

Fluvanna County Public Library

Spice of the Month Club

Fennel Seeds

Flavor Profile: sweet taste similar to licorice and anise

Fennel is a vegetable native to the Mediterranean with a licorice-like flavor. Its edible bulbs, leaves, and seeds are used in various cuisines worldwide.

Although fennel is native to the Mediterranean, it now grows in many parts of the world. The bulb is often cooked, but can also be eaten raw in foods like salads or pastas. Fennel seeds are used as a spice in baked goods, meats, and beverages.

Fennel seed extract comes from the fennel plant's flowers and then dried. They tend to be pale green to tan in color and oval in shape. Like the fennel bulb, they have a sweet, licorice-like flavor that can bring out an earthy, sweet taste to dishes. They pair exceptionally well with seafood and pork.

The warm, slightly nutty undertone adds depth to savory dishes, while their sweetness pairs beautifully with baked goods. You can easily store fennel seeds in a jar.

Fennel seeds pack a nutritional punch in a small package.

- Fennel is a good source of carbohydrates and dietary fiber. Moreover, fennel seeds are known for providing essential vitamins and minerals which help support a heart-healthy diet.
- Heart Health - Fennel is high in dietary fiber, which may help protect your heart and manage your cholesterol and blood sugar, reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease. Moreover, the fennel plant and seeds also have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Digestion - Fennel seeds are traditionally used as a digestive aid in various cultures. The seeds from fennel plants are commonly used as a spice to season food. Medicinally, fennel seeds have also been used to treat bloating and gas via tea. Prepare fennel seeds from a small spoonful, add hot water, keep it steeped for 20 minutes, and sip half an hour after a meal.
- Bone Health, Nerve and Muscle Function - These tiny but mighty seeds act as fennel supplements that contain minerals like calcium, iron, and magnesium. Fennel seeds also contain manganese.
- Promote Healthy Skin - Fennel contains vitamin C, an antioxidant that reduces cell damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are harmful substances partly produced by ultraviolet (UV) exposure.
- Protect Against Chronic Diseases - The vitamins, minerals, and compounds found in fennel may help prevent certain chronic diseases, such as cancer and heart disease.
- Other benefits: Promotes Brain Health, Reduces Risk of Anemia, Supports Eye Health
- Fennel seeds are a flavorful and nutritious ingredient that can boost your meals and health. These seeds are excellent in improving digestion, reduce weight and enhance your cooking. If you're new to fennel seeds, incorporate them into simple recipes like teas or roasted vegetables. Just remember to use them in normal amounts to avoid potential side effects.

Banana Muffins with Fennel Seeds

(Malpua Inspired – Indian fried pancake) 8 servings

DRY INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups All-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. dry-toasted and ground fennel seeds
- 1 tsp. Cardamom powder
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 pinch Salt

WET INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup Ghee or, oil
- 2 Bananas mashed – Use bananas that are very ripe (black skins and soft bananas are best) for best flavor.
- ½ cup milk mixed with 1 tbsp. vinegar
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 degree F
2. Line a muffin pan with muffin liners
3. In a small bowl, add 1 tbsp. white vinegar to the milk and set it aside. The milk will curdle making it your homemade buttermilk
4. MIX THE WET INGREDIENTS
5. In a medium-sized bowl, mash the bananas
6. Add the melted ghee, brown sugar, and vanilla extract. Mix well
7. Pour the homemade buttermilk into it and give it a stir
8. MIX THE DRY INGREDIENTS INTO THE WET INGREDIENTS
9. Now, add the flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda directly into the bowl.
10. Mix in the fennel seeds and cardamom powder.
11. Mix the dry into wet. Don't overmix.
12. BAKE BANANA MUFFINS WITH FENNEL SEEDS
13. Scoop the egg-free banana muffin batter into the muffin tins. Make sure not to fill till the top.
14. Top with almonds and bake for 25/30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

<https://myyellowapron.com/banana-muffins-with-fennel-seeds-malpua-inspired/>

Fennel and Ginger Tea (1 serving)

- 1 cup boiling water, or as needed
- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- ⅓ tsp. grated fresh ginger root

1. Fill a mug with boiling water.
2. Place fennel seeds in a tea ball; add to boiling water. Add grated ginger; steep for 2 minutes. Remove tea ball; serve.



