



FEBRUARY 2026

ALLSPICE



Each month from February to November, we'll offer a free "take-and-make" spice kit highlighting a different spice, herb, or blend. Each kit includes a small portion of the featured spice, enough for the suggested recipes on the back page. Kits will be available starting the first Monday of the month at the Adult Services desk at both Harnish and Eastgate branches. Supplies are limited. Please take one kit per household. After trying the recipes, we'd love to hear from you! Share your photos, tips, or feedback at info@aapld.org.

Allspice comes from the pepper plant *Pimenta dioica*, a member of the myrtle family that grows as a shrub or tree and produces aromatic berries. The berries are harvested unripe, then sun-dried, and sold whole or ground as a spice.

Originally native to Jamaica, allspice spread throughout the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America by migratory birds. Today, it is grown in tropical regions worldwide and can even be adapted for container growing.

Culinary Uses Allspice is a key ingredient in Jamaican dishes like jerk seasoning and soups, and it's widely used in Middle Eastern stews and meat blends. It also flavors pickles, sausages, mole, vegetables, and Cincinnati-style chili, and enhances tomato and barbecue sauces. In sweet dishes, allspice adds warmth to gingerbread, spice cakes, and drinks like spiced cider, mulled wine, and chai.

Health Benefits Allspice is a good source of vitamin C and minerals such as calcium, iron, manganese, copper, and magnesium. It also contains small amounts of niacin, pantothenic acid, pyridoxine, vitamin A, potassium, and phosphorus, along with essential oils—most notably the aromatic compound eugenol.

Fun Facts Allspice gets its name after its flavor, which resembles a blend of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, and pepper, a term dating from 17th-century England. It was introduced to Europe by Christopher Columbus, who believed it was a type of pepper. Attempts to cultivate allspice from seed failed until it was discovered that the seeds only germinate after being digested by birds. In the Caribbean, allspice was used to cure pork for long sea voyages. This preserved meat, known as boucan by Indigenous peoples, later became associated with 17th-century pirates and gave rise to the term "buccaneers".



ALLERGEN WARNING AAPLD is not responsible for any reactions or sensitivities to any spice. Please be aware that spices may contain or come into contact with common allergens like dairy, eggs, soybeans, tree nuts, peanuts, fish, shellfish, or wheat. Stay safe! Cook with caution.



CARIBBEAN SPICED PUMPKIN

Ingredients

- 2 cups pumpkin, diced and peeled
- 1 red bell pepper, cut in chunks
- 14 oz canned tomatoes
- 2 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 sticks celery chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 scotch bonnet pepper chopped
- 2 teaspoons fresh ginger, grated
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon all spice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

Instructions

- Heat the coconut oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.
- Add the onion and sauté for 10 minutes until soft.
- Add the garlic, celery, and ginger and sauté for 5 minutes until soft.
- Add the pumpkin, red peppers, scotch bonnet pepper, and spices and cook for a further 3 minutes, stirring so that the spices are evenly distributed.
- Add the canned tomatoes, bring to the boil, and cover.
- Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until the pumpkin is soft, yet still firm. You don't want it too mushy.
- Season to taste and serve.

Recipe and image Source:

<https://divaliciousrecipes.com/caribbean-spiced-pumpkin/#recipe>



LEBANESE STUFFED ZUCCHINI

Ingredients

- 8 zucchini
- 1 1/2 cups rice
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups diced tomatoes
- 3 oz tomato paste
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 2 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp pepper
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 lb ground beef or lamb
- 3 Tbsp butter, melted

Instructions

- Clean zucchini and trim ends. Cut each zucchini into 3 pieces. Hollow out each piece.
- In a stock pot, heat olive oil and sauté onion until softened. Add garlic and sauté for 1 more minute.
- Remove 3/4 of the mixture and set aside. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, salt, pepper, bouillon cubes, bay leaves, parsley.
- Add water until the pot is 2/3 full. Bring to a simmer. Combine reserved onion mixture with meat, rice, melted butter, and allspice. Tightly stuff each zucchini shell with meat mixture.
- Add stuffed zucchini to the broth. Cook, covered, for 60–75 minutes.
- Serve hot.

Image Source:

<https://danastable.com/kousa-mahshi-stuffed-zucchini/>