

Allspice Essential Oil Health and Beauty Benefits

QUICK FACTS

Name:	Allspice
Scientific Name:	<i>Pimenta dioica</i>
Origin	Native to the Caribbean
Colors	Green turning dark purple when ripe
Shapes	Globose 4–7 mm in diameter with a thick, woody, brittle pericarp
Taste	Pungent and slightly peppery
Calories	263 Kcal./cup
Major nutrients	Manganese (127.96%), Iron (88.25%), Calcium (66.10%), Copper (61.44%), Total dietary Fiber (56.84%)
Health benefits	Good for Diabetes, Heart Health, Circulation, Reduced constipation (Bulking), Dental Health, Slows Aging, Immune System, Cancer Prevention, Digestion, Makes You Energetic, Anti-Inflammatory Qualities, Strong bones

MORE FACTS ABOUT ALLSPICE

Allspice which is also called *Jamaica pepper*, *Kurundu*, *Myrtle pepper*, *pimento*, *allspice berries*, or *newspace* is the dried unripe fruit of the *Pimenta dioica* plant, and is native to the Caribbean — Greater Antilles, and possibly parts of Central America – from southern Mexico to Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Although the berries are usually distilled in both Europe and the US. It is an evergreen tropical shrub belonging to the *Myrtaceae* family and in the genus *pimento*.

HISTORY

Its use was initially observed by Christopher Columbus during a visit to Jamaica on his second voyage to the New World, but was not brought back to Europe until the 16th Century. In the 1600's it was introduced to Europe and became a popular substitute for the more expensive cardamom. In England it was used to preserve fish and to flavor beef. It was named allspice around the 17th century.

It features a taste similar to a mixture of Cloves, Cinnamon, Pepper, and Juniper berries – hence the name Allspice. It spread gradually throughout the world because of its unique flavor as well as its health benefits. The berries are picked when ripe and allowed to dry in the sun. They end up looking like the somewhat shrunken, hard berries we know as allspice. They are then ground up into powder for culinary use, or to extract the essential oil.

Allspice has been used in baking, and pickling since ancient times. And it continues to be utilized in the Caribbean and other nations as an essential component in culinary

dishes, and it is even used to kill bacteria in food. It is extensively grown in Jamaica, Guatemala, Mexico (Yucatán), South America, India, and Réunion.

PLANT

Allspice is a small, evergreen tree, 6–12 m high; has a brownish gray trunk, and a bushy, rounded canopy. It grows well in semitropical lowland forests, and thrives best in well drained, moist, fertile, loamy, and *calcareous* (mostly or partly composed of calcium carbonate) soil. Leaves are oval-oblong or elliptical in shape, 6–16 cm long by 3–6 cm wide. Have an obtuse rounded apex, a *cuneate* (triangular) base, *glabrous* (smooth), leathery, and pellucid-dotted on lower surface with 12–16 pairs of prominent veins. Are mid-rib depressed on upper surface; are glossy deep green when mature, and pale green when juvenile. Flowers are small, greenish white, 6–10 mm across, and appear in summer, followed by round berries.

FRUIT

Allspice is extensively used in Mexican and other Central American cuisines. Allspice is a small, *globose* (round) berry, 6 -10 mm in diameter, with a thick, woody, brittle *pericarp* (the walls of a ripened fruit). They're green while young, and turn dark purple when ripe. There is a thin layer of soft, sweet aromatic pulp around the seeds, and the skin is wrinkly. They are picked when green and unripe and are subsequently dried in the sun until they end up shrunken, hard berries. Allspice berries have a strong, spicy, pungent aroma and flavor that closely resemble a mixture of black pepper, nutmeg, clove, and cinnamon. Each berry has two hard, dark brown, *reniform* (kidney-shaped) seeds. Seeds are about the size of a peppercorn. Whole fruits have a longer shelf life than the powdered product and are more aromatic when ground just before use.