<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/285417/fennel-and-ginger-tea/>

Boiled Carrots with Fennel Seeds and Citrus (4 servings)

- 1 pound carrots, peeled
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. lemon juice, plus extra for serving
- ½ tsp. grated orange zest
- ½ tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley



1. Cut carrots into 1 ½-2-inch lengths. Leave thin pieces whole, halve medium pieces lengthwise, and quarter thick pieces lengthwise.
2. Bring 2 cups water to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Add carrots and salt, cover, and cook until tender throughout, about 6 minutes (start timer as soon as carrots go into water).
3. Drain carrots and return them to saucepan. Add oil, lemon juice, orange zest, and fennel seeds and stir until combined. Stir in parsley. Season with extra lemon juice to taste, and serve.

<https://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/9396-boiled-carrots-with-fennel-seeds-and-citrus>

Fennel Coconut Shortbread (Inspired by Jeera Biscuits, a traditional South Asian shortbread cookie) Makes 14 cookies

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ cup shredded coconut
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. fennel seeds



1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking tray with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Cream together butter, sugar, coconut, and fennel seeds until fluffy and light. Stir in the salt. Add the flour, mixing until dough comes together and is smooth. If dough seems dry and won't come together, add a tablespoon of milk.
3. On a flat surface, sprinkle flour and shape dough into a flat disc. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough until it is 1/4 inch thick. Cut into circles using a cookie cutter.
4. Place the cookies on the parchment-lined baking tray. Sprinkle with granulated sugar and shredded coconut. Bake for 10 minutes. Lower the temperature to 325 degrees F, and bake another 3-4 minutes. The middle of the cookies should be fairly pale, and the edges golden brown.
5. Let cool before serving. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

<https://bakerwithoutborders.com/2020/10/25/fennel-coconut-shortbread/>

Library Resources

Bismillah, Let's Eat by Zehra Allibhai – 641.5954 ALL

Modern Asian Kitchen by Kat Lieu – 641.595 LIE

Black Bean Dip with Toasted Cumin and Fennel (4 Servings)

- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- 1 (14 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 lime, zest and juice (plus more to taste)
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- 2-3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 fresh chilli, deseeded and roughly chopped (optional)
- Small handful fresh coriander (approx. 0.5 oz / 15 g)
- 4 tbsp. cold water (plus more if necessary)
- Salt and pepper to taste



1. Heat a pan on medium heat (no oil) and add the cumin seeds and fennel seeds. Dry-toast for a couple of minutes, moving the pan regularly, until the seeds start to release their aroma and gently brown. Turn off the heat and set aside.
2. To a food processor, add the drained black beans, lime zest, lime juice, garlic, olive oil, chilli, fresh coriander, and toasted cumin and fennel seeds. If you like, you can save some of the seeds and coriander leaves for serving.
3. Add four tablespoons of water, season with salt and pepper, and blend for a minute or two until smooth, stopping to scrape down the sides if necessary. For a smoother, lighter consistency, continue to add small amounts of extra water.
4. Adjust the seasoning to taste, adding any extra lime, chilli, salt, or pepper, and serve (see suggestions above).

<https://thepeskyvegan.com/recipes/black-bean-dip/>

Spice-Crusted Chicken Breasts with Lemon-Cucumber Raita (Raita - traditional Indian/South Asian yogurt side)

- 2 ½ tbsp. coriander seeds
- 2 ½ tbsp. cumin seeds
- 2 ½ tbsp. fennel seeds
- ½ seedless cucumber, unpeeled and coarsely shredded
- 1 ¼ cups plain yogurt
- 1 tbsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper
- 6 (6 ounce) boneless chicken breast halves, with skin
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil



1. Preheat the oven to 350°. In a small dry skillet, toast the coriander, cumin and fennel seeds over moderate heat until golden and fragrant, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a spice grinder and let cool. Grind the seeds to a fine powder.

