

SPICE OF THE MONTH

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March's spice is berbere!

Berberere (pronounced "behr-BEHR-ay") is an Ethiopian or Eritrean blend of chilies and spices, many of them familiar to home cooks all over the world, that come together to form more than the sum of their parts!

Marcus Samuelsson — an award-winning chef known for his Ethiopian and Swedish food, and one of our favorite Top Chef contestants — calls berbere one of the three building blocks of Ethiopian cooking. (Injera and spiced butter are the others.) It can be rubbed on meat, sprinkled on produce, or mixed with oil to form a condiment paste. The word "berbere" means "pepper" or "hot" in Amharic.

Traditionally, every Ethiopian cook has a different recipe, and its preparation can take several days. Samuelsson simplified it in his cookbook, *The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa*:

- 1 T fenugreek seeds
- 1/2 c ground serrano chilies
or other ground dried chilies
- 1/2 c paprika
- 2 T salt
- 2 t ground ginger
- 2 t onion powder
- 1 t ground cardamom,
preferably freshly ground
- 1 t ground nutmeg
- 1/2 t garlic powder
- 1/4 t ground cloves
- 1/4 t ground cinnamon
- 1/4 t ground allspice

Finely grind the fenugreek seeds with a mortar and pestle or in an electric spice or coffee grinder.

Stir together with remaining ingredients in a small bowl until well combined.

Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to three months.

Makes about one cup.



Sources - berbere

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

- *The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa* by Marcus Samuelsson
- Spruce Eats: thespruceeats.com/what-is-berbere-spice-4773542
- Photo from earthtoveg.com/berbere-spice/

These recipes are from:

- *The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food* by Marcus Samuelsson
- *The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa* by Marcus Samuelsson
- *In Bibi's Kitchen: The Recipes and Stories of Grandmothers from the Eight African Countries that Touch the Indian Ocean* by Hawa Hassan with Julia Turshen

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

Berberere purchased from Penzey's Spices.