HEALTH AND BEAUTY BENEFITS OF ALLSPICE EO

Allspice essential oil is warm and fragrant in nature. Allspice constituency is about 4% oil. A substance in the oil, known as *eugenol*, has germ killing and pain reducing properties. The health benefits of allspice EO are tied to its properties as an *anesthetic* (numbing), *analgesic* (painkiller), *antioxidant*, *antiseptic* (reducing the possibility of infection, sepsis, or putrefaction), *carminative* (causing expulsion of gas from the stomach or bowel), *relaxant*, *rubefacient* (increasing blood circulation), *stimulant* (increasing activity of the central nervous system and the body), as well as a *tonic* (restoring or improving health or well-being).

USES

Allspice EO has traditionally been utilized to help treat a number of health conditions like arthritis, colds, depression, nervous exhaustion, fatigue, flatulence, viral infections, and toothaches. It's thought to aid in digestion, muscle relaxation, and muscle pain. It may even act as a cough suppressant. This particular essential oil is regarded as beneficial for elevating one's mood, easing stress, and promoting deeper sleep. Can be

added to massage blends. However, it should be noted that if used in higher concentrations or in poorly diluted combinations, it may irritate the skin. A patch test should be performed before applying. Allspice EO is frequently utilized during the winter and fall months using a diffuser or some other vaporizer since its scent resembles clove and cinnamon.

This particular essential oil features a number of healing and therapeutic uses in spite of not being well-liked by aromatherapy practitioners. These are described below:

1. STRONG BONES

Allspice contains a considerable amount of manganese which is essential for healthy bone growth. Manganese deficiency is tied to osteoporosis and arthritis. The manganese that we consume is stored in our bones, liver, and kidneys. Any deficiency of manganese could adversely affect these organs and their function. There's some research that recommends manganese supplements to improve *bone mineral density* (BMD).

2. ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

One of the most important features of allspice is its capacity to lower inflammation and relieve pain. The chemical compounds in this spice eliminate inflammation, making it a pretty good natural dietary addition to give you some relief from arthritis, gout, muscle aches, and even hemorrhoids. The anti-inflammatory quality of allspice may also ease cramps.

3. ANESTHETIC

Wherever applied, produces a numbing or even anesthetic effect, though only local, not of the central nervous system. This helps combat certain pains, for instance from neuralgia, pain from bone, joint, and muscular injuries, and pain from insect bites and stings.

4. ANALGESIC

The anesthetic property of allspice EO is responsible for its analgesic value. It can have a numbing effect on nerve endings, providing relief from pain stemming from headaches, sinusitis, cold, and flu. This is definitely much better than swallowing a bunch of pain killers (many of them narcotics), that cause long lasting damage to your heart, brain, and nervous system.

5. ANTIOXIDANT

This is the most sought after quality today. It's because antioxidants work wonders. *Antioxidants* fight aging by canceling free radicals and healing the damage previously caused by them. Allspice contains copper, a potent *antioxidant* that defends cells from damage by free radicals. It helps reduce the risk of macular degeneration, as well as

reducing the appearance of wrinkles and age spots. Allspice contains 0.553 mg of copper, 61.44% of the daily recommended value.

Free radicals (or oxidants) aren't just responsible for age related maladies such as loss of hair, decrease in vision as well as hearing, nervous disorders, macular and muscular degeneration, but can also result in certain kinds of cancer. Cancers like colon, intestinal and prostate. The antioxidant property of this EO can be of efficacy at countering these types of health risks. Research has shown that consuming calcium-rich foods is linked to a reduced risk of colon and rectal cancers. Allspice consists of 661 mg of calcium, 66.10% of the daily recommended value.

6. ANTISEPTIC

Even a small wound can be hazardous if it becomes septic, or develops tetanus. Sepsis and tetanus are infections of wounds from bacteria. They spread quickly through the entire body, leading to convulsions, cramping, pain, difficulty swallowing, *hydrophobia* (fear of water), and shortness of breath. The antiseptic property of allspice EO safeguards wounds from such infections as well as prevents bacterial development.

Allspice also has antibacterial and antifungal properties, mainly on stomach bacteria. In addition to assisting the gastrointestinal system function efficiently, it also protects the body from external attacks by creating a natural immune response.

