

SPICE OF THE MONTH

AT THE CROTON FREE LIBRARY

December's spice is allspice!

Nestled in the leaves and branches of the myrtle pepper tree are deliciously fragrant clusters of berries. When ripe, these berries are harvested, dried, and used to flavor meats, sauces, pickles, preserves, baked goods, and drinks. The dried berries are known as Jamaica pepper, myrtle pepper, pimento, pimenta, clove pepper... or the ubiquitous allspice!

Allspice is native to the Caribbean, and the most desirable berries come from Jamaica. Myrtle pepper trees grow largely in the Western Hemisphere — so, unlike many spices, allspice was only introduced to countries in the Eastern Hemisphere in the 16th century.

Ubiquitous in both professional and home kitchens in nations around the world, allspice has with a bouquet of flavors that resemble cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. In the United States, we know allspice primarily in its ground form, as an additive to desserts like gingerbread or spice cake.

But all over the world, this versatile spice is used in its whole berry form and also used as an indispensable ingredient in a huge number of savory dishes, like Jamaican jerk rub, Lebanese baharat, and the sauce for Swedish meatballs, just to name a few.

Allspice is also known to have been used by the Arawak and Carib nations, and it was likely an ingredient in Azteca and Mayan recipes as well.

Both sweet and savory recipes are included
in this month's kit!



Sources - allspice

All books listed here are available to check out from the Croton Free Library.

- *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* by Andrew Dalby
- *Cooking with Herbs & Spices* by Judy Gilliard
- *The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices & Flavorings: A Cook's Compendium* by Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz

These recipes are from:

- *Heirloom Baking with the Brass Sisters* by Marilynn Brass & Sheila Brass
- *Wintersweet* by Tammy Donroe Inman
- *Food from Many Greek Kitchens* by Tessa Kiros
- *Entertaining* by Martha Stewart
- *The Apple Lover's Cookbook* by Amy Traverso
- *Jerk from Jamaica* by Helen Willinsky

What did you cook with your allspice?
Post it on social media with the hashtag
#CrotonSpiceClub and tag us, or send a
photo & description to gglazer@wlsmail.org!

Allspice purchased from Penzey's.