masala may also be sprinkled on top of the dish. Traditionally, garam masala is made fresh from the component spices and used within a few days.

Pairs well with – chicken, soup, and curry recipes. Many chicken tikka masala dishes use garam masala as a seasoning. It also works as a tasty seasoning for vegetables such as cauliflower, potatoes, or lentils.

Healing Power – The blend is believed to heat the body and boost the metabolism. And each of the spices in it have their own health benefits. In Ayurveda, the ancient Indian healing tradition, garam masala is lauded as a spice that aids digestion, boosts immunity and metabolism, and promotes weight loss.

- Black pepper contains piperine, a compound that prevents new fat cells from developing, alongside anti-inflammatory and gastro-protective properties. It also amplifies the absorption of curcumin from the turmeric, which reduced inflammation even further. Chronic inflammation has been associated with diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes and coronary artery disease.
- Green cardamom has a high level of antioxidants. It's a proven diuretic, reducing the amount of excess fluid in the body which, in turn, lowers blood pressure. Cinnamon could help regulate blood sugar by lowering insulin resistance.
- Cloves have some unexpected benefits. In addition to having a large amount of eugenol, a compound that helps the body fight inflammation and infection, they also kill bacteria in the mouth and freshen breath.
- Black cumin inhibits tumor growth across the spectrum, and boosts the immune system, lowering cholesterol, fights MRSA and protects brain function.

Making Your Own Garam Masala Spice Blend

Starting with whole seeds, your garam masala will be much more fragrant and flavorful than anything you buy in a jar at the store. For this recipe, you will need a skillet and a spice grinder or coffee grinder.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons cardamom seeds
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 whole cinnamon stick
- 1 tsp. whole cloves



Instructions

1. Heat a dry skillet over medium-high heat and toast the coriander, cumin, cardamom, black peppercorns for about 10 minutes. Stir them from time to time to keep everything cooking evenly.
2. When the ingredients have darkened slightly and give off a rich, toasty aroma, remove them from the pan and let them cool.
3. Grind in a spice grinder or coffee grinder.
4. Grate the nutmeg and add it to the mix.
5. Store in an airtight container away from heat – so in a cool, dark area. Ground garam masala will lose its potency rather quickly, so it's best to use it as soon as possible. Aim to use it within a few weeks, although it won't spoil and you could use it up to six months. Expect that you will need to use more garam masala in your recipe to get the desired flavor the older it gets.

<https://www.thespruceeats.com/what-is-garam-masala-995690>

Garam Masala and Honey Roasted Carrots

Ingredients

- 1 pound carrots, peeled and sliced in half lengthwise if large
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove of garlic, grated
- 2 tsp. garam masala
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
- Fresh mint leaves and chopped pistachios for topping (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl whisk together the honey, oil, garlic, garam masala, salt and pepper. Toss the carrots in the mixture until they're coated then place them in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle with a little more salt and pepper.
3. Roast the carrots for approximately 20 minutes or until they are tender, but not mushy. Rotate the baking sheet halfway through the cooking time.
4. Place the carrots on a serving plate and top them with chopped pistachios and mint.

<https://reciperunner.com/garam-masala-and-honey-roasted-carrots/>



Garam Masala Molasses Cookies

Ingredients - Combine in a bowl:

- 1 cup sugar + extra for rolling or dipping (if desired)
- ¾ cup oil
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup molasses

In a separate bowl, mix

- 2 cup flour, sifted
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 tsp. baking soda
- 3 tsp. garam masala

Instructions

1. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix until well blended.
2. Form teaspoon-sized rounded balls, dip the tops or roll the whole ball in granulated sugar (if desired) and place them on a cookie sheet lined with parchment.
3. Bake for 8 minutes at 350 degrees F.
4. Eat them hot out of the oven or allow to cool, if you can wait that long to eat them.

