



## Fennel : A spice from your garden



FLOWERING FENNEL

The conception of an Indian Restaurant is perhaps not complete unless in the final touches they

have a bowl of fennel seeds. For most it does not mean anything except a mouth freshener. However if you try to uncover the small veil of ignorance about this herb you would be introduced to a real wonder world full of its magical properties.

This flowering plant can also be planted for its beauty. An array of brightly lit flowers in the shape of umbrella with each twig bending forward as if to ask "How are you?"

provide a spectacular look to an eye. Fennel Seed generally called as (Sauf) in Indian language is widely used in India as an after-meal breath freshener. It also helps in digestion after a rich meal. The seeds have a fragrant odor and taste. When chewed the seeds taste like licorice.

Rich in a large number of trace minerals and oils the fennel seeds have been used for centuries for treating a large number of health issues.

## Mythology and Origin

As per Greek mythology fennel came from the giant fennel, Ferula Communis, that Bacchanalian God Dionysus (the Greek God of food & wine) & his followers were said to have come from. As per the myths fennel stalk carried the coal that passed down knowledge from the Gods to men at Olympus. It was stalk of fennel plant that Prometheus used to steal fire from the Gods. The ancient Greeks knew fennel by the name "MARATHON" as it grew in the field in which one of the great ancient battles the "Battle of Marathon" (490 BC) was fought.

## The Plant and the Family



Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare) is a perennial plant. It belongs to the "Apiaceae" family of herbs those include anise, caraway, celery, chervil, coriander, cumin, dill, and parsley. This popular family of culinary herbs are noted for the unique flavors they impart to various foods.

Fennel has a thick bright green rootstock and stout stems. The 4' to 5' feet tall plant has unique beauty

about it. The branched leaves bring forth bright golden flowers that blossom in July & early August with each having thirteen to twenty rays.

The leaves, bulb, and stalk of fennel resemble white celery and are all edible. The seeds are used in herbal medicines and as a spice in cooking.

## Healing Summary

Called the pearl of aphrodisiacs, recently a popular British concoction of fennel seeds, licorice root and water was named the "tonic for happy lovers".

As per Aurveda fennel is used to treat indigestion, flatulence, hic-

ups, colic, cramps, nausea, vomiting, excessive stomach acidity, breath freshener, treat gum disorders, diarrhea, increase peristalsis of the stomach and intestines, constipation, colon disorders, blood disorders and anemia, fatigue, lethargy and depression, giddiness of the

head, frenzy, epilepsy, earache and toothache, kidney and bladder infections, bedwetting, difficult or burning urination, gout, rheumatism, aching joints, hoarseness, sinus, congestion, expel mucus, coughs, sore throats, bronchitis, shortness of breath, emphysema, recovery from strokes, convul-

sion, nervous disorders, headaches and migraines, sciatica, relieve period pain and morning sickness, hernia, pain in testes, intestinal worms, increase libido to name a few. Recent researches have featured its benefits to the lungs, liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, and to help dissolve stones.

Commission E, an expert panel in Germany that evaluates the safety and effectiveness of herbs, endorses fennel for the treatment of digestive upsets, including indigestion, gas pains, irritable bowel syndrome, and infant colic. In Germany, fennel seed is approved for treating digestive problems such as flatulence, and mild spasms of the gastrointestinal tract. Fennel stimulates gastrointestinal motility, and at high concentrations it is anti-spasmodic.

## Health Benefits : Heart & Circulatory System

### Blood Pressure and Stokes:

Fennel is a very good source of folate, a vitamin B that is necessary for converting *homocysteine* into other, benign molecules. At high levels, homocysteine, can directly damage blood vessel walls, making it a significant risk factor for heart attack or strokes. Fennel is also a very

good source of potassium, a mineral that helps lower high blood pressure.

**Anemia:** Histidine ( an amino acid found in fennel ) & Iron, are helpful in treatment of anemia. Iron is chief constituent of haemoglobin. Histidine stimulates production of haemoglobin & also helps

forming other components of blood.

**Blood Cleanser :** A mix of crushed fennel seeds, ginger powder, dried catnip and peppermint taken before meals helps to clean the blood.

**Lowering Cholesterol :** The methanolic extract of fennel fruit have shown to help in-



FENNEL BULBS

crease HDL. A very good source of fiber, fennel bulb may help to reduce elevated cholesterol levels.

