

Anise Health and Beauty Benefits

ANISE QUICK FACTS

Name	Anise
Scientific Name	<i>Pimpinella Anisum</i>
Common Names	Aniseed, sweet cumin
Origin	Egypt, Greece, Crete and Asia Minor. Was cultivated by the ancient Egyptians
Plant	<i>Urbelliferous</i> annual
Soil	Prefers a fairly rich, well-drained soil in full sun
Size	1–3 ft. (0.3–1 m) in height
Root	Taproot
Leaf	Leaves at the base of the plant are about 3/8–2 in (1–5 cm) long and lobed, while leaves high on the stems are feathery, pinnate, divided into numerous smaller leaflets
Flower	Dainty, white, approximately 1/8 in (3 mm) in diameter, produced in dense umbels
Fruit Color	Bright olive-green to grey-brown
Fruit Shape & Size	Oblong or curved, crescent shaped, about 0.125 in (3 mm) long with fine stripes
Flavor/Aroma	Distinctive licorice flavor
Calories	23 Kcal/cup
Major nutrients	Iron (31.00%), Copper (6.78%), Manganese (6.70%), Calcium (4.30%), Phosphorus (4.14%)
Health benefits	Benefits metabolism and improves digestion, provides pain relief, stimulates the pancreas, is an antioxidant, expectorant and antiepileptic, regulates menstruation and menstrual disorders, benefits reproductive health, baby's health, boosts lactation, benefits the heart, benefits oral health, benefits respiratory health, used in skin remedies, treats head lice, microbial infections and diseases, male sexual dysfunction, thrombosis, seizures and convulsions, asthma, insomnia, and cataracts.

ABOUT ANISE

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*), also called *aniseed* or (rarely) *anix*, is a dainty, white-flowered annual plant in the family *Apiaceae*. The *Pimpinella* species is not to be confused with star anise (*Illicium verum*), or with Japanese star anise (*Illicium anisatum*). *Pimpinella anisum* is native to the eastern Mediterranean region (Egypt, Greece, Crete) and Southwest Asia. The name "anise" is derived through Old French from the Latin word, *anisum*, or Greek, *anison*, referring to dill.

The anise plant is part of the *umbelliferous* group which also includes cumin, fennel, caraway, and dill. It is an herbaceous annual plant growing to over 3 ft.

(0.9 m) tall. Slim, spindle-shaped roots support grooved stems. The leaves at the base of the plant are simple, $\frac{3}{8}$ –2 in (1–5 cm) long and shallowly lobed, while leaves higher on the stems are feathery pinnate, divided into numerous small leaflets. During the months of July and August, the plant produces dense umbels (flower clusters that spring from a common center) that are either white or yellow, and approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) in diameter. From the end of August through September, the plant produces fruit that is an oblong dry schizocarp, $\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in (3–6 mm) long, usually called "aniseed," that is generally gathered in the summertime.

Anise is a food plant for the larvae of some *Lepidoptera* species (butterflies and moths), including the lime-speck pug and wormwood pug. Anise plants grow best in light, fertile, well-drained soil. The seeds should be planted as soon as the ground warms up in spring. Because the plants have a taproot, they do not transplant well after being established, so they should either be started in their final location or be transplanted while the seedlings are still small.

Anise was first cultivated in Egypt and the Middle East, and was brought to Europe for its medicinal value. It has been cultivated in Egypt for approximately 4,000 years. It is now widely cultivated in warm climates all over the world.

Western cuisines have long used anise to flavor dishes, drinks, and candies. The flavor and aroma of its seeds share similarities with other spices, such as star anise, fennel, and licorice. The word is used for both the species of herb and its licorice-like flavor. It has volatile oils, the polymers of *anethole*, *dianethole* and *photoanethole*, *coumarins*, *flavonoids*, *phenylpropanoids*, fatty acids, *sterols*, proteins, and carbohydrates. The most powerful flavor component of the essential oil of anise, *anethole*, is found in both anise and an unrelated spice indigenous to northern China called star anise (*Illicium verum*) widely used in South Asian, Southeast Asian, and East Asian dishes. Star anise is considerably less expensive to produce, and has gradually displaced *P. anisum* in Western markets. While formerly produced in larger quantities, by 1999 world production of the essential oil of anise was only 8 tons, compared to 400 tons of star anise.

