Cinnamon

Latin name: *Cinnamomum cassia* (Chinese Cinnamon), *Cinnamomum verum* (Ceylon Cinnamon), *Cinnamomum loureiroi* (Saigon Cinnamon), *Cinnamomum burmanni* (Indonesian Cinnamon)
Common names: Cassia, Chinese Cassia, Sweet Wood, Chinese Cinnamon
Genus: Cinnamomum
Plant Family: Lauraceae
Parts Used: bark, twig, dried fruits (buds)
Herbal Energetics and Actions: alterative, analgesic, anti-fungal, antibacterial, antibiotic, anticonvulsant, antidepressant, antidiabetic, antidiarrheal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antirheumatic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, aphrodisiac, astringent, cardiac stimulant, carminative, circulatory stimulant, decongestant, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, drying, emmenagogue, emollient, expectorant, febrifuge, hemostatic, insecticide, parasiticide, stimulant, stomachic, styptic, tonic, vermifuge, warming
Body Systems Affiliation: circulatory, digestive, respiratory, brain, musculoskeletal, reproductive and genitourinary systems
Aroma: spicy, warm, woody, sweet, sharp, slightly balsamic

Botany

Cinnamon is one of the world's most beloved spices, an aromatic treasure found in everything from chai tea and pumpkin spice lattes to apple pie, French toast, and cinnamon rolls. Its warm, sweet fragrance is instantly recognizable, evoking comfort and nostalgia. Beyond desserts, Cinnamon also enhances savory dishes, adding depth and warmth to meats, vegetables, soups, and curries across countless cuisines.

The Cinnamon you know and love comes from trees in the Cinnamomum genus, a group of about 250 evergreen species. Another well-known aromatic, Camphor, comes from a close relative: *Cinnamomum camphora.*

Of these, only a few species are traded globally as “Cinnamon,” including:

- *Cinnamomum cassia*: Often called Cassia Cinnamon or Chinese Cinnamon, native to China.
- *Cinnamomum verum* (also known as *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*): Native to Sri Lanka, this is prized as “true” Cinnamon or Ceylon Cinnamon.
- *Cinnamomum loureiroi*: Known as Saigon or Vietnamese Cinnamon, originating from Vietnam.
- *Cinnamomum burmanni*: Also called Indonesian Cinnamon, Padang Cassia, or Korintje, common in Indonesia.

These bushy evergreens can grow up to 30–45 feet tall, with smooth, pinkish bark that releases a sweet, spicy scent when cut. Their glossy, leathery leaves shimmer deep green, and during the monsoon season (June to September), new growth — called a “flush” — emerges in hues of green to deep purple. Delicate, pale yellow-white flowers perfume the air and attract bees and other pollinators before maturing into bluish-black or white berries in the fall.

The familiar Cinnamon spice is made from the tree’s dried inner bark, carefully separated from the outer cork and underlying tissue, then curled into the fragrant quills we recognize. In India, even the tree’s buds are cherished, used to flavor dishes and herbal preparations alike.

Native Habitat & Distribution

Cinnamon trees are native to Southern China and Sri Lanka, and cultivated throughout Eastern and Southern Asia. Sri Lanka provides about 80% of the world's supply of Cinnamon.

When purchasing Cinnamon at the grocery or local markets, the Latin name or species name may not be on the label, but it can be helpful to know the origins of each species to deduce what species it may be.

- *Cinnamomum cassia* (Chinese Cinnamon): native to China
- *Cinnamomum verum/Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (Ceylon Cinnamon): native to Sri Lanka
- *Cinnamomum loureiroi* (Saigon Cinnamon): native to Vietnam
- *Cinnamomum burmanni:* native to Indonesia

Cultivation

There are several species of Cinnamon trees you can try growing at home, and fortunately, their cultivation methods are quite similar. Most Cinnamon plants available for purchase have been propagated from cuttings, though you can also try air layering or starting from seed if you enjoy a hands-on challenge.

Cinnamon prefers sandy, well-draining soil – it dislikes stagnation or "wet feet." Mixing a bit of sand into your potting blend helps encourage good drainage and healthy root growth. The soil should stay lightly moist, not bone dry or soggy.

These trees thrive in bright, full light, but appreciate some protection from wind and harsh weather. When young, Cinnamon trees are sensitive to direct sunlight, which can scorch their leaves, so keep them in filtered or indirect light for the first few years until they're more established.

