



Fenugreek

Fenugreek seeds derive from an annual plant native to the Mediterranean and Asia, and are now grown worldwide. They have no smell when whole but release a sweet, nutty aroma when crushed. The smell and flavour of Fenugreek are likened to butterscotch and maple syrup. However, when cooked, they impart a bitter flavour to foods so are used sparingly. Roasted seeds are used as a coffee substitute in the Middle East. Fenugreek Seeds are used in traditional and modern herbal medicine for their many health benefits, including digestive problems, diabetes, painful menstruation, heart health, and as a carminative and aphrodisiac.



- Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), is an annual plant grown for its seeds and leaves.
- Native to the Mediterranean region, southern Europe, and western Asia, and is now cultivated in semi-arid regions world-wide.
- Taste somewhat like maple syrup.
- Virtually no smell when whole. When crushed, they release the smell of sweet nuts and butterscotch, not unlike maple syrup.

Cooking with Fenugreek Seeds

- Impart a bitter flavour to foods, so should be used sparingly.
- Commonly used in Indian curries and in breads from South Asia and parts of Africa.
- Dry roasting the seeds will bring out the flavour.
- In curries, they are cooked first with the other dried seeds to release their bitter-sweet flavour.
- In India, they add fenugreek seeds to starchy vegetables to aid digestion.
- In the Middle East, the seeds are soaked overnight in cold water and made into a paste with other spices to make a condiment called 'hilbeh'. They use the paste to marinate meat.
- Roasted seeds can be used as a coffee substitute.
- Sprinkle a few seeds in vegetable casseroles.

Health Benefits and therapeutic Applications of Fenugreek

- Composed of protein, starch, sugar, mucilage, minerals, volatile oil, fixed oil, vitamins and enzymes.
- Smell of curry but taste quite bitter and contain coumarin oil.
- In traditional Ayurvedic medicine, used in colic flatulence, dysentery, diarrhoea, dyspepsia, chronic cough and enlargement of liver and spleen, rickets, gout and diabetes. It is also used as a carminative, tonic, and aphrodisiac.
- In herbal medicine, used for digestive problems such as loss of appetite, upset stomach, constipation, inflammation of the stomach (gastritis).
- Used for diabetes, painful menstruation, polycystic ovary syndrome, and obesity.
- Used for conditions that affect heart health (atherosclerosis) and for high blood levels of certain fats including cholesterol and triglycerides.
- Used for kidney ailments
- Used for a vitamin deficiency disease called beriberi, mouth ulcers, boils, bronchitis, infection of the tissues beneath the surface of the skin (cellulitis), tuberculosis, chronic coughs, chapped lips, baldness, cancer, Parkinson's disease, and exercise performance.
- Some men use fenugreek for hernia, erectile dysfunction (ED), male infertility, and other male problems.
- Promotes milk flow when breast feeding.