It is revered for its sweet aroma and pleasantly fragrant taste, which makes it a great flavoring agent in culinary delicacies, especially around the Mediterranean. As an herb, it is used in curries, bread, soups, baked goods, desserts, pickles, egg dishes, and alcoholic as well as non-alcoholic beverages.

USES

CULINARY

Anise is sweet and very aromatic, distinguished by its characteristic flavor. The seeds, whole or ground, are used for preparation of teas and tisanes (alone or in combination with other aromatic herbs), as well as in a wide variety of regional and ethnic confectioneries, including black jelly beans, British aniseed balls and *Troach drops*, Australian *humbugs*, New Zealand *aniseed wheels*, Italian *pizzelle*, German *Pfeffernüsse* and *Springerle*, Austrian *Anisbögen*, Dutch *muisjes*, New Mexican *bizcochitos*, and Peruvian *picarones*. It is a key ingredient

in Mexican *atole de anís* and *champurrado*, which is similar to hot chocolate, and it is taken as a digestive after meals in India and Pakistan.

The ancient Romans often served spiced cakes with aniseed called *mustaceoe* at the end of feasts as a digestive. This tradition of serving cake at the end of festivities is the basis for the tradition of serving cake at weddings.

LIQUOR

Anise is used to flavor Greek *ouzo*; Italian *sambuca*; Bulgarian and Macedonian *mastika*; French *absinthe*, *anisette*, and *pastis*; Spanish *Anís del Mono*, *Anísado* and *Herbs de Majorca*; Turkish and Armenian *rakı*; Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian, and Israeli *arak*; and Algerian *Anisette Cristal*. Outside the Mediterranean region, it is found in Colombian *aguardiente*, and Mexican *Xtabentún*. These liquors are clear, but on addition of water become cloudy, a phenomenon known as the ouzo effect.

Anise is used together with other herbs and spices in some root beers, such as Virgil's in the United States.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

The main use of anise in traditional European herbal medicine was for its carminative effect (reducing flatulence), as noted by John Gerard in his *Great Herball*, an early encyclopedia of herbal medicine:

“The seed wasteth and consumeth winde, and is good against belchings and upbraidings of the stomacke, alaieth gripings of the belly, provoketh urine gently, maketh abundance of milke, and stirreth up bodily lust: it staieth the laske (diarrhea), and also the white flux (leukorrhea) in women.”

According to Pliny the Elder, anise was used as a cure for sleeplessness, chewed with alexanders and a little honey in the morning to freshen the breath, and, when mixed with wine, as a remedy for asp bites. In 19th-century medicine, anise was prepared as *aqua anisi* ("Water of Anise") in doses of an ounce or more and as *spiritus anisi* ("Spirit of Anise") in doses of 5–20 minims. In Turkish folk medicine, its seeds have been used as an appetite stimulant, tranquilizer, and diuretic.

OTHER USES

Builders of steam locomotives in Britain incorporated capsules of aniseed oil into white metal plain bearings, so the distinctive smell would give warning in case of overheating. Anise can be made into a liquid scent and is used for both drag hunting and fishing. It is put on fishing lures to attract fish.

HISTORY OF ANISE

Evidence of its cultivation was documented in an Egyptian papyrus dating back to 2,000 BC. Medicinal use of anise was also documented in Pharaonic medical texts when it was utilized to

relieve tooth aches and as a diuretic. In ancient Greece, Hippocrates wrote about the benefits of anise for the respiratory system. Its licorice flavor makes ideal as a breath freshener.

During the middle Ages, anise was used together with honey and vinegar, like a gargle to treat tonsillitis.

Around the 16th century, in Europe, anise was used to lure and trap mice. Also during the 16th century, it was brought to the New World by Spanish colonists. Since then, it's been used throughout Latin American in cuisine and as a therapeutic herb.

HEALTH BENEFIT OF ANISE

Some research suggests that aniseed can help treat or alleviate the following health problems:

1. IMPROVES DIGESTION

Anise can be therapeutic for the gastro-intestinal system. It enhances digestion and treats digestive problems by maintaining balance in the digestive system. It's good for treating vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain, gas, and gastritis. Additionally, it's a good appetite stimulant. For more detail on the subject, visit health and well-being website [Buffedd](#).

2. CATARACTS

Aniseed can be used to relieve the eye pressure from cataracts.

3. INSOMNIA

Aniseed tea can treat sleeping disorders, when drunk after meals and even before bed. Take care not to boil aniseed too long since its essential oil will vaporize and its flavor will become bitter; and it will lose most of its therapeutic properties. To improve the taste without losing the herbs' qualities, you could add honey as soon as the tea is brewed and has cooled.