Cinnamon is hardy in zones 10–12, making it a tropical plant that does not tolerate cold or frost. In most climates, it's best grown in a container so it can be moved indoors during the winter months. When growing Cinnamon indoors, keep it in a warm, sunny spot or under a grow light on a 12-hour light cycle. A bright window with plenty of indirect light works well, too. Water sparingly – just enough to keep the soil evenly moist, never soaked.

In spring, when temperatures warm up, gradually reintroduce your Cinnamon plant to outdoor sunlight. Start by placing it in partial shade, then move it into full sun over the course of several weeks to prevent shock or leaf burn.

As your Cinnamon tree matures, repot it regularly to give the roots more space. Once it reaches your desired size, you can stop increasing the pot size to help maintain its shape and growth.

Cinnamon trees can occasionally attract indoor pests such as scale insects, spider mites, thrips, or aphids. You can remove scales by hand when you see them, and treat other pests with Neem oil or insecticidal soap – both gentle, non-toxic options that protect your plant while keeping it healthy.

History & Folklore

It's often said that *Cinnamomum cassia* and *Cinnamomum verum* are prized for their medicinal applications, while *Cinnamomum loureiroi* and *Cinnamomum burmanni* are favored for culinary use. In truth, there's a good deal of overlap – these species have been used interchangeably for thousands of years as culinary, medicinal, and incense spices, each carrying its own subtle nuances of aroma and effect.

In the culinary world, those nuances can be significant. Saigon Cinnamon (*C. loureiroi*) is known for its bold, spicy intensity, while Indonesian Cinnamon (*C. burmanni*) offers a smoother flavor with a gentle finish – less sharp than Cassia or Saigon. *C. verum* (Ceylon Cinnamon), often called true Cinnamon, is more delicate, with a soft sweetness and complex aroma prized by chefs and herbalists alike.

The main difference between Cassia and Ceylon Cinnamon lies in their bark: Cassia's bark is thick and forms a single dense layer, whereas Ceylon's consists of many thin, fragile layers that crumble easily into powder.

The genus name *Cinnamomum* derives from the Greek word *kinnamomon*, likely rooted in the Malaysian word *kay manis*, meaning "sweet wood." The Italian word *canela* – referring to the familiar rolled quills of dried bark – translates to "little cannon." The species name Cassia comes from the Greek *kassia*, meaning to strip off the bark. Because of its stronger aroma and lower cost, Cassia was historically called the "poor man's Cinnamon."

A Spice Fit for Gods and Kings

Cinnamon's story stretches deep into antiquity. Though celebrated as a culinary treasure, it has long held sacred status as incense, perfume, and medicine across many ancient cultures.

According to herbalists Carol and David Schiller, Cinnamon is one of the oldest spices mentioned in the Old Testament. Chinese herbalists documented its use as early as 2700 BCE, prescribing it for fever, diarrhea, and menstrual issues. In Japan, it became a revered incense ingredient in the Kōdō ceremony, an ancient ritual for appreciating aromatic woods by "listening" to their subtle scents. Cassia leaves were also mentioned as a seasoning in a first-century Roman cookbook, illustrating their wide cultural reach.

According to ancient literature and Egyptian art, the ancient Egyptians often utilized Cinnamon medicinally, culinarily, and spiritually, incorporating it in embalming

procedures and incense. It is one of the sacred ingredients of the Egyptian temple incense Kyphi (along with other aromatic plants like Frankincense, Myrrh, Benzoin, Labdanum, Spikenard, Calamus, and Saffron), and was commonly used in perfumery.

The unique combination of fragrance notes that Cinnamon releases as it is burned was highly favored by the Egyptians and many other Mediterranean cultures, adding complexity to incense and pleasing the senses with its intoxicating and exotic aroma. Cinnamon bark was also found to be used in many ancient Egyptian medicines and unguents (a type of fragrant ointment).

Cinnamon and Cassia appear throughout the Hebrew Bible as sacred ingredients in holy anointing oils and temple incense. Cassia was one of the key aromatics in the Ketoret, the revered Hebrew incense offering burned daily in Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple. The Ketoret mixture was believed to contain the most sacred aromatics in the world, including Frankincense, Myrrh, Galbanum, Benzoin, Saffron, Spikenard, and Clove – plants said in Talmudic tradition to have originated in the Garden of Eden itself.

