



Magic Ingredients!

WORDS SARAH CLARKE – Owner of Natural Earth Health Products

I love sharing the benefits of the ingredients. I get joy out of people understanding why each ingredient counts and how it helps the body – what function it plays. So I have chosen to share the magic of one of my favourite Christmas spices for this edition. Cinnamon!

Many people are surprised when I mention 'True Cinnamon'... not knowing that there was more than one type of this beautiful and very aromatic spice. 'True' or Cinnamom Verum (from the plant Cinnamomum Zeylanicum) is the inner bark of a small evergreen tree native to Sri Lanka – and is commonly referred to as Ceylon Cinnamon.

The other varieties come from a different plant (Cinnamom Cassia) and are also known as Chinese or Saigon Cinnamon. Most of this type is cultivated in China and Indonesia.

Ceylon cinnamon is typically more expensive than any of the Cassia versions, and it is also the cinnamon more closely associated with potential

health benefits. However, since both forms belong not only to the same family of plants (Lauraceae, the laurel family) but also to the same genus (Cinnamomum), they do share many characteristics. However, the contents differ much in the amount of Couramin, which is a naturally occurring substance with strong blood thinning properties. The level of Couramin in Ceylon Cinnamon is negligibly small, while that in the Cassia variety is said to be 1200 times higher. This is said to over a prolonged period of time to cause negative impact on the kidney and liver.

How can you tell the difference? When ground, it is very hard to visually but aromatically there is a huge difference. When we open our Organic Ground Cinnamom at the office – you can smell it right through the building!

Delightful! The taste I believe is more refined and subtle. The sticks do differ side by side – Ceylon has a thin and paper like textured bar that has multiple layers when rolled up versus the tougher, thicker darker brown, less layered tougher Cassia.

Health Benefits? A long history of use in both Eastern and Western cultures as a medicine, Cinnamon contains compounds called Catechins, which help relieve nausea and it is said the volatile oil in the bark may also help the body to process food by assisting in breaking down fats during digestion. It has been indicated for a variety of ailments including gastrointestinal problems, urinary infections, relief of cold and flu symptoms and is said to help people with Diabetes metabolise sugar better. It is said the tannins have an astringent action, which may help with the stemming of nose bleeds, heavy periods, catarrhal congestion. It contains the antioxidant Glutathione and research suggests it provides anti-microbial, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial and anti-parasitic properties. It both warms and stimulates the digestive system as a calmativ, it helps to break up intestinal gas and has been used traditionally to combat diarrhoea and morning sickness.

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