FitJeevan

First edition · 2026

THE EVERYDAY INDIAN HERB & SPICE GUIDE

Pansari Ki Potli

127 pages · full colour

46 Indian kitchen spices & herbs — identify, buy and use them safely

🛒 Real vs fake | 🧪 10 home tests | ⚖️ Official doses only | 🍵 6 home methods



46 items, each with a full page

8 common problems — the truth

5 dangerous items to avoid

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Simple English · Based on government and scientific sources

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🛒 Part 1 — 7
Buying from the Pansari
The right item, the right name, the right form — and protection from adulteration.



🧪 Part 2 — 12
Home Tests for Adulteration
Simple methods from FSSAI — a glass of water, a sheet of white paper, and a little attention.



🌶️ Part 3 — 19
Kitchen Spices
13 items: Turmeric, Ginger · Dry ginger, Cumin, Carom seed, Fennel, Fenugreek, Black pepper, Clove, Cinnamon, Green cardamom, Asafoetida, Black seed (Nigella), Long pepper



🫃 Part 4 — 33
Stomach & Digestion
5 items: Psyllium husk, Senna, Flaxseed, Triphala, Bael



🤧 Part 5 — 39
Cough & Cold
3 items: Holy basil, Liquorice root, Honey



🥜 Part 6 — 43
Dry Fruits & Seeds
7 items: Almond, Walnut, Fig, Raisins, Dates, Sesame, Pumpkin seed



🫙 Part 7 — 51
Oils & Ghee
5 items: Mustard oil, Coconut oil, Sesame oil, Ghee, Castor oil



🧴 Part 8 — 57
For External Use Only
5 items: Aloe vera, Neem, Henna, Alum · Soapnut, False daisy

Real or Fake? — 5 Steps

1 👀
Look
Even colour? Not too bright? Dust, stones, straws?

→

2 👃
Smell
The aroma you know? Dull, stale, mouldy, chemical?

→

3 🤏
Rub
Colour comes off on the palm? Hollow seeds? Sticky?

→

4 🥛
In water
Some adulterants float or release colour in water (→ page 12)

→

5 🚫
In doubt, don't buy
Buy from another shop; sealed and licensed

✅ What home tests can catch

- Papaya seeds floating in water (in black pepper)
- Oil-extracted cloves (they float)
- Turmeric and chilli that release colour
- Grass seeds, dust, stones (in cumin)
- Other oil in coconut oil (fridge test)

⚠️ What home tests cannot catch

- Pesticides, mould toxins (aflatoxin)
- Heavy metals — lead, mercury
- Modern sugar syrups in honey
- Drugs hidden in capsules
- The wrong species (e.g. giloy, shatavari)

For these, rely only on **brand, licence and seal**.

📱 Adulteration complaints (India): FSSAI's **Food Safety Connect** app, or toll-free **1800-112-100**.



Test 1

Artificial colour in turmeric powder

1. Take water in a clear glass
2. Add a small spoon of turmeric — **do not stir**
3. Watch for a few minutes

✅ **Pure:** Pure turmeric settles at the bottom; water turns **light yellow**.

❌ **Adulterated:** Water turns **deep, bright yellow** — a sign of artificial colour.



Test 2

Brick powder/sand in chilli powder

1. Add a spoon of red chilli powder to a glass of water
2. Watch for streaks of colour
3. Rub the settled part between your fingers

✅ **Pure:** Powder settles slowly, no colour streaks.

❌ **Adulterated: Coloured streaks** = artificial colour; **gritty** at the bottom = sand/brick; **soapy smooth** = soapstone.

Source: FSSAI DART, FSSAI video series

Turmeric

Kitchen Spices

Haldi · हल्दी · *Curcuma longa*

Part used: Rhizome (root knob)



How strong is the evidence?

Insufficient · **Limited** · Moderate · Good

🌿 What it is used for

- Everyday cooking spice and colour
- Traditionally used for indigestion, gas and a heavy stomach
- Some research signals for knee pain and indigestion

Turmeric in food is safe. Liver injury has been reported with strong curcumin "supplements".

🛒 How to buy from the pansari

- Buy **whole knobs** and grind at home — powder is adulterated more often
- If buying powder: sealed pack with an FSSAI licence
- A very bright, "glossy" yellow is a warning sign

⚠️ **Do not confuse with: Mango ginger (amba haldi)** and **black turmeric** are different plants.