In ancient Greece and Rome, Cinnamon was a luxury reserved for royalty. It flavored fine wines and ceremonial offerings, and was burned in lavish displays of wealth. Roman emperor Nero famously burned an entire year's supply of Cinnamon at the funeral of his wife, Poppaea Sabina, in 65 CE – a testament to both its prestige and its preciousness.

The Spice That Shaped Empires

Cinnamon's trade fueled centuries of exploration, conquest, and commerce. During the 15th and 16th centuries, it was among the most coveted spices on Earth – at times even more valuable than gold. Portuguese traders seized control of the Cinnamon trade in Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka) from 1505 to 1658, restructuring traditional Sinhalese harvesting practices. The Dutch East India Company later took over, followed by the British East India Company, which managed vast Cinnamon estates throughout Asia.

As Cinnamon's reputation grew, so did its scientific intrigue. Beyond its exquisite aroma, Cinnamon's antimicrobial and preservative qualities made it invaluable in food and medicine. Japanese researchers found it effective against fungi, bacteria, and other microbes, including those responsible for botulism and staph infections. Herbalist Matthew Wood also notes Cinnamon's influence over microorganisms such as E. coli, Candida, and aflatoxin, affirming its enduring role as both a culinary treasure and potent medicinal ally.

Aromatherapy Uses

Cinnamon is a gentle yet powerful aromatic for the mind and heart. Its essence feels like kindling a warm hearth fire within the psyche – a steady glow that brings comfort, safety, and connection. The scent evokes the feeling of sitting around a fire with loved ones, wrapped in shared warmth and joy. Cinnamon reminds us that we are not alone – that both people and plants surround us with love, support, and belonging. It softly encourages the heart to stay open, to welcome love, and to find strength in community.

Just as Cinnamon warms the physical body, it also brings warmth to the emotional realm. It helps dissolve cold or stagnant feelings – bitterness, resentment, sadness, or disillusionment – gently melting the frost around the heart. For those who tend to guard themselves or hold grudges, Cinnamon can teach the art of softening, releasing, and letting go.

Its fragrance can also dispel emotional heaviness and mental stagnation, lifting the spirit when life feels dull, repetitive, or uninspired. Cinnamon quite literally "spices up your life," rekindling enthusiasm and creative flow.

When the inner fire has dimmed – through stress, loss, fatigue, or anxiety – Cinnamon serves as a tender spark, reminding you of your own light. This aromatic herb rekindles passion, joy, and purpose, helping you reconnect with your inner warmth and the sacred flame of the spirit. To use Cinnamon for aromatherapeutic purposes, you can either burn the powder or chips as incense on its own or in a blend, or use the essential oil in a diffuser.

Traditional Medicinal Uses

Generally speaking, *Cinnamomum cassia* (Chinese Cinnamon) and *Cinnamomum verum* (Ceylon Cinnamon) are believed to be the most therapeutic Cinnamon species, and these two are also most commonly used in traditional remedies and sold as essential oils.

The Cassia Cinnamon has thousands of years of history of traditional medicinal use in China and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Cinnamon also has a long history of use in Unani Tibb medicine and Ayurveda. Cinnamon is energetically warming and

drying and is often included in herbal formulas that are meant to counter cold and stagnation and to help support the flow of vital force or *Qi.*
In TCM, Cinnamon is thought to help stimulate the movement of Qi, known as the life force or vital force in the body. Cinnamon is believed to have the ability to move the energy and vitality of the body. It is said to balance the liver, spleen, kidney, and heart meridians. Cinnamon has a gentle, artful way of balancing the physical body in places where there is excess or deficiency.

Cinnamon bark is listed in "The Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China," which was published in 1953, and lists over 500 TCM formulas that contain Cinnamon as an ingredient. These formulas are most commonly used to address inflammation and stagnation and to support cardiovascular health, digestive health, the musculoskeletal system, and the genitourinary system.

In Ayurveda, Cinnamon bark is referred to as "twak" and is considered very nourishing to the body. It is believed to be warming, toning, pungent, cutting, and stimulating, and has the ability to "move through blockages."

