

## CARDAMOM

"The Queen of Spices"

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1. Cardamom is a plant that grows year after year (perennial), originally from India and Indonesia.
2. The pod that contains black seeds gives it a strong smell and a sweet flavor.
3. The spice is used in meat, vegetable preparations, desserts and a variety of other dishes.
4. In Sweden and most Scandinavian countries, cardamom is very common in baked goods <sup>1</sup>.

### What is in cardamom?

The spice has a variety of plant-derived compounds that contribute to the spice's anti-inflammatory properties.

Cardamom has some plant-derived constituents (essential oils), along with other nutrients. These constituents extracted as cardamom essential oil have several biological roles mentioned above <sup>6</sup>.

Cardamom has been used as a spice and medicine. It has properties similar to the drugs that affect our system (pharmacological) such as antioxidant, **anti-inflammatory**, anticancer, and antimicrobial.

The above terms mean that they protect our body cells, reduce the risk of cancer, and lower **inflammation**.



**Inflammation is a response to injury or infection, such as pain, redness or swelling. A similar response continues for months or years with diseases of the heart, diabetes, arthritis and other chronic diseases.**

**ANTI-INFLAMMATORY** means any agent that can reduce pain or similar responses to injury, infection and chronic diseases.

### What do studies say about the health benefits?

- **Prediabetes:** A study conducted among people with prediabetes concluded that cardamom could improve inflammation and stress-related outcomes <sup>2</sup>. \*\*\*
- **Blood glucose and lipid levels:** Evidence from multiple studies suggests that different extracts of green cardamom can control blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and reduce inflammation <sup>3</sup> \*\*\*
- **Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS):** Obese women who suffered from this condition showed reduced inflammation <sup>4</sup> \*\*\*

# Functional Foods

Research is ongoing to further support the above evidence.

## Strength of evidence

\*\*\* Strong \*\* Moderate \* Basic

## How is cardamom traditionally used?

Cardamom is also linked to the following health benefits:

- Helps with digestion
- Freshens breath
- Balances blood sugar levels
- Lowers blood pressure
- May help with bronchitis
- Acts as a stimulant, improving circulation
- Removes digestion-related discomfort during pregnancy
- May help prevent stomach ulcers <sup>5</sup> \*\*

## How much cardamom is safe to consume?

About 1.5–3 grams/day, which is about ½ tsp per day<sup>5</sup>

- Adding cardamoms to food is safe.
- Consult your physician about the usage of supplements or concentrated extracts.
- Functional foods, including cardamom, should not replace a healthy diet or prescribed medication.
- Effects can differ from person to person.

## How to use cardamom?

- **Tea:** Bring 2 cups of water to a low boil. Lightly crush 4 cardamom pods and add to the boiling water. Simmer on low for five minutes. Strain into a teapot and enjoy.
- **Baked goods:** Cardamom can be added to bread and baked goods.

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## • **Dishes inspired by Indian cooking:**

Vegetable, protein dishes and Indian rice pudding (kheer) use cardamom for flavor.

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