

## Fennel, Florence Fennel, Finnochio

Family	Apiaceae
Botanical	Foeniculum vulgare
Parts Used	Bulb, Seeds and leaves
USDA Hardiness	4A - 9A
Light	Full Sun
Soil	Well drained
Duration	Perennial



Propagation Soil pH requirements: 6.6 (neutral) to 8.5 (alkaline).  
From seed, direct sow after last frost.

Water As needed, do not overwater

Growing There seems to be some confusion between this, the cultivar group *Foeniculum vulgare* or Florence Fennel/Finnochio, and common fennel. The azoricums forms a bulbous leaf base that is eaten as a vegetable, while the common fennel, including bronze fennel, does not. Vegetable fennel is a biennial, harvested at the end of it's first year. Herb fennel is generally perennial.

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Medicinal Uses Carminative, aromatic, anti-spasmodic, stimulant, galactagogue, rubefacient, expectorant, anti-emetic, diaphoretic and hepatic.

Benefits Excellent stomach and intestinal remedy for flatulence and colic while stimulating digestion and appetite. Has a calming effect on bronchitis and coughs. Externally the oil eases muscular and rheumatic pains. Increases the flow of milk in nursing mothers.

Preparation Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water on 1-2 teaspoons of slightly crushed seeds and infuse for 10 minutes. Drink 3 times a day.  
To ease flatulence, take a cup 1/2 hour before the meal.

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# Fines Herbes

## Culinary Uses

Use to flavour fish, meat and vegetable dishes, as well as breads and chutneys. You can also chew the whole seeds as a breath-freshener, and they're believed to aid digestion, too.

## Five Spice Powder

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Fennel seed, and the similarly-flavored star anise both play a prominent role in Chinese Five Spice Powder. Add five spice to beef or poultry rub for an Asian flavor.

### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons black pepper corns

3 star anise pods

2 teaspoons fennel seed

6 whole cloves

2 cinnamon sticks, approximately 3 long

### Directions:

Toast all spices in a dry skillet over medium heat until fragrant. Spread spices out onto foil or parchment to cool. Don't leave them in the pan, because they will continue to cook and burn.

Once cool, grind spices in a spice grinder or bladed coffee grinder until it is as fine as you can get it.

Store covered in a cool, dark cabinet. Exposure to light will decrease the shelf life.



## Historical Facts

The history of fennel goes back to ancient times as it was easily accessible throughout the Mediterranean Basin. Roman warriors are said to have consumed fennel to make them strong. It was also thought to have the power to help people keep thin. Its Greek name *marathon*, which means "grow thin", reflects the belief in its ability to suppress appetite.

In Greek mythology, Prometheus, who brought fire to mankind, concealed it in a stalk of fennel. The stalk of fennel, capped with a pine cone, was used as a wand by followers of Dionysus. It was called a *Thyrus*.

Pliny, a Roman writer and philosopher, said of fennel, "Fennel has a wonderful property to mundify our sight and take away the film that overcasts and dims our eyes." The Anglo-Saxons held it sacred, and Charlemagne, the great emperor, declared in 812 AD (CE) that fennel was essential in every garden because it had healing properties. He had it grown in the imperial gardens.

In some western cultures, hung over doors or placed in key holes, fennel was thought to ward off evil spirits or ghosts. It was said to be especially effective at the summer solstice.

In England in the 1200s fennel seed was commonly used as an appetite suppressant to help people to get through fasting days. Later, they were commonly used in church during long services to keep stomachs from rumbling.

In the late 1700s fennel became one of the ingredients (along with anise and wormwood) in a patent medicinal elixir called absinthe. This elixir was soon marketed as a spirit, and became a popular drink among the Bohemian set in post WWI Europe and the United States.

## Additional Tips

## Nutrition Facts

Fennel seeds are concentrated source of minerals like copper, iron, calcium, potassium, manganese, selenium, zinc, and magnesium. Copper is required in the production of red blood cells. Iron is required for red blood cell formation. Zinc is a co-factor in many enzymes that regulate growth and development, sperm generation, digestion and nucleic acid synthesis. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor for the powerful anti-oxidant enzyme, superoxide dismutase. Furthermore, the seeds indeed are the storehouse for many vital vitamins. Vitamin A, vitamin E,

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vitamin C as well as many B-complex vitamins like thiamin, pyridoxine, riboflavin and niacin particularly are concentrated in these seeds.