

Know Your Spices

Ghee Pongal in Saravanaa Bhavan is cooked with pepper, jeera or cumin seeds and curry leaves. Pepper is one of the most popular spices in the world. Plain simple kali mirch or pepper is known as pippali in Sanskrit, The English word pepper is a derivative of Old English pipor. Germans call it pfeffer, French it is called poivre, Dutch peper, no matter what name it is known as, it tastes, just peppery!!!

- Grown in a perennial, climbing vine mostly in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are the other producers in India.
- Pepper tastes & smells best when ground directly on to food. For hot food it is best to add pepper well towards the end of the cooking process, this preserves the aroma.
- Pepper improves digestion, calms nausea, earache, insect bites, insomnia, joint pain, sunburn, etc.

Cumin is a spice popular widely used in curries either in a powder form or the whole seed. Cumin has a strong aroma. It has a sharp and bitter taste.

- Originally cultivated in Iran and Mediterranean region, It was introduced in the Americas by the Spanish colonists.
- This aromatic spice is a natural stimulant. Cumin is used mostly in spicy food. In India Jeera pani, is a popular refreshing drink created by combining cumin and tamarind water.
- In East, it is used more like a traditional herbal remedy... It has been proved effective in treating, indigestion, morning sickness and other diseases.
- Cumin tea is also believed to help induce labor
- Boiled and cooled cumin water is supposed to soothe stomach problems.

Curry Leaves are native to India and is used as a seasoning in Indian cooking.

- These leaves have a very short shelf life.
- Fresh leaves have the best aroma. Since this herb or spice is all about aroma, try using them fresh.