



The Official



HAPPY

HOLIDAYS

Spice & Guide

Star Anise

Everyone needs more *étoiles* in their life, *non?* In the holidays, this spice is the best place to start *mon ami*. Like its country of origin, China, also the final country in my Marco Polo voyage, it has a mysterious flavour ... like a deep, resonant liquorice. For a show-stopping holiday dessert pair with poached plums or pears (or both *mon chéri*, if you're feeling wild) ...

Cardamom

From the exotic subcontinent of India, another *pays de ma mémoire*, cardamom is a delightful mix of seed pods which are distant relations in the ginger family. With a light citrus flavour overlaying the heavier piney tones, this is an excellent way to add some *joie de vie* to sweet and savoury dishes alike.

Cinnamon

Ah cinnamon! *Le simple* tree bark that has become a cooking classic the world over. Transform your holiday dishes – sweet and savoury – with the sweet and woody flavour of this South American spice. Try it, *vous allez l'adorer!* My suggestions are gingerbread, mulled wine and fruity desserts.

Clove

This spice is just like me, because less is more, *comprenez vous?* Cloves, from dried flower buds, have a sharp and bitter taste, and so you must *un peu* to complement the strong flavours of a fruitcake or a baked ham.

Ginger

Ginger – coming from one of Marco Polo's favourite continents, Asia- is *une forte et aromatique* flavour that brings warmth and a woody flavour to anything it is paired with. Use fresh ginger for savoury dishes, and ground or dried for sweet desserts and treats.

Nutmeg

Think creamy ... think indulgence ... think intensity! Nutmeg, a distinct musky spice from the tropical Island of Indonesia is a personal favourite because it goes best with things warm and sweet. Dust lightly over some warm eggnog – *c'est magnifique!*

Saffron

Saffron, it is as versatile as it is expensive (*très, ami*). Most well known for the beautiful, vibrant colour it infuses dishes with, Saffron pairs well with savoury and sweet, especially rice, honey, pears, rosemary, garlic, ginger and cardamom. Remember to soak in warm water before use.