2. Spread the shredded cucumber on several layers of paper towel and blot dry with more paper towels. Transfer the cucumber to a bowl and stir in the yogurt, lemon zest, garlic, cayenne and 1 teaspoon of the spice mixture; season the raita with salt and pepper.
3. Brush the chicken with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the remaining spice mixture all over the breasts. Heat 2 large ovenproof skillet over moderately high heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to each. Add 3 of the breasts to each skillet, skin side down, and cook until golden, about 4 minutes. Turn the breasts and continue cooking for another 3 minutes. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake the chicken for about 8 minutes, or until just cooked through. Serve the chicken warm, with the raita.

<https://www.food.com/recipe/spice-crusted-chicken-breasts-with-lemon-cucumber-raita-136559>

Fennel Basmati Rice

- 1 ¼ cups basmati rice rinsed thoroughly (4 to 5 rinses until water runs clear)
- 2 ¼ cups chicken bone broth (or chicken broth or vegetable broth)
- ½ small onion finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic finely minced or crushed
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- ½ tsp. caraway seeds
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon sea salt



1. Heat the olive oil in a medium pot, over medium heat. Note: Try not to skimp on the oil. The oil amount will determine how well the onions cook/brown.
2. Add the onions. Cook 6 to 7 minutes until the onions are softened and lightly brown around the edges. Stir the onions occasionally. Note: If the onions are browning too quickly, reduce the heat. You don't want to burn or brown them too much.
3. Add the fennel and caraway seeds. Stir. Cook 1 to 2 minutes until fragrant.
4. Add the garlic, black pepper and cumin. Stir. Cook 30 seconds to 1 minute.
5. Add the rice. Stir. Add the salt. Turn up the heat to medium high. Stir and allow to cook 2 minutes until you hear crackling sounds.
6. Add the chicken broth (or vegetable broth). Stir. Bring to a boil. Cover. Lower the heat and simmer 14 minutes until all liquid is absorbed.
7. Turn off the heat. Use a spoon or fork to fluff. Cover and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes.
8. Fluff the rice again. Transfer to a serving dish. Garnish with herbs if desired. Serve with your favorite entree. Enjoy.

<https://julietkitchen.com/2020/06/05/fennel-basmati-rice/>

More Library Resources

India Express by Rukmini Iyer – 641.5636 IYE

Milk Street: The World in a Skillet by Christopher Kimball – 641.5918 KIM

Chicken Breasts with Orange-Fennel Seed-Olive Relish (2-4 Servings)

- 1 tsp. fennel seeds, lightly crushed
- ¾ cup pitted and smashed brined green olives
- 1 tbsp. freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tsp. orange zest
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 bone-in, skin-on chicken breast halves (about 10 ounces)



1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees and set the rack in the center.
2. Place fennel seeds in a small frying pan and toast over medium heat until fragrant. Place seeds in a small bowl and combine with olives, juice, zest, and 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and set aside to marinate, at least 15 minutes.
3. Heat a large ovenproof 12-inch frying pan over medium heat. Rub chicken with remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Add chicken to the pan, skin side down, and cook until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Flip chicken over with tongs and put it in the oven to finish cooking. (If you're not using an ovenproof frying pan, transfer the chicken to a baking dish first). Roast chicken for about 15 minutes, or until the internal temperature registers 160 to 165 degrees on a meat thermometer.
4. Take the chicken out and let it rest for 5 minutes so that the juices settle. Transfer to a serving plate and top with reserved olive mixture. Serve.

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/aida-mollenkamp/chicken-breasts-with-orange-fennel-seed-olive-relish-recipe-1952134>

Oven-Baked Tuscan Meatballs (4 servings)

- ¼ cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. basil leaves
- 1 tsp. oregano leaves
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. fennel seed, crushed
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tbsp. milk
- 1 pound lean ground beef



1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix bread crumbs and seasonings in large bowl. Add egg and milk; mix well. Add ground beef; mix well.
2. With wet hands, shape mixture into 1-inch meatballs (about 30). Place on foil-lined 15x10x1-inch baking pan. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until cooked through. Drain well.
3. Serve over cooked pasta with your favorite pasta sauce, if desired.

<https://www.mccormick.com/blogs/recipes/oven-baked-tuscan-meatballs>