

Add a Little Spice to Your Life!

Grab & Go Spice Kits for Adults: Cumin

Do you love to cook? Do you like to try new flavors and recipes? Or maybe you are in a cooking rut and don't know how to start expanding your cooking repertoire. Let us help you get spicy in the kitchen. Your kit includes a pre-measured packet of ground cumin and a few recipes.

What is cumin? Cumin is an aromatic spice made from the dried seed of the *Cuminum cyminum* plant which is a member of the parsley family and native to the Mediterranean, Northern Egypt, Iran, and India. Cumin has been popular since the dawn of written history and is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Cumin is available as both whole seeds and ground powder and both are used in recipes. Cumin powder has a lighter flavor than cumin seeds which tends to have a more pronounced and concentrated flavor. Research has confirmed cumin has health benefits such as promoting digestion and reducing food-borne infections. It also suggests some lesser-known benefits like promoting weight loss and improving blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Easy ways to add cumin to your diet. Rich and hearty, earthy and warm, with an edge of citrus, cumin adds instant depth to any dish. Using ground cumin with other spices can highlight different flavor qualities. It is an essential component in several spice blends including curry powder, garam masala and baharat. It's robust flavor makes it perfect for meat and vegetable marinades. So, add it to burger patties, blend it with butter as a baste for vegetables or make a spicy-sweet rub by blending it with coriander, ginger, and garlic. For a simple flavor boost, use it as a garnish sprinkled over hummus.

Recipes featuring ground cumin:

- *Mango Lassi Smoothie*
- *Mushroom-Spinach Soup*
- *Cumin-Lime Shrimp with Ginger*
- *Hunan Beef with Cumin*
- *Turkey Chili*

Need more inspiration?

You can watch a six-part *Great Courses* class called *The Everyday Gourmet: Essential Secrets of Spices in Cooking* for free with your library card by using a [Hoopla Great Courses Binge-Pass](#) or streaming on [Kanopy](#).

Mango Lassi Smoothie

By Susannah Brinkley Henry

Yield: 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup almond milk
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 ½ cups diced mango fresh or frozen
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- 1 pinch salt
- ½ cup ice skip if using frozen mango

PREPARATION

1. In a blender, add the almond milk, honey, yogurt, mango, turmeric, cumin, salt and ice. Blend until the mixture is smooth.
2. Pour into two glasses and serve.

Mushroom-Spinach Soup

By Melissa Clark

Yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter or extra virgin olive oil
- 1¼ pounds mixed mushrooms (such as cremini, oyster, chanterelles and shiitake), chopped
- ½ pound shallots, finely diced
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch ground allspice
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt, more to taste
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 5 ounces baby spinach
- Fresh lime juice, to taste
- Plain yogurt, for serving (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Heat 3 tablespoons butter or oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add half the mushrooms and half the shallots; cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated and the mushrooms are well browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer mushrooms to a bowl and repeat with remaining butter, mushrooms and shallots.
2. Return all mushrooms to the pot and stir in tomato paste, thyme, cumin, coriander, cinnamon and allspice; cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Stir in 5 cups water, the salt and the black pepper. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium heat and cook gently for 20 minutes. Stir in baby spinach and let cook until just wilted, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Using an immersion blender or food processor, coarsely purée soup. Mix in lime juice. Thin with water, as needed. Taste and adjust seasoning, if necessary. Serve with dollops of yogurt if you'd like.

Cumin- Lime Shrimp with Ginger

By Colu Henry

Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined (16 to 20 shrimp)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon grated garlic
- Pinch of red-pepper flakes (optional)
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 3 tablespoons roughly chopped cilantro
- Flaky salt (optional)

PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, toss together the shrimp and the cumin until well coated. Season with kosher salt and toss again.
2. Heat the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add half the shrimp to the pan in one layer and cook undisturbed until they just start turning pink, about 1 minute. Flip and cook for about 1 minute more, then remove from the pan and set aside. They may not be fully cooked at this time, and that's O.K. Repeat with remaining shrimp and leave in the pan.
3. Add the reserved shrimp back to the pan with any juices that have accumulated. Stir in the ginger, garlic and red-pepper flakes, if using, and cook for about 30 seconds, stirring to make sure the garlic doesn't burn. Add the lime juice to pan and scrape up any brown bits that have formed at the bottom of the pan. Cook until the mixture is reduced by about half, about 1 minute more. Stir in the lime zest and scatter with the cilantro. Season with flaky salt, if desired.

Hunan Beef with Cumin

Recipe from Fuchsia Dunlop

Adapted by Anne Mendelson

Yield: 2 to 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine or good medium-dry sherry
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon light soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon potato starch or flour
- 12 ounces boneless short rib or other beef steak
- 1¾ cups peanut oil
- 2 teaspoons minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 2 fresh red chilies (tien tsin or Thai red chiles), seeded and finely chopped
- 2 to 4 teaspoons dried chili flakes
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- Salt
- 2 scallions, green parts only, finely sliced
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

PREPARATION

1. In a bowl, mix the wine, salt, soy sauces, potato starch or flour and one tablespoon water. Cut the beef across the grain into thin slices and add to marinade.
2. In a wok, heat peanut oil to about 275 degrees. Add beef and stir gently for two to three minutes, then remove from oil with a slotted spoon and drain well.
3. Pour off all but 3 tablespoons of oil in wok. Over a high flame, add the ginger, garlic, fresh chilies, chili flakes and cumin and stir-fry briefly, until they are fragrant. Return beef to the wok and stir well, seasoning with salt to taste.
4. When beef is sizzling and fragrant, add scallion greens and toss briefly. Remove from heat and stir in sesame oil.

Turkey Chili

By Pierre Franey

Yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 pounds ground turkey, white and dark meat combined
- 2 cups coarsely chopped onions
- 2 tablespoons chopped garlic
- 1 large sweet red pepper, cored, deveined and coarsely chopped
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 jalapeño, cored, deveined and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped, or 1 tablespoon dried
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 3 cups canned diced tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken broth, fresh or canned
- Salt and black pepper
- 2 (15-ounce) cans red kidney beans, drained
- 2 cups shredded Cheddar
- 1 cup sour cream (optional)
- Sliced lime, for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Heat the oil over high in a large heavy pot and add the turkey meat. Cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes, chopping down and stirring with the side of a heavy kitchen spoon to break up any lumps.
2. Add the onions, garlic, sweet pepper, celery, jalapeño, oregano, bay leaves, chili powder and cumin. Stir to blend well. Cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes, chicken broth, salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes.
4. Add the drained beans and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes longer. Serve in bowls with Cheddar, and sour cream and lime wedges, if desired.