



## Book Review

### **Handbook of spices, seasoning, and flavorings**

Susheela Raghavan Uhl, TECHNOMIC Publishing Co., Inc., Lancaster, USA, 2000, xv + 329 pp, \$79.95, ISBN 1-56676-931-0

Throughout history, various parts of plants have been cultivated and used for their aromatic, fragrant, pungent or other desirable properties. In this handbook, the term 'spice' is used to refer to all of the edible parts of a plant used for flavouring foods, including roots, stems, seeds, rhizomes and the leafy plant parts usually referred to as herbs. Spices are the building blocks of flavours, they create the desired taste and characterise cuisines. A food developer needs technical knowledge, creative talent, and an understanding of the cultural aspects of the consumer in order to develop successful products. This handbook successfully incorporates information about spices with culinary concepts, food history, market trends, and the cultural and flavour profiles of different ethnic populations and different regions of the globe.

The introductory chapter provides a historical overview of spices and the spice trade. The second chapter discusses trends in the world of spices today, covering the growing demand for authenticity and the spices and flavourings of popular authentic ethnic cuisines. Current and emerging trends in the marketplace are presented, with a view to assisting food professionals with the development of new products with an ethnic flair. The third chapter covers the forms, functions and applications of spices. Spices originate in a variety of different forms depending on their source (e.g. seeds, leaves, buds, stems, fruit), and can be sold by suppliers in various forms (e.g. fresh, dried, whole, ground, crushed, pureed, as a paste, extract, essential oil or oleoresin). The original and supplied forms can affect how

a final product formulation is processed. The primary functions of spices include flavour, aroma, texture and colour modification, whilst the secondary functions include antimicrobial and antioxidant activity.

The fourth chapter is by far the largest and provides detailed descriptions of over sixty individual spices and seasonings, arranged alphabetically. Specific information provided includes scientific name, origin and varieties, common names, forms, physical and sensory properties, major chemical components, preparation and consumption, blends, therapeutic uses and folklore. Information on global traditionally popular ingredients and the increasingly important ethnic spices, herbs and seasonings crucial for creating ethnic, fusion, and regional food products, is provided in this chapter. The fifth chapter provides detailed technical and application information on emerging flavour contributors, including roots and rhizomes, flowers, wrappers, seafood flavourings, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and sweet and bitter flavourings. The final chapter covers emerging spice blends and seasonings, from Latin America, Asia, the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Africa, and North America.

This handbook provides detailed information on a wide variety of spices from around the world in a single, concise volume. It should be of value to food technologists and product developers, and to any individuals with interests in any aspects of food and beverage flavouring.

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