



# STAPH Meal: Society To Always Procure Healthfully Newsletter

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF DR. MIKE: THE FOOD SHAMAN

IN THIS ISSUE: SPICES OF LIFE

## Spice!

*“Lovers may be - and indeed generally are - enemies, but they never can be friends, because there must always be a spice of jealousy and a something of Self in all their speculations.”*

*~ Lord Byron*

Spicy.

A word for both food and flesh. And we love our loves and our meals with that bit of bite. At the nexus of food and sex dwell spices; as intertwined with that history of humankind and food as our own DNA. Shaping our behavior, crafting empires, and crumbling dynasties; spices are at the root of it all. But from whence they came?

Herbs and spices have been used for both culinary and medicinal purposes for centuries. However, it has only been very recently that there has been serious and intensive research into their healthful role in diet.



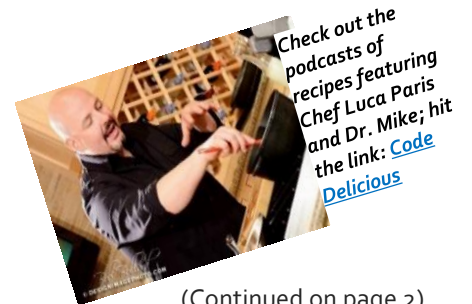
**Curcumin is the concentrated pill form of the bioactive ingredient in the spice turmeric**

Much of that has focused on a class of compounds known as polyphenols. These compounds appear to confer healthful benefit to the many contributors of chronic non-communicable diseases that form the scourge of modern Western healthcare. A scourge that is directly correlative to consumption of the standard American diet.

These benefits include a possible role in conferring protection against cardiovascular and neurodegenerative

diseases, cancer, and type 2 diabetes. Professor Tapsell observes that the real challenge in establishing the role of herbs and spices is not proving that they “have health benefits but in defining what these benefits are and developing methods to expose them by scientific means”.

One important aspect of evaluating nutritional and healthful aspects of the culinary use of herbs and spices is investigating the bioactive properties at levels at which these herbs and spices are consumed. This is what separates eating wholesome, authentic foods and reaping their natural benefits from taking supplementation.



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In some cases, supplementation is warranted; the previous newsletter featured the benefits of vitamin B complex supplements on the effects pollution and the May 17<sup>th</sup> episode of *Code Delicious* will feature an in depth discussion of turmeric and the use of curcumin as a supplement (you do not want to miss that anti-inflammatory powerhouse!). In other cases,

**Combining herbs and spices builds flavors, textures and adds powerful nutrition. It is how the Ancients cooked**



as in pure calcium supplementation it may be detrimental; in other cases, like multi-vitamins there is simply little, if any, beneficial effect demonstrable.

One of the challenges is accounting for the wide variance in character, quality and quantity of certain compounds based on speciation and growing conditions. The magnitude of effect on both nutrition and flavor is also affected by manufacture and preparation. Individual digestive processes also affect the bioactive properties of culinary herbs and spices.

This is where observational studies of certain cuisines and dietary patterns can yield insight and benefit. The polyphenols are a broad category containing structurally diverse compounds classified on the number of phenol rings (hydroxyl groups attached to aromatic rings) and the groups that bind these rings.

The main classes of dietary polyphenols are the phenolic acids (hydroxybenzoic and hydroxycinnamic acids), the flavonoids (flavonols, flavones, isoflavones, flavonones, flavanols and the anthocyanidins), the stilbenes and the lignans. Other classes of dietary polyphenols are the coumarins and

the tannins: the coumarins are cinnamic derived phenolic compounds and the term tannin is applied to large polyphenolic compounds including pro-anthocyanidins and gallic acid esters.

In addition to polyphenol anti-oxidants in spices like turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves; polyphenols are prominent in herbs like fennel, parsley, rosemary, sage and thyme.

HEALTHY BYTES BY THE NUMBERS

70-80%

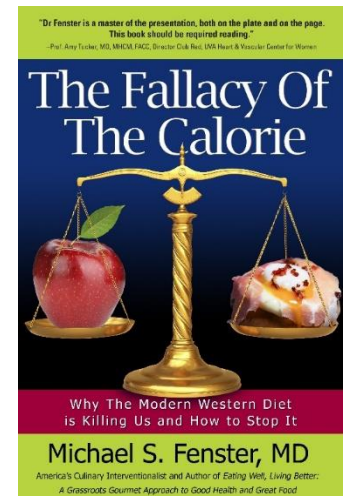
The efficacy in cinnamon oils in reducing diarrhea (in animal models)

16%

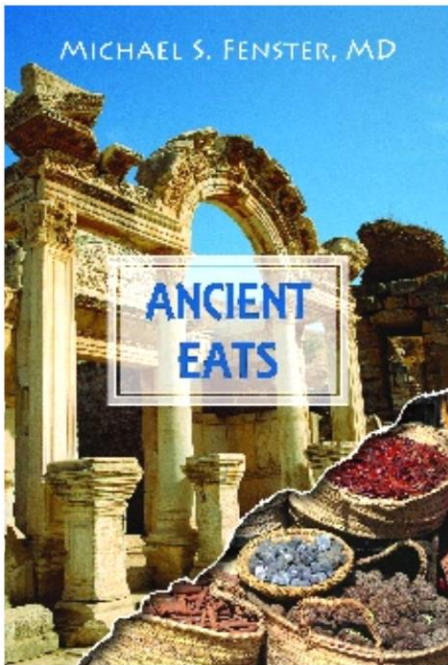
The percent decrease in the likelihood of developing diabetes taking curcumin

Opara, Elizabeth J; Magali Chohan, Magali (2014). Culinary Herbs and Spices: Their Bioactive Properties, the Contribution of Polyphenols and the Challenges in Deducing Their True Health Benefits. *IJMS*, 15:10.

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*Fresh and ground turmeric!*

**For You! (continued from Page 1)**