

Fruit-based Beverages Enriched With Spice Extracts - Flavour and Health in One Bottle

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The market for fruit juices and soft drinks in India has witnessed a massive improvement in the last few years. People, especially teens and youngsters, come looking for them, especially during summer season. Fruit juices are available in the market in bottled form and easy-to-carry, cheap, tetra packs, which contain added preservatives. Instead of approved preservatives, if spice extracts are added to these fruit juices, they can not only act as preservatives but also enhance taste, flavour and medicinal value of the juice.

Taking fruit juices once in a while is a healthy habit as they are very good store houses of antioxidants. Following the metabolism after a fatty meal, the body tends to accumulate free radicals (also called single oxygen or Reactive Oxygen species). Human body has natural anti-oxidants which can scavenge these free radicals. But most often, the concentration of antioxidants produced by the body is not sufficient to scavenge all free radicals.

If the body is supported with natural oxidants present in spices such as ginger, turmeric, black pepper, garlic cinnamon etc., they will neutralize all the free radicals and will protect the body from cell damage, cancer etc.

All our spices are rich sources of phenolics, a group of chemicals which are responsible for the antioxidant property of spices. Studies conducted at ICAR - Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) Kozhikode and many other research Institutes in the world have clearly established the direct correlation between total phenol content and antioxidant property. In Kerala, especially north Kerala, 'biriyani' is a much favoured dish. In many parts of north Kerala, after taking a sumptuous biriyani, a hot beverage known locally as 'Sulaimani', is served.

***Just like fruit-juices,
drinks mixed with spices are
excellent antioxidants.***

It is prepared by boiling dry ginger, cardamom, cinnamon bark and lime juice in varying proportions. As illustrated before, this drink has lot of phenolics and is better than any soft drinks available in the market.

Rasam which is another much favoured dish in South Indian vegetarian meals. This is also a good source of antioxidants as its major ingredients are coriander and turmeric. Cardamom is a good carminative, flavourant and also good for nausea and morning sickness.

Dry Ginger with good quantity gingerol – its active pungent principle – is a carminative and also good in managing colitis, colon related diseases and ulcer. Cinnamon bark extract is proved to be a good tonic for controlling diabetes and colon related problems. In a study conducted by ICAR – IISR with the help of RCC Thiruvananthapuram it has also been proved beneficial in the control of colon cancer.

As for value addition of spices, fruit juices enriched with spices extract is a new trend. Lime juice enriched with 5-10% fresh ginger juice is getting high popularity in Gujarat and Karnataka. The lemony flavour and supply of Vitamin C of lime juice and the phenolic constituents of ginger make the squash very delicious and medicinal.

Fruit juices enriched with spices extract is a new trend, which is catching up in many States like Gujarat and Karnataka.

The fruit rind of nutmeg is usually discarded. Blending the pericarp juice (fruit rind) of nutmeg with papaya juice or sapota juice can make a new tasty fruit juice. If cinnamon extract is added in place of ginger juice, the addition of preservatives can be reduced to a great extent. Cinnamon is proved to be a great preservative. This can be a new trend in fruit juice field. Entrepreneurs can think of a new beverage with addition of cinnamon

extract. Research has proved that cinnamon extracts prepared in organic solvents are more medicinal than water extracts.

India exports about 40,000 tons of cumin annually. Cumin is a good source of iron. If carbonated drink of cumin can be prepared, it would be medicinal in properties.

Fruit juices with spices content can also be effective in supporting the fight against many diseases like cancer, according to new studies emerging.

According to the research data on cancer, it is reported that about 500 different types of genetic modifications can trigger the disease. Many of the spices like turmeric, clove, fenugreek, kokum, ginger, nigella, cumin, cinnamon bark, constituents of nutmeg and mace have the required constituents which can prevent the above mentioned genetic modifications.

Fresh fruit juices have very limited shelf life and preservatives are added to increase it. If spice extracts like that of dry ginger, turmeric or cinnamon bark are added, the shelf life of juices can be enhanced without using artificial preservatives. The medicinal properties that spices provide is an added advantage.