<https://www.teenytinyspicerecipes.com/blog/2017/6/30/garam-masala-molasses-cookies>



Moroccan Pot Roast

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 small onions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon plus ½ teaspoon garam masala divided
- 1 ¼ tsp. salt, divided
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) beef broth
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1 boneless beef chuck roast (3 pounds)
- 4 medium carrots, cut diagonally into ¾-inch pieces
- 1 small eggplant, cubed
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh mint
- Optional: Hot cooked couscous or flatbreads

Instructions

1. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat; saute onions with paprika, 1 tablespoon garam masala, ½ teaspoon salt and cayenne until tender, 4-5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste; cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in garbanzo beans and broth; transfer to a 5- or 6-qt. slow cooker.
2. Mix pepper and the remaining ½ teaspoon garam masala and ¾ tsp. salt; rub over roast. Place in slow cooker. Add carrots and eggplant. Cook, covered, until meat and vegetables are tender, 7-9 hours.
3. Remove roast from slow cooker; break into pieces. Remove vegetables with a slotted spoon; skim fat from cooking juices. Stir in honey. Return beef and vegetables to slow cooker and heat through. Sprinkle with mint. If desired, serve with couscous.
4. Freeze option: Freeze cooled beef and vegetables mixture in freezer containers. To use, partially thaw and refrigerator overnight. Microwave, covered, on high in a microwave safe dish until heated through, stirring gently.

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/moroccan-pot-roast/>

Garam Masala Fried Rice (Indo-China)

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked basmati rice
- ½ cup, finely chopped onions
- 1 finely chopped carrot
- 6-7 finely chopped green beans
- ½ cup finely chopped cabbage
- Handful chopped of spring onions (green onions)



- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 tsp. oil
- 1 tsp. soy sauce low sodium
- 1 tsp. garam masala

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a pan. Add the onions and saute till brown. Add in the chopped vegetables and saute until tender but crisp.
2. Season with salt and pepper. Add the soy sauce followed by the garam masala. Once the raw smell goes off, add the spring onions and fry for 1 minute. Add the cooled rice and mix well.

<http://vimithaa.blogspot.com/2014/03/garam-masala-fried-rice.html>

Slow-Cooker Chicken Tikka Masala (Indian)

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato puree
- 1 small onion, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tsp. hot pepper sauce
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. garam masala
- 4 bone-in chicken thighs
- 3 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt, plus more for topping
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
- Chopped cilantro, optional (or substitute parsley)
- Grated lemon zest, optional
- Hot Cooked Rice (to serve)

Instructions

1. Combine first 12 ingredients in a 3- or 4-quart slow cooker. Add chicken thighs and stir gently to coat. Cook, covered, on low 3-4 hours or until chicken is tender.
2. Preheat broiler. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken to a broiler-safe baking pan lined with foil. Broil 4-6 inches from heat for 3-4 minutes on each side or until lightly charred.
3. Meanwhile, transfer cooking juices from slow cooker to saucepan. Cook, uncovered, over medium-high heat until slightly thickened, 6-8 minutes. Remove from heat and gently stir in yogurt and butter. Serve chicken with sauce. If desired, garnish with chopped cilantro (or parsley), lemon zest and additional yogurt. Serve with hot cooked rice.

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/slow-cooker-chicken-tikka-masala/>



Cauliflower Garam Masala (Vegan – Indian)

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion (about one small onion)
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. curry
- ½ tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. minced garlic
- 1 small head cauliflower (cleaned and cut into small florets)
- 3 medium potatoes (washed, peeled and diced)
- 1 (13 ½ oz. can) coconut milk (full fat preferred)
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 (14 ½ oz. can) chickpeas (garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed)
- ½ tsp. salt (or to taste)
- ¼ tsp. black pepper



Instructions

1. In a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat, heat the oil until hot.
2. Add the diced onion and saute until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the garam masala, curry, and cumin and stir to release fragrance (about 30 seconds)
4. Add the minced garlic and cook for about 1 minute more.
5. Add the cauliflower florets and continue sautéing until the cauliflower starts to soften (about 10-12 minutes).
6. Add the potatoes and cook until they start to soften (About 10-12 minutes).
7. Mix the cornstarch with a little of the thin coconut water (found below the coconut fat) until the cornstarch dissolves.
8. Pour the coconut milk and the cornstarch/coconut milk unto the pan and stir to combine.
9. Continue cooking until the vegetables are tender and the sauce is the thickness of gravy (about 5 minutes).
10. Add the drained chickpeas and stir to combine, continuing to cook for another minute or two until the chickpeas are heated through.
11. Season with salt and pepper and serve hot.
12. NOTE – If you want to speed things up a bit, steam the cauliflower before adding it to the dish.