The "Canon of Medicine" is an encyclopedia of the ancient text of Unani Tibb medicine written by Muslim Persian physician-philosopher Avicenna in 1025. In his book, he talks about Cinnamon being a "tenuous" medicine. He writes that it is "one which under the influence of our physical power splits into very small particles and spreads throughout our bodies." This is a nod to Cinnamon's diffusive, warming, stimulating energetics. He also notes that Cinnamon is drying and toning, without being irritating. He recommends using Cinnamon in a variety of herbal preparations – my favorite is creating a decoction of Cinnamon bark in Rosewater and using that topically for inflammation.

Circulatory System

For thousands of years, Cinnamon has been revered in Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and other ancient healing systems for its warming, drying, and stimulating qualities. It is believed to invigorate circulation, open the vessels, and counteract stagnation, helping restore vitality and movement throughout the body.

In Western Herbalism, Cinnamon is classically used to support circulation and to ease colds and flu. Herbalist Matthew Wood describes it as a stimulating diaphoretic, an herb that helps the body release heat through gentle sweating, flushing out illness and bringing warmth to those who feel cold, weak, or depleted. In Ayurveda, this same action is said to move blood toward the surface, open the pores, and release internal heat, making Cinnamon a valuable herb during feverish conditions.

Cinnamon's warming nature makes it especially beneficial for people with poor circulation or a tendency to feel cold. It is said to strengthen the heart, balance blood flow, and support healthy blood sugar regulation – qualities that have drawn scientific interest, though studies have shown mixed results. In Ayurveda, Cinnamon is viewed as a harmonizing herb that strengthens and balances the flow of circulation throughout the body.

The great Persian physician Avicenna described Cinnamon as attenuate, meaning it promotes thinness and subtlety in the blood, echoing the ancient understanding of its warming nature. Cinnamon is also considered an amphoteric herb, meaning it works to restore balance rather than push in a single direction. Depending on the body's needs, it can both stimulate blood flow and reduce excessive bleeding, warming and invigorating, yet harmonizing and grounding at the same time.

As Ayurvedic scholars David Frawley and Vasant Lad write in "The Yoga of Herbs," Cinnamon "strengthens the heart, warms the kidneys, and promotes Agni," the body's vital digestive fire that governs transformation, metabolism, and vitality.

Digestive System

Incorporating Cinnamon into foods and teas can help support the digestive system and promote healthy digestion, fueling the "digestive fire." In addition to its favorable flavor in cuisine, Cinnamon is also commonly used culinarily as a digestive aid, providing digestive balance with heavier meals. This spice is often used as an ingredient in meals with dairy or heavier holiday recipes to help aid in digestion.

Not only does Cinnamon support the efficiency of the digestive system, but it can also soothe common digestive ailments. When used internally, Cinnamon can stimulate slow digestion and relieve excess gas, bloating, abdominal cramping, indigestion, diarrhea, nausea, and a host of other digestive issues.

According to herbalist Matthew Wood, Cinnamon is warming and stimulating to the digestive tract, helping to promote digestion, but it is also sweet and astringent, so it nourishes and tones the digestive system as well. In TCM, Cinnamon is indicated to be used to address stomach cramping, a lack of appetite, "cold" digestion, and diarrhea due to its drying and astringent properties.

In "Yoga of Herbs," Dr. Vasant Lad and Dr. David Frawley describe Cinnamon as one of the three sacred "Aromatics" of Ayurveda (alongside Bay Laurel and Cardamom). These

three herbs are often combined in traditional formulas, where they work in synergy to support healthy digestion and enhance the absorption of nutrients. In herbal medicine, synergy refers to the way certain plants amplify one another's effects when used together. When herbs are harmoniously paired, their combined energy creates a more potent, balanced, and effective remedy than any single plant could achieve on its own.

Avicenna writes that Cinnamon has the ability to "dissolve thick gases," and Maud Grieve, a famous English herbalist, mentions Cinnamon as being a carminative in her book, "A Modern Herbal," published in 1931. Carminative herbs support the body in expelling excess gas. Grieve also mentions that Cinnamon was traditionally used in Europe medicinally as a powder or as an herbal tea infusion to help ease nausea and vomiting, as well as diarrhea and heavy periods.

Reproductive and Genitourinary Systems

In Ayurveda, Cinnamon is said to "warm the kidneys," which helps filter blood, remove waste, and produce urine. It is also considered one of the best oils to increase blood circulation and support the uterus during menopause. According to herbalist Brigitte Mars, Cinnamon can be helpful for painful and irregular menstrual cycles, heavy periods, and erectile dysfunction.