4. ASTHMA

Aniseed has expectorative qualities, and is great for managing coughs and asthma.

5. CONVULSIONS

Aniseed can prevent convulsions, even when convulsions are caused by electroshock or by *pentylentetrazole* (PTZ).

6. MICROBIAL INFECTIONS AND DISEASES

Aniseed extract has been found to hinder the development and spread of bacterial strains, viruses, and fungi. It can help avoid and manage microbial infections and the illnesses brought on by them.

7. ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION AND MENSTRUAL DISORDERS

Aniseed contains *anethole*, a main element in its essential oil. Anethole is a *phytoestrogen*. Derivatives of anethole, *dianethole* and *photoanethole* can assist in reducing symptoms of erectile dysfunction, it can boost the production of breast milk, and regulate menstruation.

8. ANISE FOR BOOSTING LACTATION

The herb can also be used to promote lactation in breastfeeding mothers. Anise consists of *diantheole* and *photoantheole*, both of which have gentle estrogenic effects that improve lactation. These estrogenic effects can also boost libido and relieve symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS). This herb should not be used during pregnancy and nursing mothers should seek advice from their physician before using.

9. HEAD LICE

Aniseed can be applied topically as an insecticide to treat lice, mites, and vermin. Additionally, this herb has fungicidal properties.

10. USE AS AN EXPECTORANT

Aniseed can enhance respiratory health. It has mild expectorant qualities such that it is often used in manufacturing lozenges and cough medicine. Additionally it can offer relief from the symptoms of the common cold, asthma, bronchitis, influenza, pneumonia, and sinusitis.

11. RESPIRATORY HEALTH

Aniseed can function as an expectorant. It will help loosen phlegm in the throat and lungs. It is also efficacious for the treatment of asthma. It has been used as an ingredient in cough medicine. In addition, it can be beneficial in treating various other upper respiratory problems like bronchitis, sinusitis, influenza, and pneumonia.

12. ORAL HEALTH

One of the health benefits of aniseed is its maintaining oral health. It has antimicrobial and antibacterial properties that make an ideal component for homemade mouthwash. It can combat bad breath and reduce swelling too.

13. BABIES' HEALTH

Using aniseed in infants can treat colic and hiccups.

14. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Aniseed is purported to have aphrodisiac qualities that improve libido. Drinking one glass of water infused with the crushed seeds every night may improve one's sex drive. It's thought that anise can ease the symptoms of "male menopause" as well as erectile dysfunction.

15. REGULATING MENSTRUATION

The estrogenic effect of anise can help regulate menstruation and improve reproductive health. The antispasmodic properties of anise can ease cramps and aid birth. *Shatapushpa churna* (aniseed powder) is recognized as effective treatment of *Hypermenorrhea* (a menstrual disorder).

16. MICROBIAL INFECTIONS AND DISEASES

There has been some research that supports the scientific notion of aniseed extract preventing the development of numerous strains of bacteria, viruses, and fungi. It has been shown to prevent the development and spread of microbial infections.

17. ANTIOXIDANT

Anise contains chemical compounds that display antioxidant properties as well as other health benefits.

18. PANCREAS

The pancreas is a crucial organ for the management of insulin and other hormones used in metabolism. Aniseed has been shown to support the function of the pancreas. It can reduce the chances of developing diabetes.

19. METABOLISM

The detoxifying effects of aniseed promotes proper metabolism by ridding the body of harmful toxins.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL USES

- a) To improve digestion.
- b) When ingested, it can be helpful in the treatment of asthma, whooping cough and other upper respiratory conditions.
- c) Drinking anise tea or using anise essential oil can relieve digestive disorders such as gas, bloating, colic, nausea, and indigestion.
- d) A strong decoction of the seeds can be applied topically to swollen nursing breasts or to stimulate lactation.
- e) Seeds are chewed after meals in India and Pakistan to freshen breath.
- f) It can be used in mouthwash or tea to improve bad breath.
- g) Drinking aniseed tea can open up mucous membranes and relieve a running nose.
- h) Aniseed can be used to alleviate a persistent cough.
- i) Aniseed tea can help alleviate the symptoms of menopause.
- j) Tea made from anise can help soothe morning sickness during pregnancy.
- k) Drinking aniseed tea to relieve a sore throat.

