

Spice Up the Holidays



Cinnamon: Whether you're mulling cider or baking snickerdoodles, cinnamon is a key to many holiday foods. But how can it improve your health? Well, cinnamon may have anti-inflammatory properties, aiding your body's resistance to both bacterial and fungal infections. It's even been useful in battling yeast infections. Plus, according to [Diabetics Care](#), cinnamon may help improve your blood glucose and blood lipid levels. Further research is needed, but the initial findings are promising.

Nutmeg: Like cinnamon, nutmeg also has antibacterial properties. In fact, it can cut down on the bacteria that builds up in your mouth and causes bad breath. Did you know that nutmeg and its oils can be ingredients in toothpaste? Plus, nutmeg can ease digestive distress and reduce flatulence. Be sure to eat nutmeg in small doses — a little bit goes a long way and too much is quite bad for you.



Ginger: When it comes to spices, we may very well have saved the best for last. Ginger is a powerhouse of health benefits, with many reputable studies backing up its great effects. Ginger can be used to reduce nausea and has been especially effective at reducing morning sickness in pregnant women. It also has anti-inflammatory properties that can reduce menstrual and joint pain.

Cranberries: Cranberries are the bee's knees. According to [NCCAM](#), "Historically, cranberry fruits and leaves were used for a variety of problems, such as wounds, urinary disorders, diarrhea, diabetes, stomach ailments, and liver problems. More recently, cranberry has been used as a folk or traditional remedy for urinary tract infections [UTIs] or Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infections that can lead to stomach ulcers, or to prevent dental plaque. Cranberry has also been reported to have antioxidant and anticancer activity." [MedlinePlus](#) backs up those statements, maintaining, " Research shows that drinking cranberry juice cocktail can help prevent repeated UTIs in older women and pregnant women. Additional research shows that drinking cranberry juice can also help prevent UTIs in hospitalized patients. [...] Cranberry, as well as many other fruits and vegetables, contains significant amounts of salicylic acid, which is an important ingredient in aspirin. Drinking cranberry juice regularly increases the amount of salicylic acid in the body. Salicylic acid can reduce swelling, prevent blood clots, and can have anti-tumor effects."



Oranges: Oranges are well-known for their high vitamin C content, but do you know what the benefits of that content are? Vitamin C is key to the healing of wounds, along with the growth and repair of cells and tissues. It also helps block some of the damage that free radicals can cause. That's because it's an antioxidant. Flavanones in oranges may also help reduce blood pressure. Oranges are great. Eat the whole fruit instead of juice for the full complement of nutrients and fiber.

Tea: Now when it comes to health benefits for the holidays, this time we're focusing on black tea. According to [MedlinePlus](#), "Black tea is used for improving mental alertness as well as learning, memory and information processing skills. It is also used for treating headache and low blood pressure; preventing heart disease, including "hardening of the arteries" (atherosclerosis) and heart attack.