

Turmeric Root



WHAT IS TURMERIC?

Turmeric is a common spice derived from the root of the turmeric plant much like ginger root. Turmeric is boiled, dried and powdered for use in spices, teas or extract. It is the major spice in curry powder, giving curry its distinctive yellow color. For this reason, turmeric is sometimes referred to as Indian saffron.

The compound responsible for the color, curcumin (*ker-KEU-man*), has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. Curcumin is the active ingredient in turmeric and has been studied extensively for its many health benefits. Keep in mind, most research is focused on curcumin, which makes up only 2-5% of turmeric, and not on the remaining 95-98% of other ingredients in turmeric root.

POTENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Curcumin has been used for over 5000 years for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which are beneficial for many of today's chronic diseases.

Heart Disease

- ◆ Inhibits the formation of both cholesterol and triglycerides
- ◆ Reduces blood clot formation and plaque buildup
- ◆ Reduces inflammation and improves endothelial function (blood vessels)
- ◆ Has been shown to reduce the number of heart attacks suffered by bypass patients after surgery

Cancer

- ◆ Reduces skin irritation that often occur with cancer radiation treatments
- ◆ Studies in laboratory animals show potential benefits for prevention and slowing growth of cancer
- ◆ Studies in humans are ongoing

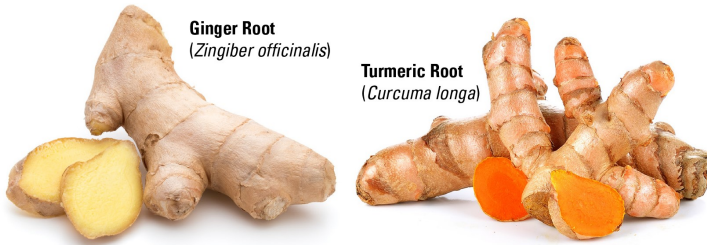
Alzheimer's and Other Dementia

- ◆ Improves cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients
- ◆ Reduces inflammation of neurons
- ◆ Protects against oxidative damage
- ◆ Reduce formation of plaques because curcumin can bind to beta-amyloid fibrils

Other

- ◆ Has been shown to control knee pain from osteoarthritis as effectively as ibuprofen
- ◆ Is not only a powerful antioxidant, but also has been seen to boost the body's own anti-oxidant enzymes
- ◆ May help to improve absorption of nutrients like beta-carotene from carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, etc
- ◆ Diseases in which inflammation plays a major role may benefit from curcumin therapy including:
 - ◆ AIDS
 - ◆ Allergies
 - ◆ Asthma
 - ◆ Bronchitis
 - ◆ Cerebral injury
 - ◆ Colitis
 - ◆ Depression
 - ◆ Diabetes
 - ◆ Fatigue
 - ◆ Epilepsy
 - ◆ Parkinson's
 - ◆ Rheumatoid arthritis





Ginger Root
(*Zingiber officinalis*)

Turmeric Root
(*Curcuma longa*)

FRESH or POWDERED

- ◆ You can purchase turmeric root in the produce section of most grocery stores. Look for a reddish-orange knobby root similar to ginger root but smaller
- ◆ Powdered turmeric is available in the bottled spice section. Seek out glass over plastic containers. You can also buy in bulk from spice distributors
- ◆ 1" of fresh turmeric (skinned, sliced and chopped) is equivalent to 1 tsp powdered

SAFETY

- ◆ Curcumin has been found safe in doses up to 10 g/day (2 tsp). Since curcumin is only 2-5% of turmeric, 1 teaspoon of turmeric/day will provide very safe but effective amounts of curcumin
- ◆ Curcumin has poor absorption in the gut. A pinch of black pepper per teaspoon of turmeric increases the amount of curcumin that can enter the blood stream
- ◆ Curcumin may interact with certain drugs such as blood-thinning agents, NSAIDS and reserpine. Let your doctor know if you are using turmeric regularly
- ◆ Some may experience side effects such as GI upset or skin rashes if applied directly to skin. Chronic use of curcumin may contribute to liver disease
- ◆ If considering taking turmeric or curcumin in supplement form, do not exceed recommended daily dose

REFERENCES

mayoclinic.,org
 mskcc.org/cancer
 ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2781139/
 ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2637808/
 Nutritionfacts.org

USING IN RECIPES

- ◆ Although turmeric is yellow in color and looks like curry powder, it is not spicy but has a mild pepper flavor
- ◆ Scrape off the peel of the turmeric root before chopping, cooking, steeping or tossing in smoothies
- ◆ Add turmeric to scrambled eggs, potatoes, carrots, rice, sautéed greens, soups, stews or chili



Warm and Spicy Turmeric Milk
(*thehappybear.ie*)

- 1 cup oat (or other non-dairy) milk
- 1/2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp ground cardamom (or 1 pod, crushed)
- 1 pinch ground ginger
- 1 star anise

Add all ingredients to a saucepan and whisk to combine. Heat on medium until bubbles. Remove from heat and cover. Let steep 2-3 minutes. Drain into cup. Sweeten if desired.

Golden Turmeric Tahini
(*yumly.com*)

Delicious on salads, rice bowls, roasted veggies and avocado toast

- 5 Tbsp tahini (ground sesame seeds)
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp water
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/8 tsp black pepper

Add all ingredients to a food processor and blend until smooth. Store in covered jar in the refrigerator.