

SPICES COME FROM MANY PLANTS AND VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Four Corners of World Are Called Upon to Supply American Household.

The ordinary housewife knows so little about the origin of her spices and flavoring agents, that she cannot judge whether they are fresh or stale. A young woman was heard to remark recently that she would like to see a pepper tree—especially a white pepper tree—which she was sure must be "prettier than a black pepper tree." For her benefit and that of others we will say that pepper is the dried berry of a climbing plant indigenous to India. Growing in spike formation, the peppers are picked when red, dried on mats, where they turn black and acrid in taste. White peppers are the black ones with the skin removed by a steeping process, which leaves them more delicate in flavor. This is done in Siam and China.

Cayenne—capsicum—made of ripe red peppers, is an American product, but some also comes here from Zanzibar, Singapore, Sumatra, Malabar, Lampong and Tellicherry are the main pepper reports. Paprika, made of the dark red peppers of the tropics, coming from Spain, is sweet and mild; from Hungary it has a pungent odor, but is also mild. Ginger is the root stock of an annual herb grown in India and China. The plant grows three feet high, the root is dug when it is three years old, and the stalk is withered.

Black ginger is made by scalding fresh roots—common process in Africa and India to prevent sprouting. White ginger is also a treated product. That from Jamaica, Japan and Cochin, China, is the best.

Green ginger is the undried root

and we use it in preserving.

Ground ginger is pale yellow, has a pungent odor and biting taste. When stale the color fades, it grows soggy, and loses the bite.

Cinnamon and cassia are a species of laurel. The quill-like rolls are made from the inside bark of the tree, and the best is from Ceylon. Cassia bark is darker in color, thicker, and lacks the delicate flavor of the other.

Nutmegs and mace are real West Indians. The tree grows 20 to 30 feet tall. The blossom is succeeded by a fruit, three inches long and two inches in diameter, which ripens and bursts like a chestnut burr. The nutmeg inside is covered with a network fiber, which is the mace. The best comes from the West Indies and Mascasses.

Allspice is the berry of the pimento an evergreen tree related to the myrtle of the West Indies. The tree flowers twice a year, though it yields but one crop of berries. Picked before they ripen, the berries are dried whole.

Cloves are the flower buds of a tropical evergreen tree. The flowers grow in clusters and when the first green buds turn red they are picked and dried. Cloves from Zanzibar and China are largest and best.

Among the flavoring seeds are the caraway from northern Europe and America, cardamons from Java, poppy seeds from China, pumpkin, lotus and coriander seeds from several far-eastern countries. Mustard seeds from California and Europe, and fennel seeds from the United States. Sesame seed, and sweet flavoring seed, are Japanese products—the latter is used by the Japanese in their rice cakes.

The plant producing the vanilla bean is related to the orchid, and is abundant in South and Central America. In Mexico the beans reach the greatest and finest flavor. When gathered, the beans are a pale, greenish yellow, fleshy and odorless. They are dried, bundled and sent to market.

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