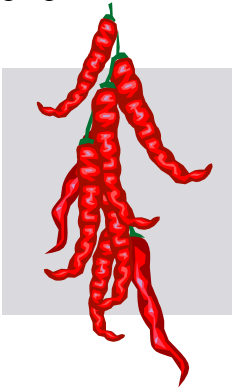


Warm the Bones By Virginia Scoggins

Staying healthy challenges all of us, especially in the cold weather. For those of us with chronic pain, it can be a day-to-day struggle. In the kitchen, amazing allies are waiting to boost the immune system and help the inflammation in the body. Let me introduce you to three of my grandmother's favorites: **capsaicin or red hot peppers, turmeric and ginger**. All three of these wonderful tasty spices are anti-inflammatory and boost the ability of the body to handle pain sensory messages.

My grandmother, Bamie, was always interested in plants and how they can help us heal. In her legacy, I would like to share a little of her kitchen wisdom. She often "warmed her bones" (and her family and friends), with these three musketeers: cayenne, turmeric and ginger.



She grew a variety of **cayenne peppers**. These tiny red, hot "lady slippers" can be made into tinctures and ointments for arthritis relieving arthritic pain for hours. Adding these peppers to vegetables, stews, soups and herbal teas eases a sore throat and shortens a cold. Cayenne has long enjoyed a reputation in the herbal world as a "counterirritant," meaning it can redirect the mind. Cayenne increases the metabolism by immediately influencing the venous structure. It is effective at blocking the pain, especially when applied topically. The cumulative effect will treat nerve pain effectively. Cayenne's primary chemical make up includes capsaicin, beta-carotene, flavonoids and vitamin C.

Always wear gloves when preparing these peppers, as the oils will cling to the skin. The hottest part of the pepper is the seeds. Process the skin and discard the seeds to avoid the pain and keep the warmth. Be brave and try a dash in your food!

Grandmother Bamie's Foot Powder

1-tablespoon cayenne pepper

1-cup cornstarch

Mix and use as a foot powder, keeping the feet toasty warm, excellent for the next outdoor football game.

Grandmother Bamie's Cold and Flu Remedy

1 quart of boiled water

1-cup apple cider vinegar (with the mother)

1/4 cup of sea salt

1/4 cup of cayenne pepper

Mix ingredients in a canning jar and take 1 to 3 tablespoons every 2 to 3 hours.

Spiced Apple Cider

1-cup cider

2 cloves

1 stick cinnamon

1/8th teaspoon cayenne pepper

Microwave cider for 2 minutes, add spices and steep 3 to 5 minutes.



Turmeric has been used for over 4,000 years spicing foods and treating ailments of our ancestors. It is used as food coloring and gives curry its distinct flavor and aroma. Herbalists regard it as an anti-inflammatory, natural antiseptic, antibacterial agent and a powerful antioxidant. The active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin. It is a natural liver detoxifier. I have included a simple curry recipe for you to try, it is even good over plain rice!

Simple Curry

1/4-cup olive oil (more if needed to create a thick cream when done)

2 to 4 tablespoons dried turmeric powder.

2 to 4 tablespoons dried ginger powder

1 to 4 teaspoons dried cayenne powder (add slivers of the pepper if desired).

1 to 3 tablespoon dried grated garlic

2 to 3 tablespoons honey

Warm the olive oil in small frying pan on low heat; add spices and cook on low until the mixture "blooms." Stir often. This sauce is excellent with chicken, pork, fish and vegetables. Add 2 to 4 tablespoons of the curry mixture and 1 can coconut milk to meat or vegetables and serve over warm rice. Store any extra mixture in a small jar in the refrigerator.



Ginger makes great teas, curries, cookies, bread and houses! Although ginger is called a root, it is actually a rhizome. A perennial herb native to China and India, it has played an important part in Chinese medicine for centuries and used as a preventive for the plague in the Middle Ages. Ginger's anti-inflammatory properties effectively help reduce pain and inflammation associated with arthritis, rheumatism and muscle spasms. Its therapeutic properties stimulate circulation and help remove toxins from the body. It is known to aid in digestion, alleviate high blood pressure; treat nausea and morning sickness and lower LDL cholesterol.

Grandmother Bamie's Ginger Tea

4 to 5 cups of water

4 to 6 slices of fresh ginger (generous slices)

2 to 4 slices orange

4 cloves

2 to 4 lemon slices

2 cinnamon sticks

Honey to taste

Place water, ginger slices, clover and cinnamon in saucepan and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat and allow simmering for 20 minutes. Strain liquid out to remove the cloves, adding lemon, oranges and honey to taste.

Try adding fresh grated ginger to peppermint tea, or chamomile. Chamomile and ginger tea compresses aids sore muscles for external relief. Powdered ginger enhances rice dishes, soups, and stews.

My grandmother used to call these three herbs: **cayenne, turmeric and ginger**, the herbs that "warm your bones." Explore recipes that use these herbs. Travel the world with your taste buds and improve your health on this journey!