7. CARMINATIVE

The *eugenol* found in allspice aid in eliminating digestive problems like constipation, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. While also encouraging regularity, which reduces bloating and excess flatulence. Intestinal gas can be extremely unpleasant and uncomfortable. Gas leads to indigestion, discomfort, stomachaches, bloating, rheumatism, cramps, chest pain, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

8. RELAXANT

This particular EO has a calming and soothing effect. This property can be of use to people struggling with insomnia.

9. RUBEFACIENT

Allspice has a *rubefacient* effect for comforting the stomach and facilitating healthy digestion. This revitalizing property boosts blood circulation to the skin as well as the entire body. It promotes circulation and digestion, therefore maintaining a healthy metabolism.

10. STIMULANT

Allspice contains a significant amount of copper and iron that are important components of red blood cells. The iron contained in allspice acts as a carrier of oxygen through the body and the brain, thereby increasing physical performance and mental alertness. Iron also functions in the formation of certain enzymes crucial for general metabolism.

Research conducted at the University of Melbourne recommends iron supplements for improving exercise performance in women.

11. HEART HEALTH

The potassium found in allspice has a positive effect on heart health, since it is a *vasodilator* (widens of blood vessels) and eases strain on the cardiovascular system. Thus reducing the risk of developing atherosclerosis, stroke, and heart attack.

12. GOOD FOR DIABETICS

Allspice has a very low glycemic index (GI), a number which represents the rise in blood sugar two hours after food consumption. Making it safe for people diagnosed with Type II diabetes. It balances out blood sugar levels when frequently consumed in the form of tea before meals.

For people diagnosed with Type II diabetes, sugar absorption and conversion to energy is hindered due to insulin resistance and a relative lack of insulin. Consuming foods with low GI helps control blood sugar levels post meal. Nearly 1 Tbsp or 6 grams of ground allspice has a GI of 1 on a scale of 250 (a typical target for a day is 100).

13. ORAL HEALTH

The *antimicrobial*, *antibacterial*, and *antiseptic* properties of allspice help maintain oral health. Gargling with a mixture of water, baking soda, and a few drops of this EO can lead to healthier teeth gums.

14. TONIC

This EO enhances the defense mechanisms of the body.

AYURVEDIC HEALTH AND BEAUTY BENEFITS

1. Allspice EO features a warm, spicy, and sweet aroma. It's utilized in spicy, manly fragrances.
2. It mixes effectively with orange, ginger, patchouli and other spice oils including cinnamon, cassia and clove.
3. Allspice can be used topically to help heal bruises and calm sore muscles & joints. To sooth muscles combine 2-3 drops of allspice EO along with 1 oz. of a carrier oil. Rub affected areas.
4. Diffuse to assist in relaxing air passages.
5. To elevate mood include a few drops in diffuser.
6. Apply a few drops to a clean cotton cloth and throw it in the dryer to add its essence to your linens and help encourage sleep.
7. Allspice oil should only be utilized when highly diluted, since it can inflame mucus membranes and also result in skin irritation.
8. Allspice oil is beneficial to the digestive system for rheumatism, dyspepsia, nausea, indigestion, colic, cramps, flatulence, and diarrhea.