In American Eclectic medicine in the 19th and 20th centuries, eclectic physicians traditionally used Cinnamon as a first aid herb to address blood hemorrhaging, using the tincture of Cinnamon bark for uterine hemorrhaging and painful periods. This was typically given in dram doses, which equals ⅛ ounces, in sweetened water, and repeated every 5, 10, or 20 minutes as required until the bleeding calms down. Cinnamon was believed to be a styptic, meaning that it has the ability to slow or stop bleeding.

Respiratory System

In Ayurveda, a common remedy for respiratory ailments like coughs, colds, and sore throats is to make an herbal steam and inhale the vapor of Cinnamon sticks boiling in hot water. As incense and as a steam inhalant, Cinnamon has been traditionally used to soothe asthma, bronchitis, sinus congestion, and many other respiratory illnesses.

This aromatic herb is known as an expectorant that helps move out stagnation in the chest, especially when there is a weakened constitution, like during times of illness. Cinnamon can help move excess cold and dampness out of the chest and respiratory system, bringing balance to the lungs.

Brain Health

Due to Cinnamon's ability to stimulate blood flow, it also helps promote healthy blood flow to the brain. Recent scientific studies suggest that Cinnamon has a positive effect on cognitive function, supporting the mind, learning, and memory. Using Cinnamon in incense form, cuisine, internal medicine, or even chewing gum may improve visual-motor response speed, strengthen memory, and stimulate attention and mental awareness. There are also various scientific studies on Cinnamon and its neuroprotective effects for those suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Musculoskeletal System

Cinnamon has a history of being used topically for a wide variety of health issues, due to its analgesic, stimulating, and warming properties. In TCM and other ancient medical traditions, Cinnamon has been commonly used as an analgesic to soothe aches and pains in the muscles and joints, as well as menstrual cramps, both topically and internally.

According to herbalist Matthew Wood, Cinnamon is helpful for soothing rheumatism, cramping, pain, swelling, back pain, and sore muscles. This herb has an affinity for easing painful conditions that often get worse during cold, damp weather.

Herbal & Aromatic Preparations

Culinary Uses

Since ancient times, Cinnamon has been treasured in kitchens and apothecaries alike for its sweet flavor, warmth, and aromatic richness, as well as its digestive and preservative qualities. Keep a jar of Cinnamon powder in your spice cabinet to sprinkle into both cooked dishes and baked treats, from hearty stews to sweet pastries. Cinnamon quills can also be added to simmering soups, mulled wines, hot ciders, or infused teas, releasing their warming fragrance and subtle sweetness. Experiment and let your culinary creativity flow!

Beyond the kitchen, Cinnamon is also commonly used as a supplement. Powdered Cinnamon or encapsulated tablets can be taken internally to support digestion, circulation, and overall wellness. These are widely available at natural food stores, herbal

shops, and online, making it easy to incorporate this ancient, aromatic herb into your daily routine.

Important: Always consult with a qualified healthcare professional before using Cinnamon – or any herb – as a supplement, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, taking medications, or managing a health condition. See the "Safety" section for more details.

Incense

Cinnamon powder or chips can be sprinkled on top of incense charcoal; enjoyed on their own or incorporated into incense blends; or tossed into a fire as an uplifting offering. When burned, its rich, spicy-sweet smoke can boost the spirit, clear stagnant energy, and bring warmth to both the body and mind.

Just as Cinnamon warms the physical body, it gently nurtures the emotional and energetic self, helping to dissolve feelings of coldness, resentment, or stagnation while inspiring creativity, joy, and a sense of connection. Cinnamon incense can also be a powerful tool for enhancing focus and clarity. Its aromatic compounds stimulate the senses and support the nervous system, helping to center the mind and promote mental alertness.

Its gentle yet stimulating energy makes it ideal for seasonal transitions, moments of fatigue or emotional heaviness, or any time you wish to awaken the inner "fire" within. Consider combining Cinnamon with complementary resins, woods, and botanicals to amplify its effects for ceremonial, therapeutic, or purely aromatic intentions.

Herbal Alcohol Extract (Tincture)

An alcohol extract, commonly called an herbal tincture, is a concentrated preparation that uses alcohol to draw out the therapeutic properties of plants. Cinnamon tincture has a rich, deep red hue – a beautiful, symbolic reflection of its traditional use in supporting blood flow and circulation. Its gentle, toning properties can also softly support digestion without causing irritation.