## Cancer Prevention

**Cancer Protection :** In animal studies the *anethole* in fennel has repeatedly shown to reduce inflammation & help prevent the occurrence of cancer. Other phytochemicals namely phthalides, polyacetylenes, and coumarins provide the consumer, protection against cancer. As a very good source of fiber, fennel bulb may help to remove potentially carcinogenic toxins from the colon, thereby useful in preventing colon cancer. After radiation or chemotherapy treatments fennel has shown to help soothe the digestive system.

**Caution:** Fennel contains compounds which act like estrogen; women suffering from breast cancer or uterine cancer and pregnant mothers should avoid taking it in large quantities.

## Benefits to Digestive System

**Indigestion:** Some essential oils in fennel have components that stimulate secretion of digestive & gastric juices, reduce inflammation of stomach & intestines and facilitate proper absorption of nutrients from the food. Fennel is extensively used in antacid preparations.

**Flatulence:** Carminative properties of Aspartic acid found in fennel makes it most

popular as an anti flatulent. Its extract can be used to cure flatulence, expel gases & acid from the stomach both in infants & old. It is known to be very good for IBS.

**Constipation:** Fennel seeds, particularly in powdered form, act as laxative. The roughage helps clearance of bowels whereas the stimulating effect helps maintain the

proper peristaltic motion of the intestines, thereby helping proper excretion.

**Diarrhea:** Presence of essential oils like Anetol, Cineole etc. have disinfectant and anti bacterial properties. This is helpful in curing diarrhea if caused by bacterial action. Other amino acids such as Histidine help to cure diarrhea due to indigestion.

## Eye Care

In the Indian subcontinent, Fennel seeds are eaten raw, as it is said to improve eyesight. Ancient Romans regarded Fennel as the herb of sight. Fennel root extracts were often used in tonics to clear cloudy eyes. Extracts of fennel seed have been shown in animal studies to have a potential use in the treatment of glaucoma. While using fennel in food helps protect eyes from inflammation, Oxidants like Vitamin-C, Amino Acids like Arginine & Minerals like cobalt and magnesium are beneficial for rejuvenation of tissues & prevention of aging due to macular degeneration. The juice of fennel leaves and the plant can be externally applied on the eyes to reduce irritation and fatigue of eyes.

## Benefits to Women

**Menstrual Disorders :** Fennel seeds & oil are used as oestrogen source to regulate menstruation relieve discomforts of menopause & regulate hormonal imbalance that causes PMS. It is also used to increase **Libido**. Fennel tea is used to cure inflammation of the uterus and vagina helping relax the uterus.

**Galactagogue :** There are historical anecdotes that fennel improves the milk supply of a breastfeeding mother.

**Breast Enhancement :** Fennel promotes natural breast enhancement

**Weight Reduction:** Fennel was traditionally known as the slimming herb as it has a



### Fennel, raw, sliced

1.00 cup  
87.00 grams  
26.98 calories

Nutrient	Amt	DV (%)
vitamin C	10.44 mg	17.4
dietary fiber	2.70 g	10.8
Potassium	360.18 mg	10.3
Manganese	0.16 mg	8.0
Folate	23.50 mcg	5.9
Molybdenum	4.34 mcg	5.8
Phosphorus	43.50 mg	4.3
Calcium	42.64 mg	4.3
Magnesium	14.80 mg	3.7
Iron	0.64 mg	3.6
Copper	0.06 mg	3.0
vitamin B3 (niacin)	0.56 mg	2.8

## General Benefits

stimulating effect on the metabolism. Chew seeds as a snack for hunger pangs, to depress the appetite and desire for sweets, chocolates and rich cakes. Eat the leaves, stems and seeds, or make a leaf or seed tea for weight loss. Fennel is said to dissolve fat deposits of the body.

**Respiratory Disorders:** Fennel is useful in respiratory disorders such as congestion, bronchitis, cough etc. due to the presence of Cineole and Anetol which are expectorant in nature.

**Urination :** Fennel is diuretic, i.e. increases amount & frequency of urination, thereby helping removal of toxic sub-

stances from the body and helping in rheumatism, swelling etc.

**Strengthen Immune system:** The vitamin C found in fennel bulb is directly antimicrobial and is also needed for the proper function of the immune system.

**Liver Care :** Fennel is said to restore damaged liver cells. Fennel was used for jaundice, hepatitis and other liver disorders. Fennel helps the liver and pancreas in the metabolism of fats and sugars.

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