

Did You Know?



Anise, *Pimpinella anisum*

- Anise or aniseed is an annual plant prized for aromatic fruits, commonly called seeds.
- Anise, related to dill, cumin, caraway and fennel.
- Egyptians were reportedly the first to cultivate anise for use as a spice, though ancient culinary uses took place in Greece and Rome as well.
- The use of anise to aid digestion dates back to the Romans who ate anise seed cakes at the conclusion of feasts. It's use following celebrations led to the creation of special cakes following a wedding.
- Anise flavors a range of dishes from soups, salads, baked goods to meats, as well as curries, baked apples and cooked vegetables. It is also added to candies to give a pronounced licorice flavor.
- Tea can be made from the seeds and leaves.
- Used to flavor commercial liqueurs and liquors such as Ouzo, Pernod, Sambuca, Absinthe, and Pastis.
- Essential oil of anise is reportedly antibacterial, antiviral, insecticidal, as well as an expectorant, antispasmodic and has estrogenic effects.

The essential oils are used to add fragrance to soaps and perfumes. They are also used as an anti spoilage agent and preservative.

- Star anise is the fruit of a tree, *Illicium verum*, is star shaped and an entirely different plant with a similar flavor and aroma to *Pimpinella anisum*.
- Florence fennel or finocchio (the vegetable form of fennel), *Foeniculum vulgare*, also has a similar flavor to anise.
- Anise is easily grown in the garden with full sun, well-drained soil and about 120 frost-free days to set fruit (seeds).

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