

CUMIN



Cumin is a close relative of Coriander, Dill, Fennel etc., and is a native of Egypt which now grows all round the Mediterranean and in the Far East. The seeds are used to distil the essential oil, which is colourless initially but yellows with age. The aroma is slightly bitter, musky and aromatic, with a slight resemblance to aniseed.

The chief chemical constituents are cuminol, varying from about 35% to 50%, with cymene, pinene and terpineol. Cumin is another of the spices which has been used since antiquity, Both the Egyptians and the Hebrews used large quantities for flavouring food and as a digestive aid. Nowadays, it is probably best known as an ingredient of curry, to which it gives not only flavour but a deep yellow colour.

In common with almost all the Umbelliferae family, Cumin is a good aperitif, a digestive aid and carminative. The essential oil is a digestive stimulant and tonic, and helpful when the digestion is sluggish- It is antispasmodic, and relieves griping pains in the abdomen which may accompany flatulence and

diarrhoea.

Cumin is also a more general tonic and stimulant, acting particularly on the heart and nervous system, and it may possibly have some aphrodisiac action. It needs, however, to be used with great care, as it may cause sensitisation of the skin in some people. In most cases it would be wiser to use Coriander which has very similar properties.