AYURVEDIC BENEFITS OF ANISE

Aniseed and its essential oil have applications in several traditional medicines due to their health benefits.

1. Stir a teaspoon of crushed aniseed in a cup of boiling water. Steep for ten minutes. Drink this tea after a meal. The tea will relax you, aid digestion, and prevent gas.
2. Use aniseed in baking desserts like pastries, cakes, and cookies. The mild licorice flavor will boost the sweetness. In cooking, mix anise with cinnamon. Their flavors enhance one another.

3. It's safe to feed aniseed to dogs. Dogs like the aroma of anise as much as cats like the scent of catnip.
4. Put a little anise at the end of a fishing lure. The sweet, powerful aroma attracts fish. You can also use anise in mouse traps to attract mice. Be cautious when using in mousetraps in case you have dogs.
5. Combine anise with coriander, fennel and sweetened vodka. These are the makings of a sweet liqueur known as *anisette*.
6. Anise is frequently used to improve appetite, especially in patients experiencing severe illness. Just sip anise tea or chew the seeds before meals. The herb promotes the secretion of digestive enzymes.
7. Anise concoctions are a fantastic treatment for asthma, bronchitis, and cough as well as digestive complaints like gas, bloating, colicky stomach, nausea, and indigestion.
8. The decoction extracted from the seeds has been used by nursing mothers to improve lactation.
9. Aniseed water is a gentle decongestant for runny nose in infants.
10. The seeds are usually chewed after meals in India to freshen breath.

OTHER FACTS

- The powdered seeds can be used as a *dentifrice* (tooth paste) and mouthwash.
- The plant is an ingredient in potpourri.
- The plant can be used as an insect repellent, although it is also said to attract mice.
- A spray made by boiling one part coriander leaves, one part aniseed and two parts water is effective against red spider mites and woolly aphids in the garden.

BUYING ANISE

Anise can be found dried or powdered at most grocery stores year round. For authenticity, you can also purchase aniseed from organic herb shops. It is best to purchase it in small quantities since it can lose flavor and aroma rapidly.

Fresh seeds will release a great rich fragrance when crushed between index finger and thumb. Avoid seeds that have broken tips or those from old stocks since they will contain significantly less essential oil.

STORING ANISE

Store anise in airtight containers in a cool, dry place and away from direct sunlight. When stored properly, anise will remain fresh for around 12 months. However, it is better to use it as soon as possible because it loses its flavor and aroma rapidly.

CULINARY USES

Aniseed, its essential oil, and its fresh young foliage are all used in cooking. Their flavor is enhanced by dry toasting the seeds. Anise is used in sweet dishes into which it imparts sweet

aromatic flavor. The seeds, whole or freshly ground into powder, should be added to the recipe at the last moment to prevent the evaporation of the volatile organic compounds within them.

The leaves have a sweet licorice flavor; they are refreshing to chew, and add a mild flavor profile to salads, puddings, soups, sauces, stews, etc.

Anise's aromatic seeds can be eaten raw or used to add flavor to raw and cooked foods such as curries, soups, bread, and desserts like confectionary, pies and cakes. Anise is also widely used in nonalcoholic beverages, and liqueurs like *anissette*. Other popular aniseed flavored drinks are Pernod, French Pastis, and Spanish Ojen.

Aniseed and its oil have been used in the preparation of sweet dishes in many parts of Asia. Star anise (bajiao) is probably the most significant spice in Chinese cuisine. It's also the main component in Chinese five spice powder combined with cloves, cinnamon, huajiao (Sichuan pepper) and ground fennel seeds.

Both the leaves and the seeds can be brewed into a sweet licorice tea. Aniseed, whole or ground, can also be used to prepare herbal teas and tisanes that can help relieve mild physical ailments.

ANISE RECIPES

BASIC ANISE COOKIES

Mix 1 ½ teaspoon aniseed into a 17 ½ ounce package of sugar cookie mix (or homemade sugar cookie recipe) and bake according to directions.

ANISE LIQUEUR

Mix ¼ cup fresh anise leaves or 2 tablespoons crushed aniseed with 1 quart plain vodka or brandy. Cap bottle and steep for 24 hours. Strain a small quantity and taste. Continue to steep until preferred flavor strength is attained.

ANISE DIP

Combine 1 cup cream cheese, 1 tablespoon minced fresh anise leaves, ½ teaspoon ground aniseed, and ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard. Mix well and refrigerate until needed.

