

Cold- Free But Still Spicy

By Rebekah Linga

What do ginger, horseradish, mustard, and the chili pepper have in common? All have a long- standing and varied history, as well as the ability to help you ward off colds this winter. Ginger has been known for over 3000 years, and had been used by the Romans. However, ginger disappeared from the European continent, and Marco Polo is credited with the revival of ginger in European countries. Horseradish has been known since 1500 B. C. by the Egyptians. Even Greece's Delphic Oracle knew of horseradish's importance, saying, "The radish is worth its weight in lead, the beet its weight in silver, the horseradish its weight in gold" (horseradish.org). Like ginger and horseradish, mustard's power has been known for centuries, especially by the Latins and Greeks, who had far more radical uses for the spice than we do today. And as for the chili pepper? The chili pepper has been known in parts of Central and South America for over 6,100 years.

Since the healing properties of these spices have been known for such a long time, there must be some beneficial use for them today as well. Ginger, native to Southern Asia, is great for relieving cold symptoms and sore throats. It has warming properties, thus improving circulation and helping to remove toxins from the body. Ginger, which contains the active ingredient gingerol, could be used to aid with nausea and general stomach upset. In addition, ginger has been shown to help those with arthritis. However, the possibilities with ginger are endless.

Horseradish has the ability to clear sinuses by encouraging the body to excrete toxins, as well as increase facial circulation because of its warming properties. In addition, horseradish has antibiotic properties, making it especially helpful during the cold and flu season. Similarly, mustard has antiseptic powers as well as the ability to increase circulation, and has been used to stimulate the appetite, while aiding with digestion. In addition, mustard seeds provide many necessary nutrients, like calcium, selenium, iron, and omega 3 fatty acids.

What you may not know about the chili pepper is that it contains three times the amount of Vitamin C as oranges (<http://healthzone.wordpress.com>). Thus, chili peppers are excellent immune boosters. If a cold has already set in, you can use chili peppers as a decongestant, clearing both the sinuses and the lungs. Chili peppers contain capsaicin, a mild irritant that has heating capabilities when applied directly to the skin. The capsaicin found in chili peppers also has been used to treat chronic pain, as well as muscle soreness. The heating properties in chili peppers can also stimulate the metabolism.

The next time you visit *The Living Earth*, you may want to stock up on a few of these spices. Why not try a mug of ginger tea to soothe your sore throat? Or how about using horseradish, mustard, and chili peppers as natural decongestants? Don't bother with drugstore remedies that contain artificial ingredients whose names you can't pronounce. This winter, it's all about living well and living naturally, so who better to assist you than those at *The Living Earth*?

Sources:

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