



The Etna Library's



# SPICE *of the Month* Program

Spice for December, 2023:

## Nutmeg

Nutmeg is a spice made from the seed of the nutmeg tree (*Myristica fragrans*), a native Indonesian evergreen tree that is the source of two popular spices: nutmeg and mace. Nutmeg is the inner seed, while mace is the red, lace-like substance that covers the seed.

Nutmeg is a quintessential autumn spice, frequently found in fall desserts and beverages. It can also be used in savory dishes, and pairs well with cream- or cheese-based recipes. Nutty and slightly sweet, nutmeg is an intense spice that has a strong and distinct aroma.

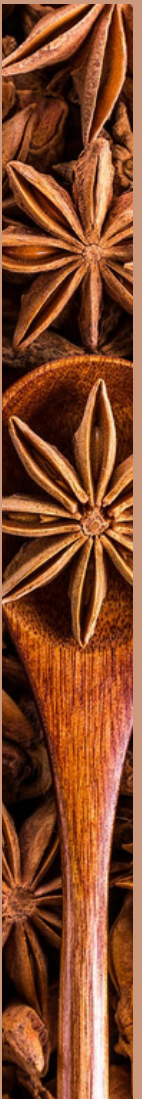
To make nutmeg for seasoning, the nutmeg seeds are dried gradually in the sun for a period of six to eight weeks. During this time, the nutmeg shrinks away from its hard seed coat. The spice is ready when the kernels rattle in their shells when shaken.



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# Homemade Wassail



Prep Time: 5 min  
Cook Time: 30 min  
Servings: 10

Wassail is a hot mulled cider with Nordic roots. It's traditionally enjoyed during wassailing, which is the ancient Yuletide practice of singing door-to-door.

## Ingredients:

2 apples  
8 cups apple cider  
2 cups orange juice  
4 cinnamon sticks  
15 whole cloves (or 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves)  
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 tablespoon light brown sugar

## Directions:

1. Poke the whole cloves into the apples on all sides
2. Add all of the ingredients, including the apples, to a large pot over medium-low heat.
3. Bring to a simmer. Simmer for 30-45 minutes.
4. Remove the apples and whole cloves. Ladle into mugs and enjoy!

Note: while this recipe contains no alcohol, traditional wassail is often served with an added splash of brandy, bourbon, rum, or whiskey.

Source for these recipes:  
[www.tastesbetterfromscratch.com](http://www.tastesbetterfromscratch.com)

# Candied Pecans



Prep Time: 15 min  
Cook Time: 1 hour  
Servings: 20

Candied pecans are made with sugar and spice - specifically cinnamon and nutmeg - and everything nice! These are a holiday favorite!

## Ingredients:

1 large egg white  
1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract  
1/2 tablespoon water  
1 cup granulated sugar  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 pound raw pecal halves

## Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Butter a rimmed baking sheet.
2. In a bowl, beat the egg white, vanilla, and water until frothy. In a separate bowl, combine the sugar, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
3. Add the pecans to the egg-white mixture and gently toss to coat. Transfer the nuts to the sugar mixture and toss to coat. Spread the nuts evenly on the baking sheet.
4. Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 10-15 minutes. Watch the pecans carefully during the last 15-20 minutes of cooking for doneness. The nuts should be golden brown, crunchy, and evenly coated with the hardened sugar coating when they come out of the oven.
5. Store the pecans in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to two weeks.