

Here at the Akbar Dynasty we are masters of traditional and innovative Indian and Bengali Cuisine. Whilst many people may be familiar with our fantastic cuisine and love the herbs & spices used to flavour our recipes, we wanted to go a step further and include a basic selection of the herbs & spices from India that are often used by our chefs, such as cardamom, fennel and turmeric, as well as the spice blends of curry and garam masala.

We hope you find our guide informative and helpful in making your choice from our menu.

The Akbar Dynasty Spice Guide:

ANISEED - is highly aromatic and has a sweetish scent and flavour. It is a medicinal plant that is used for curing colds, cough, sleeplessness and also stomach ache.

BASIL - is revered as a sacred herb in India. There are 40 varieties, but the most common is bush basil.

BAY LEAF - is mainly used in pulaos and also in a few curries.

CARDAMONS - are dried aromatic pods of plants containing small seeds, which have a pleasant aroma. Regarded as a cardiogenic and expectorant, the seeds can also be chewed as a breath freshener.

CINNAMON - is the dried bark of the cinnamon tree. It is moderately pungent and sweet in taste. It is a tonic as well as an antiseptic and also helps to lower high blood pressure.

CLOVES - are a powerful antiseptic and used as an aromatic culinary spice. Indians value cloves highly as a general breath-freshener as well as a painkiller for toothache, long before clove oil became a popular remedy in the Western World.

TURMERIC - is the root of a plant, which is boiled, dried and powdered and adds colour and flavour to curries. This spice reduces fat, purifies and helps circulate blood, enhances body colour and is an effective antiseptic.

MACE - is the aril or inner coating of the nutmeg. It is scarlet in colour and its flavour resembles that of nutmeg. Its flakes are crushed and added to the masala powder.

NUTMEG - is the dried seed of an aromatic tree, mainly found in Kerala. It has a very strong flavour and is added with caution to curry powders.

CUMIN - is the seed of an annual herb and is a member of the parsley family. It is used whole or in powder form.

FENNEL - is an aromatic seed that is mainly used in Kashmiri dishes

FENUGREEK - seeds have a pleasantly bitter taste

and are copiously used as an ingredient in pickle masalas. Its green leaves are rich in iron, calcium and sulphur, and are extensively used in Indian cooking.

GARAM MASALA - is a mixture where certain spices are blended, powdered and used for 'piping up' the curries. Added either after the curries are done or during the cooking process.

SAFFRON - is an expensive and exotic pistil of a flower that is grown in the Kashmir valley. This spice has a great reputation as a stimulant as it is very rejuvenating and is considered to be an aphrodisiac.

TAMARIND - is a very all-round good palate-enhancer, and is excellent for digestion.

GARLIC is valued for its flavour and ability to combine with other ingredients, this is regarded as a very good immune booster, and a powerful antibiotic as well as an aid to digestion.

GINGER - originated in India as a sovereign root to ward off colds and flu, and is also effective against pain, it is good for blood circulation and helps relieve any joint aches; also relieves sore throats and head colds, not to mention its aphrodisiac properties.

YOGHURT - During the past few decades, the Western World has woken up to the excellent health qualities of yoghurt, but in India, yoghurt has been used for thousands of years in food and as a meat tenderiser. It helps lower cholesterol, prevents common digestive tract ailments, reduces hypertension and enhances the immune system.

Cooking Essentials:

KARAHI: A curved, heavy iron pan akin to a 'wok' used by Chinese cooks.

TAWA: A skillet or griddle made of cast iron and used for making paratha or chapattis.

TAN DOOR: Tandoori cooking is recognized as the most flavourful and healthy cuisine. This method is, in fact, a combination of grilling, baking and smoking simultaneously, and thus creates a unique tandoori flavour unmatched by any other technique.