Typically, alcohol tinctures have a shelf life of around 5 years, but Cinnamon tincture can thicken or coagulate after about a year. To maintain a smooth consistency, it's best to use the tincture relatively soon after making it.

To prolong shelf life, a simple trick is to add a bit of vegetable glycerine to your alcohol during extraction. Not only does this help prevent coagulation, but it also enhances the natural sweetness and warmth of Cinnamon, resulting in a deliciously potent tincture.

For best results, work with Cinnamon chips when making a tincture. Powdered Cinnamon is too fine for effective extraction, while quills provide insufficient surface area for the solvent to act. Our favorite menstruum mix for a Cinnamon tincture is: 65% alcohol, 25% water, and 10% vegetable glycerine.

Use a 1:4 ratio (1 part Cinnamon to 4 parts menstruum). You can choose 80-proof vodka or a higher-proof alcohol – but don't go below 80-proof, as weaker alcohol won't have a long shelf life.

How to Make Cinnamon Tincture

Tools & Ingredients:

Cinnamon chips
80-proof alcohol
Vegetable glycerine
Water
Measuring glass
Clean glass mason jar with lid
Fine mesh stainless steel strainer and/or cheesecloth or muslin cloth
Label & pen

Instructions:

- Using a measuring glass, carefully measure out your menstruum mixture of 65% alcohol, 25% water, and 10% vegetable glycerine.
- Place your Cinnamon chips in a glass mason jar, filling it about ¼ of the way full, to match the 1:4 folk method ratio (1 part Cinnamon to 4 parts menstruum).
- Then, pour in your menstruum mixture, making sure to completely cover the plant material with liquid.
- Screw the lid on the jar. Be sure to label the jar with the ingredients and date.
- Set it in a cool, dark place and return every day to gently shake the mixture and check on menstruum levels. If the herbs are no longer completely covered, you may add more menstruum (or alcohol) to top it off. You always want the herbs to remain covered with menstruum to avoid spoilage!

- Allow your tincture to infuse for 3-4 weeks, then strain out the herbs using a fine mesh strainer and/or cheesecloth or a muslin cloth.
- Make sure to label your finished tincture with its name, ingredients, and date. Store your tincture in a dark amber glass jar in a cool, dark place away from direct light and heat. Enjoy!

Suggested Uses:

Always shake your Cinnamon tincture well before use to ensure the ingredients are evenly blended. It makes a delightful addition to bitters or warming tincture recipes, enhancing digestion and adding a comforting, aromatic warmth to your herbal formulations.

Important: Cinnamon tincture is potent. Always consult a qualified health professional before using it internally, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, have a medical condition, or are taking medications.

Herbal Tea

When crafting an herbal tea blend, herbs are commonly classified into three roles: base (or lead), supportive, and accent/catalyst (or synergist). Different herbalists may use slightly different terminology, but the underlying principle is the same: each herb has a purpose within the blend.

A typical herbal tea formula often follows this ratio: 3 parts base, 1-2 parts supportive, and ¼ to 1 part catalyst. Cinnamon usually functions as a catalyst herb, bringing warmth, movement, and a gentle pungency that stimulates the vital force. Because of this powerful action, Cinnamon takes up the smallest portion of the blend.

Recommended guidelines for using Cinnamon in tea blends:

- Cinnamon bark chips: ~10–15% of the blend
- Cinnamon powder: ~5–7% (occasionally up to 10%)

Powdered Cinnamon coats the other herbs nicely, enhancing flavor and aroma, but too much can easily overpower the blend. A good rule of thumb is to start at around 5% of the blend and adjust to taste. These proportions are just a starting point — feel free to experiment. Make a single cup of your blend, taste it, and then tweak the ingredients as

needed. Developing a feel for how herbs interact takes practice, patience, and hands-on experimentation. Enjoy the process!

How to Prepare Cinnamon in Herbal Tea:

- Blend together your herbal tea mix, then place your herbal blend in a teapot or cup.
- Add hot water (roughly 1 tablespoon of herbs per 8 ounces of water).
- Cover with a lid to preserve the volatile aromatic compounds.
- Steep for 15–20 minutes (or longer for a stronger infusion), then strain and enjoy.

