

Berberé

Type: Spice

Serves: Varies

Time to Prepare: 15 minutes

Ingredients

1 tsp. ginger, ground

½ tsp. coriander, ground

½ tsp. cardamom, ground

½ tsp. fenugreek seeds

½ tsp. nutmeg, grated

¼ tsp. cloves, ground

¼ tsp. allspice

¼ tsp. cinnamon

1 tbsp. crushed red pepper

1/3 cup paprika

1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Options: ¼ cup of onion, 1 clove of garlic, 3 tbsp. of oil (use this if you want to make berberé paste)

Instructions

Set up a small pan on a medium heat.

Toast the spices for 1 minute and no more.

Immediately remove from the heat.

Let them cool and store them.

Options: **Chop** the onion and garlic.

In a separate pan from the spices, sauté the onion until it turns brown.

Add the garlic and sauté for another minute.

Blend up the toasted spices with the onion and garlic.

Place in a container and cover with the olive oil.

Kitchen Equipment

Sauté Pan

Optional: Spice Grinder or Mortar and Pestle if you want to grind your own spices

Optional: Grater if you want to use fresh ginger

Optional: Blender if you make the paste

Presentation



It's a spice mixture, so there isn't really any presentation that goes with it.

Time Management

This is quick to make, so it can be made just before you use it. It also keeps very well, so you can make a large batch and keep it in your pantry.

Complimentary Food and Drinks

This goes with just about any darkly colored Ethiopian food and it goes really well crusted on seitan or sautéed onto vegetables like zucchini and potatoes.

Where to Shop

These spices are most easily found at ethnic stores, particularly Indian and Middle Eastern. They can also be found at African stores, but the other two are a little more common.

How It Works

Berberé is a red spice made up of mostly paprika with some heat and a lot of different aromatics. The paprika gives it a dark flavor while the crushed red peppers mingle in with that to give it some heat. The cardamom, cloves, allspice, and nutmeg are the strong aromatics, giving it a hint of lightness. Because these aromatics are so strong, they are added to the berberé in limited quantities. Otherwise, they would be the dominating taste in the berberé and overwhelm the food it was used to spice. The same holds true with the fenugreek, which has a very deep taste to it, helping to round out the spice mixture. The ginger adds a staple Ethiopian flavor to the berberé.

Chef's Notes

Like curries, berberé mixtures can change from family to family, so it's not that important to worry about getting this absolutely precise. Experiment with it and you'll eventually find a mix that is your favorite. Berberé can also be used outside of Ethiopian dishes to great effect. It can be used crusted on seitan, in soups, and even in enchiladas. If you go the optional route and make the berberé paste, put it in a storage jar and cover it with about ¼ inch of olive oil. Use about twice as much paste and you would powder and replace the olive oil when you take some of the paste. The olive oil helps seal in the flavor and freshness of it. It also means you can store it for several weeks.

Nutritional Facts (does not include the options)

Calories 112

Calories from Fat 27

Fat 3g

Potassium

Total Carbohydrates 22g

Dietary Fiber 13g

Sugars 3g

Protein 5g

Salt 11mg

Vitamin A 220%

Vitamin B6 67%

Vitamin C 40%

Calcium 7%

Iron 46%

Thiamin 14%

Riboflavin 34%

Niacin 28%

Folate 8%

Phosphorous 11%

Zinc 9%

Magnesium

Copper

Interesting Facts

Berberé is ubiquitous throughout Ethiopian cuisine.

Berberé mixes spices that originally came from radically different parts of the world, from the New World to Asia.

It is traditional to eat Ethiopian cuisine with the right hand.