

LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN – THE BEST DOCTOR IS THE COOK!™

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RITA'S FAVORITE HOMEMADE CHAI TEA MIX

Making your own blend of Chai allows you to be creative and "customize" the blend. Here's a basic recipe, and I will tell you that mixing the spices is like blending a perfume. *You* decide what to add to make it more to your taste, whether it is some dried orange peel, fennel seeds, nutmeg, or even dried rose petals or lemon herbs.

5 tablespoons cardamom pods
2 tablespoons whole cloves
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
Cinnamon sticks – about 6-8 sticks, 2" long each
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon black peppercorns
2 whole star anise
1-1/4 teaspoons ground ginger

Combine all of the ingredients except the ginger in a non-stick ungreased heavy skillet. Over low to medium heat, toast the spices for about 3 minutes, until fragrant. Add the ginger and blend. Now you have to pound everything briefly, just enough to crush the spices coarsely. Transfer to an airtight container where they'll keep nicely for about 4 months.

DIRECTIONS FOR BREWING CHAI TEA:

Combine 1 cup milk with about 2 teaspoons Chai mix and brown sugar or honey to taste. Simmer and then turn off heat. Cover and let steep for 10 minutes while you brew a pot of Assam or Darjeeling (these are Indian teas – you could also use regular tea) using 2 cups boiling water and 2 teaspoons or 2 bags of tea. Reheat the spiced milk if necessary and strain it into 2 large teacups. Pour in the hot tea and enjoy!

HEALTH ASPECTS OF CHAI TEA:

Cardamom is an anti-spasmodic and a digestive stimulant.

Cloves are antiseptic (dentists used to use clove oil to soothe gums) and are a warming, healing spice. Cloves are good for gastric discomfort.

Cinnamon is pungent and warming and is good for the digestion. It is also anti-spasmodic and antiseptic.

Ginger has been used as a medicinal herb in the West for over 2,000 years. It helps the circulation, is an expectorant, and is very calming to the stomach. There is research going on currently regarding ginger's effect in combating nausea in cancer patients on chemo.

Star Anise is the star-shaped fruit of an evergreen native to China. It tastes a bit like licorice and is a stimulant and diuretic, and is thought to relieve sore throats.

READ RITA!

My books *Gifts without Ribbons, Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul, The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports parents and Sports Nutrition for Dummies* (I developed the recipes) are available at Susan's Natural World

RITA'S YUMMY BREAD BLENDS!

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