ANISE TEA

Place one teaspoon whole aniseed together with the tea leaves into the tea ball and steep in boiling water for around three minutes, or until preferred flavor is attained.

PRECAUTIONS

- Pregnant women should avoid the use and consumption of anise seeds.
- Be aware that aniseed can cause weight gain from water and/or sodium retention.
- Use this herb cautiously in case of contact dermatitis or an allergic reaction.

ANISE SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Rank	Scientific & Common Name
Scientific Name	<i>Pimpinella Anisum</i>
Kingdom	<i>Plantae</i> (Plants)
Subkingdom	<i>Tracheobionta</i> (Vascular plants)
Infrakingdom	<i>Streptophyta</i> (land plants)
Superdivision	<i>Spermatophytes</i> (Seed plants)
Division	<i>Magnoliophytes</i> (Flowering plants)
Class	<i>Magnoliopsida</i> (<i>Dicotyledons</i>)
Subclass	<i>Rosidae</i>
Order	<i>Apiales</i>
Family	<i>Apiaceae Umbelliferae</i> (Carrot family)
Genus	<i>Pimpinella</i> L. (<i>burnet saxifrage</i>)
Species	<i>Pimpinella Anisum</i> L. (<i>anise burnet saxifrage</i>)
Synonyms	<i>Anisum odoratum</i> Raf. <i>Anisum officinale</i> DC. <i>Anisum officinarum</i> Moench <i>Anisum vulgare</i> Gaertn. <i>Apium anisum</i> (L.) Crantz <i>Carum anisum</i> (L.) Baill. <i>Pimpinele anisa</i> St.-Lag. <i>Ptychotis vargasiana</i> DC. <i>Selinum anisum</i> (L.) E.H.L. Krause <i>Seseli gilliesii</i> Hook. & Arn. <i>Sison anisum</i> (L.) Spreng. <i>Tragium anisum</i> (L.) Link

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Serving Size	1 Tbsp. whole 6.7 g	
Calories	23 Kcal.	
Calories from Fat	9.63 Kcal.	
Proximity	Amount	% DV
Water	0.64 g	N/D
Energy	23 Kcal	N/D
Energy	95 kJ	N/D
Protein	1.18 g	2.36%
Total Fat (lipid)	1.07 g	3.06%
Ash	0.47 g	N/D
Carbohydrate	3.35 g	2.58%
Total dietary Fiber	1 g	2.63%
Minerals	Amount	% DV
Calcium, Ca	43 mg	4.30%
Iron, Fe	2.48 mg	31.00%

Magnesium, Mg	11 mg	2.62%
Phosphorus, P	29 mg	4.14%
Potassium, K	97 mg	2.06%
Sodium, Na	1 mg	0.07%
Zinc, Zn	0.36 mg	3.27%
Copper, Cu	0.061 mg	6.78%
Manganese, Mn	0.154 mg	6.70%
Selenium, Se	0.3 mcg	0.55%
Vitamins	Amount	% DV
<i>Water soluble Vitamins</i>		
Vitamin B1 (Thiamin)	0.023 mg	1.92%
Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)	0.019 mg	1.46%
Vitamin B3 (Niacin)	0.205 mg	1.28%
Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic acid)	0.053 mg	1.06%
Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)	0.044 mg	3.38%
Vitamin B9 (Folate)	1 mcg	0.25%
Folate, food	1 mcg	N/D
Folate, DEF	1 mcg	N/D
Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid)	1.4 mg	1.56%
<i>Fat soluble Vitamins</i>		
Vitamin A, RAE	1 mcg	0.14%
Vitamin A, IU	21 IU	N/D
Lipids	Amount	% DV
Fatty acids, total saturated	0.039 g	N/D
Fatty acids, total monounsaturated	0.655 g	N/D
Oleic acid 18:1 (<i>octadecenoic acid</i>)	0.655 g	N/D
Fatty acids, total polyunsaturated	0.211 g	N/D
Linoleic acid 18:2 (<i>octadecadienoic acid</i>)	0.211 g	N/D

**Above mentioned Percent Daily Values (%DVs) are based on 2,000 calorie diet intake. Daily values (DVs) may be different depending upon your daily calorie needs. Mentioned values are recommended by a U.S. Department of Agriculture. They are not healthbenefitstimes.com recommendations. Calculations are based on average age of 19 to 50 years and weighs 194 lbs.*

SOURCES:

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