

# Winter Spices

Winter is a time when we love to indulge in warming comfort foods that bring some enjoyment to the short bleak days and long cold nights. The lack of fresh produce in these months is made up by the rich, filling and warming fragrance created by a selection of classic spices known as *winter spices*, or also commonly referred to as *pie spices*. Included under this title are star anise, allspice, nutmeg, mace, green cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and ginger. Here at NetCost Market, we want you to enjoy the warming sensations of winter comfort food to their full potential, so we have come up with some key ways you can incorporate spices into your cooking to give you relief from the winter blues!



**Allspice:** Allspice gets its name because when it first arrived on the shores of Great Britain, transported by merchants in the Caribbean, people believed it was a blend made up of

several spices. In fact, it comes from a single berry, which is harvested from an evergreen tree native to Jamaica. Allspice is brilliant for adding a warming flavor to sweet baked goods such as cookies and cakes. However, it is also great for savory flavors such as Jamaican jerk marinade, barbecue sauce, and curries.



**Cardamom:** Native to India, cardamom is a central spice in Indian cuisine, featuring in various curries, sweet goods, and even tea! Simply adding some pods to steamed or boiled rice infuses a warming flavor that can really lift a dish, or alternatively, try making a cup of warming Kashmiri tea which includes cardamom, saffron, tea leaves, and sugar!



**Cinnamon:** Cinnamon has a distinctive flavor which has become an American classic. However, in America, we often reserve cinnamon for sweet dishes such as cookies, cakes, and cereals. Added to a tasty vegetable curry, cinnamon can bring out beautiful flavors that gently warm you, making it a great winter spice!



**Cloves:** Another classic spice, cloves, often remind people of Christmas. They are the dried flower bud of an evergreen tree native to Indonesia and produce a pungent and intensely sweet and bitter flavor, which means they should be used sparingly. They, like many winter spices, are great for both sweet and savory dishes. A great winter use is honey roasted ham, where the flavors of cloves infuse with the sweetness of the honey and saltiness of the meat to bridge the flavor notes of the dish.



**Ginger:** Ginger is a root commonly grown in Asia, but has been used in European influenced cooking for several millennia. Of course, we all know gingerbread and ginger cake, which gives our mouth a beautiful warming sensation with a fiery aftertaste. Yet, ginger is also used in cuisines across Asia, including Indian, Chinese and Thai cooking, and can be prepared in many ways such as dried, pickled, fresh or even roasted. This versatility makes ginger one of the world's favorite spices, and its warming qualities make it a perfect winter spice!

Eating warming foods in winter can help make you feel physically warmer, but also psychologically comforted. For this reason, here at NetCost Market, we're advocating the use of these powerful spices in the use of winter cooking. Try experimenting this winter to find the balance that makes you feel comfortable and cozy in this bleak weather. Head down to your local NetCost Market to find a great selection of different winter spices and get yourself warmed up for winter,

today!