🔍 Adulteration

- Artificial colour on whole knobs (FSSAI home test)
- Colour and soil/starch in the powder

📦 **Store:** Airtight box, away from sun and moisture

⏳ **Lasts:** No reliable source for shelf life found

🛑 Caution

🟡 Gallbladder/liver disease, pregnancy and blood thinners: **no supplements**

🟡 Not as a medicine for children — as a spice in food is fine

🚑 Stop at once / see a doctor if

- Yellow eyes or skin, dark urine, severe tiredness, loss of appetite (liver signs)
- Skin rash or hives

Kadha (Decoction)



An extract made by boiling hard parts — roots, barks, dried rhizomes — in water.

Used for: Dry ginger, liquorice, cinnamon, arjuna bark, baheda

Step by step

1. **Coarsely crush** the item — whole pieces release less
2. Put it in a clean steel pot with water
3. When it boils, turn the heat **low**, cover and simmer
4. Strain through a fine sieve
5. Drink it **warm** — not boiling hot

✅ Do

- Make it fresh every time
- Measure in grams — a kitchen spoon is not a measure
- Try only one new item at a time

❌ Don't

- Do not make a whole day's batch at once
- No adult amounts for children
- "The stronger, the better" — wrong; more = danger



Turmeric

Source: EMA

⚖️ **Dose (adults)**	Digestive complaints (traditional): **powder 0.5–1 g, 2–3 times a day**; or 0.5–1 g crushed turmeric in 150 ml boiling water as a tea, 2–3 times a day.
⏳ **How long**	If the trouble lasts more than 2 weeks, see a doctor.
🧒 **Children**	Under 18: not as a medicine (EMA).
🛑 **Check first**	Not with gallbladder/liver disease, in pregnancy, or with blood thinners.



Ginger / Dry ginger

Source: EMA

⚖️ **Dose (adults)**	To prevent travel sickness: **1–2 g powder, once, 1 hour before travel**. Bloating, loss of appetite (traditional): powder 0.18–1 g, 3 times a day.
⏳ **How long**	For stomach complaints, not more than 2 weeks.
🧒 **Children**	Not for travel sickness in children under 6.
🛑 **Check first**	Not with blood thinners, before surgery, or with gallstones.

🤰 Gas, Bloating and Indigestion

1 🚑 **Check this first — if any of these, no home remedy: see a doctor**

- Chest pain or heaviness spreading to the arm/jaw — **this may not be gas; go to hospital at once**
- Vomiting blood or black stools
- Persistent vomiting, weight loss, difficulty swallowing

⬇️ **No, none of these**

2 🏠 **Most important at home**

- Eat slowly, do not overeat; dinner 2–3 hours before bed
- Less fried-spicy food, cold drinks, late-night tea
- Walk for 10–15 minutes after meals

⬇️ **Along with that**

3 🧺 **From the potli — tradition and limited evidence**



A little fennel after meals
See page 24



Carom seed — in food
See page 23



Cumin — in food
See page 22



Asafoetida — in tempering (not as medicine for babies)
See page 30



Ginger — for nausea
See page 21

Only after reading the 🛑 section of the card. Doses → page 79

⬇️ **Still not better**

4 🩺 **When to see a doctor**

Daily trouble for more than 2 weeks, or a new start after age 45 — get checked by a doctor.



☠️ Datura (Thorn Apple)

No home use at all

- Seeds, flowers, leaves, fruit — **every part is poisonous**
- The seeds can look like chilli seeds; cases of robbery after mixing them into food or "prasad"
- Signs: dilated pupils, dry mouth, hot red skin, confused talk, seizures

If eaten by mistake, do not wait for symptoms — **hospital immediately**. Do not accept "prasad" or food from strangers while travelling.

Sources: WHO INCHEM · Indian case series



☠️ Argemone (Satyanashi)

The danger hidden in mustard

- Its black seeds **look like mustard seeds** — they get mixed in at harvest
- Their oil mixed into mustard oil causes **epidemic dropsy**
- Swollen legs, red skin, breathlessness, glaucoma, even death

Buy only **sealed mustard oil with an FSSAI licence**. If several people at home or in the neighbourhood get swollen legs together — stop that oil at once, tell a doctor and the food safety officer.

Sources: FSSAI · APJMT 2013