9. It might help in cases of depression disorders, nervousness, tension, neuralgia, and stress.
10. A very small quantity of allspice EO can be used to massage onto the chest to alleviate a respiratory infection, or a serious cold.
11. In small doses it can help treat rheumatism, arthritis, stiffness, chills, cough, congestion, and bronchitis.
12. It can be beneficial in controlling your appetite for weight loss.
13. It can be beneficial in managing the blood sugar spikes in Type II diabetes.
14. It's a pretty good treatment for headaches, colds, flu, muscle tension, intestinal cramps, menstrual cramps, digestive problems, stress, fatigue, depressive disorders, and insomnia.
15. Inhalation of allspice EO can control coughing, and even speed recovery from colds. Add oil to a big bowl of boiling water. Mix thoroughly. Cover your head with a towel and breathe in the steam.
16. A compress with allspice EO can alleviate headaches. Mix oil with water. Soak a cloth with it and place on your forehead.
17. Allspice EO can be efficient in relieving moderate toothache pain. The *eugenol* in allspice has *germicidal* properties which are helpful in maintaining healthy teeth and gums.
18. A hot bath with allspice EO might help enhance blood circulation.
19. Allspice EO has gentle antibacterial qualities and can be utilized to clean laundry and the home.
20. The stimulating effect of allspice EO might help relieve mild depressive disorders, particularly when it is combined with Lavender and Bergamot.
21. A hot bath containing allspice EO before bed can have a relaxing effect and may even promote restful sleep.
22. "Pru" is a traditional therapeutic drink made from the *decoction* (extraction method by mashing and boiling) of three species of plants: *Gouania polygamy* (Jacq.), *Smilax domingensis* Willd., and *Pimenta dioica*. Followed by fermentation with sugar. It's said to have *hypotensive* (lowering blood pressure), *stomachic* (medicine that stimulates gastric activity), *depurative* (a purifying and purgative substance), and *diuretic* (a substance that increases production of urine) properties.

OTHER FACTS

- a) Apart from the food industry, essential oil of allspice's leaf and fruit is used in medicine, cosmetics, and perfumery (especially aftershaves and deodorants).
- b) Allspice is used in ointments, a bath additive, and occasionally included in over the counter (OTC) medicines to increase their flavor.
- c) The pre-Columbian Mayan civilization used it to embalm their dead.

- d) The bark and leaves of allspice contain tannin and are used for tanning purposes.
- e) The wood of the allspice tree, which is hard with a smooth texture and a dark to light salmon color, is used for making walking sticks and umbrellas.
- f) Allspice has *insecticidal* (kills insects and other arthropods) and *nematicidal* (kills nematodes parasitic to plants) activity and is probable to be used as a *termiticide* (a pesticide used to kill termites) and *nematicide* (a chemical pesticide).
- g) Studies show that allspice EO can be used as an effective, natural, nontoxic alternate *acaricide* (pesticides that kill members of the arachnid subclass Acari that includes ticks and mites) for the control of the cattle tick, *microplus*.

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Apart from its strong, spicy, pungent smell and slightly peppery taste, allspice is a good source of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. Just 100 grams of (whole) allspice contains 2.943 mg of Manganese, 7.06 mg of Iron, 661 mg of Calcium, 0.553 mg of Copper, 21.6 g of total dietary fiber, 72.12 g of carbohydrate, 39.2 mg of Vitamin C, 135 mg of Magnesium, 8.69 g of fat, and 1044 mg of Potassium.

PRECAUTIONS

- Excessive usage of allspice may result in seizures, nausea, appetite loss, vomiting, and stomach discomfort.
- Never to mix EOs with drugs, as it could lead to unwanted side effects.
- Avoid taking EOs with mineral supplements, especially iron.
- Allspice should not be used to treat long-term digestive illnesses like duodenal ulcers, acid reflux, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, and diverticulosis.
- People with history of cancer or those people who are a risk of cancer shouldn't use this herb as Eugenol, an ingredient present in it, may encourage cancer.
- Excessive usage of allspice EO could result in rashes, skin and mucus membrane irritation. Individuals with skin allergies should avoid this EO.
- Allspice should not be consumed while pregnant or breastfeeding.

BUYING AND STORING ALLSPICE

It is best to buy allspice in whole berry form, since powdered allspice has a tendency to lose its flavor and fragrance quickly. You can easily grind the berries, simply by using a pepper mill, coffee grinder, or even a mortar and pestle. Whole berries might stay fresher longer if kept in an airtight glass jar away from sunlight.

STORAGE TIPS

Allspice can be purchased in whole berry, powder, or oil form depending on individuals' preference. However, whole berries will keep for a longer period and produce much more flavor when ground right before using.

Allspice whole, powdered, or EO should be kept in cool, dry place away from light. In powder form, it will remain fresh for nearly 6 months, and in its whole or oil form, it may last as long as 1 year.