<https://recipeideashop.com/cauliflower-garam-masala/>

Suggested Cookbooks at the Fluvanna Library

Essential Spices and Herbs: Discover Them, Understand Them, Enjoy Them – by Christina Nichol – 641.6383 NIC

Mastering Spice: Recipes and Techniques to transform your everyday cooking – by Lior Lev Sercarz –
641.6383 SER

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

Vegan Energy Balls with Masala Spice (Gluten Free)

Ingredients

- 1 cup raw pecan pieces
- ½ cup flaked or shredded coconut (unsweetened)
- ½ cup dates, pitted
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- ½ tsp. vanilla
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. garam masala spice

Instructions

1. Add pecans and coconut into a food processor and pulse until crumbled. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse repeatedly until well combined. For the best texture – leave the texture coarse, rather than making it too smooth.
2. Roll into 12 small ping-pong sized balls and place on a parchment-lined sheet pan to firm up and cool in the fridge or freezer. Once chilled you can stack in a storage container, or place in a ziploc bag, and continue storing in the fridge for up to 2 weeks, or freeze.

<https://www.feastingathome.com/coconut-pecan-energy-balls-with-masala-spice/>



Aaloo Tikki (Indian Street Food)

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups potatoes (boiled, peeled and mashed/grated)
- 2 tbsp. fresh coriander or cilantro (or parsley) (chopped) – to taste
- 1 tsp. ginger (grated)
- 1 tsp. coriander powder
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- Salt (to taste)
- ½ tsp. chilli powder
- Oil for deep frying or 3 tablespoons oil for air frying

Instructions

1. To a large mixing bowl/dish, add all the ingredients except oil.
2. Divide the dough into 6 medium balls.
3. Slide the prepared tikkis/patties/cutlets in hot oil and deep fry 2 minutes each side.
4. If you are using an air fryer, then brush oil on both sides of the tikkis/patties/cutlets and cook at 180 degrees for 10-15 minutes.
5. Serve and enjoy with sauce of choice. Serving suggestions (links to recipes for these on webpage – Cilantro/Coriander Chutney, Caramelized Onion Yogurt Dip, Lemon and Garlic Yogurt Dip, Roasted Beetroot Hummus, Arugula Salad with Roasted Chickpeas, or Quinoa Salad.

<https://thetwincookingproject.net/aaloo-tikki-indian-street-food/>



Tandoori Chicken Recipe (Air Fryer) Indian

Ingredients

- 1 pound chicken tenders, each cut in half
- ¼ cup Full Fat Greek Yogurt
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- ¼ cup cilantro (or parsley if you prefer)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tsp. garam marsala
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika, to add a smoky flavor to the chicken, and color

For finishing

- 1 tablespoon oil, for basting
- 2 tsp. lemon juice, for finishing
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro, for garnishing

Instructions

1. In a glass bowl, mix all ingredients except the basting oil, lemon juice and 2 tablespoons of cilantro. Marinate for 30 minutes.
2. Open up the air fryer and carefully lay the tandoori chicken in a single layer on either the rack or in the basket of your air fryer.
3. Using a silicon brush, baste the chicken with oil on one side.
4. Cook at 350 for 10 minutes.
5. Remove and flip over the chicken, and baste on the other side.
6. Cook for another 5 minutes.
7. Using a meat thermometer, check to see if the internal temperature has reached 165F. Do NOT skip this step.
8. Remove and place on a serving plate. Add lemon juice and mix, and sprinkle with cilantro.
9. NOTE – If you don't have an air fryer, you can cook this recipe in a skillet. Just heat up a skillet until it's screaming hot, add oil and cook the chicken for 4-5 minutes on each side.
10. NOTE – Serving suggestions: serve alone as an appetizer, serve with green chutney as an appetizer, serve with tzatziki or aita as a dip, serve with naan as part of a meal, make extra and add to your leftover butter chicken sauce, or eat in lettuce leaves as a low carb wrap.

<https://twosleever.com/tandoori-chicken-recipe/>

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