



EACH **SPICEJET** AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN NAMED AFTER A PARTICULAR SPICE. IN THIS ISSUE WE TALK ABOUT THE BENEFITS AND USAGE OF **TURMERIC**



# YELLOW BOOSTER

THE MYRIAD BENEFITS OF TURMERIC IS TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM AND PROVING ONCE AGAIN THAT GOING BACK TO YOUR ROOTS IS WHAT MATTERS. BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

A combination of meen moilee (yellow dal tadka; cucumber, turmeric and mint juice; and turmeric and green bhillies)



Coconut milk turmeric iced latte with curcuma powder

## DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR KITCHEN

has an ingredient that packs a punch? It is an anti-aging, anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory super spice and has been around for centuries in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicines to treat a wide variety of health problems, from pain control to fighting cancer. We are talking about the humble turmeric which has now made inroads into the Western world as well thanks to its huge health benefits. Turmeric is also getting a gourmet makeover and is being seen in lattes, cocktails, sorbets and ice creams.

Adding more turmeric to your daily diet is one of the best things you could do to improve your overall health. So if you are okay with turmeric and are interested

in herbal remedies, go for it. “I have been adding turmeric to many of my dishes to give them that nice saffron-like colour and wonderful flavour. It works well in curries, stir-fried dishes, smoothies, salads and dressings. The optimal dose for daily consumption is between a quarter and a half teaspoon,” says Chef Prem K Pogakula, Executive Chef, The Imperial, New Delhi.

Curcumin, the magical component which gives turmeric its golden colour and its many health benefits, has been well-studied over the past decades. The root of turmeric is also widely used to make medicine. Chef Yogen Datta, Executive Chef at ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru, avers, “Apart from providing

## FOOD TURMERIC



From above: Turmeric smoothie; roasted turmeric cauliflower with Greek yogurt dressing

colour, turmeric provides an earthy-peppery flavour to food. It also imparts a body to thin curries. Turmeric is also a digestive, especially helping the body break down fats in the diet. Primarily used in curries, it is also consumed fresh as a side vegetable, often tossed with just green chillies and hing. Turmeric leaves are used to make sweets like patoleo from Goan-Mangalorean cuisines.”

While most Indian kitchens use turmeric in traditional cooking, you can add it to spice up many other foods too. Turmeric is always added at the

beginning of the cooking process and sautéed with other aromatics such as onions, ginger and garlic. This allows the release of curcumin, which is fat soluble. “Another popular use for turmeric in cooking is golden milk (masala dudh in north India). Considered an anti-inflammatory elixir, this drink is used to treat everything from cold to arthritis. Although it is traditionally found in Indian curries, turmeric features in a variety of American dishes and condiments,” says Exec Chef Parimal Sawant, The Lalit, Mumbai. Turmeric is what colours American processed cheese, mustard, butter, yellow cake mix, popcorn and dozens of other products. It is beloved in Iranian cuisine, where it is commonly combined with black pepper, cinnamon and cardamom in a spice mix called *advieh*. Moroccans also use turmeric in cooking. They combine it with saffron in *harira*, a soup widely eaten at the end of Ramadan. Also, turmeric is one of the spices in the famous mixture called *Ras-el-hanout* (similar to our *garam masala*).

“Use a pinch of turmeric in scrambled eggs, a frittata, or tofu scramble. If you or your family is new to turmeric, this is a great way to start because the colour is familiar and the flavour subtle,” says The Imperial’s Pogakula. Turmeric’s slightly warm and peppery flavour works especially well with cauliflower, potatoes, and root vegetables. Likewise, a dash of turmeric brings colour and a mild flavour to a pot of plain rice or a fancier pilaf and you can also sprinkle turmeric into sautéed or braised greens like kale, spinach, and cabbage. A bowl of vegetable or chicken soup feels even more warming when it’s tinged with golden turmeric. While fresh turmeric root is especially great in juices and smoothies, a pinch of ground spice is good, too. The slightly pungent flavour is usually well masked in smoothies. You can also simmer turmeric

Turmeric spiced chicken breast salad



**STIR FRY DUCK IN TURMERIC AND LEMONGRASS SAUCE**

(COURTESY NOVOTEL HYDERABAD AIRPORT)

**INGREDIENTS**

- Duck, thinly sliced 750-800 gram
- Turmeric powder 1½ teaspoon
- Coriander powder 1½ teaspoon
- Salt 1½ teaspoon
- Oil 1 tbsp
- Shallot, thinly sliced 100 g
- Lemongrass (only white parts),

- thinly sliced 3
- Soy sauce 2 tsp
- Fish sauce 2 tsp
- Indonesian sweet soy sauce 2 tsp
- Red bell pepper, thinly sliced 1
- Green serano chili, thinly sliced 1

**METHOD**

→ In a mixing bowl, mix together the duck, turmeric, coriander, salt, and one tablespoon of oil. Set aside for 15 minutes.

- Heat two tablespoon oil in a wok/frying pan on medium-high. Sauté until no longer pink.
- Add shallot and lemongrass, mix well, cook for one minute.
- Season with soy sauce, fish sauce, and sweet soy sauce. Mix well.
- Add bell pepper and serano chili. Mix well. Turn off heat. Serve with steamed white rice.

with coconut milk, almond milk, cashew nut milk and honey to make an earthy and comforting beverage.

Numerous studies have categorized turmeric as a superfood and the spice has been lauded for its anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties found in curcumin. “It is believed to be a cancer fighter, especially in cancers affecting the digestive system. Turmeric is also used to treat a host of diseases, from respiratory illness to liver trouble and arthritis. Curcumin has already been shown to suppress traumatic memories in mice, sooth bowels, and help heal wounds. It can also help us stay mentally sharp as we age,” says Sawant. Varun MB, Executive Chef, Novotel Hyderabad Airport, adds, “It is a herbal medicine and a very strong antioxidant and has many attributes like controlling depression, improving immune system, healing diabetes and blood pressure. With so much going for turmeric it is not hard to say it is the golden spice of your kitchen.” ■