Suggested Uses:

Cinnamon works beautifully in teas for cold and flu support, immune support, respiratory health, digestion, and menstrual wellness. Herbalist Rosemary Gladstar suggests pairing Cinnamon with: Ginger for circulatory support, Chamomile for digestion, or Yarrow and Peppermint for cold and flu support.

Essential Oil

The old American Eclectic physicians traditionally used Cinnamon essential oil internally to address excessive internal bleeding, as a carminative, and as a digestive antispasmodic. However, it is important to note that Cinnamon essential oil is very potent and should **never be used** internally, as it can be very irritating to the digestive system and sensitive internal organs.

The essential oils of Cinnamon are made using the bark and leaves in steam distillation. Both the *Cinnamomum cassia* and *Cinnamomum verum* species are most commonly distilled into essential oils. Oftentimes, they will be sold separately, so you might purchase the essential oil of just the bark or just the leaves of one specific species. Be sure to read the label to make sure which species and plant parts you are buying! There are some differences between dermal application and safety with each specific essential oil.

Suggested Uses:

Cassia Cinnamon bark essential oil is considered extremely irritating to the skin. It is said that Cinnamon leaf (*Cinnamomum verum)* is less irritating topically. Either way, when using any Cinnamon essential oil topically, it is wise to proceed with caution.

Never apply an essential oil directly to the skin. Always dilute essential oils before topical use.

According to essential oil safety experts, if you are attempting to use Cassia Cinnamon bark essential oil topically, do not exceed a 0.05% dilution ratio in order to avoid skin irritation. When using Cinnamon leaf (*Cinnamomum verum)* essential oil topically, do not exceed a 0.5-0.6% dilution ratio.

The essential oil diluted in a carrier oil may be used topically as a chest rub for respiratory support or anywhere there are aches and pains for musculoskeletal system support. Rosemary Gladstar recommends adding the essential oil to topical herbal salve recipes for its analgesic properties and as warming, stimulating balms.

You can also use Cinnamon essential oil in a diffuser for aromatherapy. Follow the instructions on your specific diffuser for how many drops of essential oil to use. Remember, less is more, as essential oils are very powerful, concentrated forms of aromatic medicine. Typically, only 1-3 drops of an essential oil in a diffuser are needed at one time.

Absolute

You might also find Cinnamon Absolute available for purchase, which is made through solvent extraction using CO_2. Absolutes are highly concentrated and aromatic substances, similar to essential oils, commonly used in natural perfumery and aromatherapy for their rich and complex scents. Some examples of plant materials that are often processed into absolutes include Jasmine and Rose.

Absolutes are often more expensive than essential oils due to the complexity of the extraction process and the amount of raw material required to produce them. In the absolute production process, a solvent like hexane or CO_2 is typically used to extract the volatile oils, and then the solvent is gently heated out of the mixture. It's important to note that some absolutes may contain trace amounts of the solvent used in the extraction process.

Suggested Uses:

Cinnamon Absolute can be used in the same way you would use Cinnamon essential oil.

Safety/Contraindications

- **Essential Oil - Internal Use: Never** consume an essential oil, especially Cinnamon essential oil. Essential oils are extremely concentrated and can be highly irritating if consumed.

- **Essential Oil - External Use**: Use extreme care when applying Cinnamon essential oil to the skin. **Never** apply an essential oil directly to the skin. Essential oils should always be diluted with a carrier oil like olive, coconut, or jojoba oil before applying topically. It is generally recommended to avoid using Cassia Cinnamon bark essential oil topically. According to essential oil safety experts, if you are attempting to use Cassia Cinnamon bark essential oil topically, do not exceed a **0.05% dilution ratio**. When using Cinnamon leaf (*Cinnamomum verum*) essential oil topically, do not exceed a **0.5-0.6% dilution ratio**.

- Do not use Cinnamon essential oil topically on children under the age of 2.

- According to herbalist Brigette Mars, avoid Cinnamon in cases of hot, feverish conditions; excessive dryness; hemorrhoids; dry stools; or hematuria (blood in the urine) due to Cinnamon's drying nature.

- Avoid taking large amounts when pregnant or nursing because it can decrease the milk supply.

- Avoid therapeutic doses for extended periods of time, especially if you are currently taking blood thinner medication.

- High doses of more than 2 grams could cause delirium, hallucinations, and convulsions.

- Always consult a qualified health professional before using it internally beyond culinary use, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, have a medical condition, or are taking medications.

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