

FOOD

FENNEL



Garam Masala and the Bengali Panchphoran. Sugar-coated fennel is also served as a mouth freshener in many parts of the country. Coming under the category of a sweet-smelling spice, fennel is a versatile spice and can be used in many ways.

“Fresh fennel can be used as accompaniments for many dishes. Grilled fennel bulb goes very well with grilled fish and can be used as a grilled vegetable also. It can be roasted and pureed and can be served as a side sauce or as a base for pasta,” says Chef Shiiv Parvesh, Head Chef, Hyatt Regency Amritsar. Fennel seed is used for tempering gravies and masalas. It can be slightly

roasted and grounded and then used for flavouring curry. It also goes very well with dessert because of its sweet-smelling taste like in malpua. Chef Tarun Sibal, Director, One Fine Meal, Delhi, advises, “Less is more when fennel is used in cooking. It is a potent spice hence mild usage is desired. Different parts of fennel can be used in different preparations. They have a mild anise flavour but because they are so delicate and beautiful they are most often used for garnish.”

While using fennel it is recommended that you lightly roast on low heat and powder. Use the powder in combination with other spices and heat to get your desired flavour. Fennel is a very aromatic spice often used in combination with other Indian spices. A large variety of dishes from almost all parts of the country use fennel to add a sweet aroma. Some of the preparations of fennel include Goan Xacuti, Thokku style south Indian dishes and north Indian pickles.

Good liquors exist with a fennel being the star ingredient. Also try gently using fennel in western preparations such as lamb or chicken, using a roasting or braising approach. “Also do not hesitate to use the leaves for higher flavour, and bulbs as a gently aromatic vegetable,” says Chef Anthony, Head Chef of KA01 Rooftop Bar and Eats at ibis Bengaluru City Center. Fennel can be used as a tempering. For instance adding fennel curtails the bitterness of bitter gourd and fennel tempering is a must while making karele ki subzi.

In powder form it enhances the flavours of curry like in the classical Kashmiri speciality dish mutton rogan josh – dry fennel powder is added in the end which gives the entire dish a unique flavour. It can be used as topping like saunf wala tandoori naan and the

KNOW YOUR FENNEL

- When using fresh fennel it is very common for people to throw away the fronds. However if used fresh, the fronds have a light liquorice flavour and work well as a garnish to salads. It can also be dried and stored for adding as a seasoning for sauces and pastas.
- When buying dried fennel always look for seeds that have at least a little green tinge, and are not completely brown.
- The dried fennel seeds can retain flavor up to three years. However once ground it should be consumed within a year.
- Be careful when roasting to avoid burning. Select greener rather than browner or paler ones when you buy.