

SPICE OF THE MONTH

AT THE CROTON FREE LIBRARY

April's spice is fennel seeds!

Fennel's history goes way back: It was catalogued in the Linear B tablets of the Mycenaean palaces in the 14th century BCE, alongside sesame and cumin!

It's native to southern Europe, but it's a truly international plant that's grown and eaten all over the world.

Common fennel, also called wild fennel, is usually cultivated in Russia and central Europe. It has a more bitter taste than Florence fennel, which is grown in wetter climates throughout Asia and the Americas, and is prized for its large bulbous stalks.

All the parts of a fennel plant are edible. The tender, feathery leaves are often used to flavor fish and chopped into sauces, salads, and dressings. The delicate yellow flowers can be dried into a flavorful pollen. Stems can be eaten raw or cooked lightly, and the thick bases of the stalks are roasted or chopped into salads.

Fennel seeds — the part of the plant included in this month's kit — are dried and used to flavor meats, steeped to make tea, crushed into spice blends, stuffed into sausages, cooked with pasta and hearty vegetables, and even paired with apple pie.



After a meal, some people of Indian heritage or fans of Indian food will eat the seeds plain or candied, to aid in digestion and freshen their breath with the light anise flavor.

Fennel seeds should be stored in a cool, dark place, and can be kept for up to six months to maintain their freshness.


Sources - fennel seeds

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

- *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* by Andrew Dalby
- Harvest to Table: harvesttotable.com/how_to_grow_florence_fennel/
- *The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices & Flavorings: A Cook's Compendium* by Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz

These recipes are from:

- *Simply Sensational Cookies* by Nancy Baggett
- *Molto Gusto: Easy Italian Cooking* by Mario Batali
- *Nadiya Bakes: Over 100 Must-Try Recipes for Breads, Cakes, Biscuits, Pies, and More* by Nadiya Hussain
- *Jamie's Italy* by Jamie Oliver
- *Dining In: Highly Cookable Recipes* by Alison Roman



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

Fennel seeds purchased from Penzey's Spices.