



10 Top Culinary Spices & Herbs for Bone Health



Who doesn't love the feeling of taking charge of their bone health? One simple way to support your wellness, including your bone health, is having readily attainable spices and herbs on hand easily and affordably include them in your daily food and beverages. A short list of herb and spice retailers is also included at the end of this list. So why not start building your Bone Health Apothecary today!

Cinnamon. Said to be one of the oldest spices, dating back 2500 years, this popular spice can help lower blood sugar and stimulate digestion and circulation. It is also reported to reduce bone breakdown and help prevent bone loss. Studies of this spice indicate it may help prevent osteoporotic bone loss. Sprinkle it on fruit, add it to tea or coffee, put some in your yogurt. It works well in savory dishes as well as sweet, so don't hesitate to try it on meat or in soups. Make a simple tea by stirring $\frac{1}{4}$ t. cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ t ginger and 1 t lemon juice into a cup of hot water. Look for Ceylon cinnamon, also known as "true cinnamon."

Cloves. This spicy aromatic herb stimulates circulation and digestion. The tiny clove buds pack a powerful nutrient punch; they contain vitamin K, manganese, and omega-3 fatty acids, all of which are essential bone nutrients. Cloves are high in phenolic compounds which have been shown to enhance bone mineral content. Ground cloves are great in baked goods and stir fry, or you can put whole cloves in hot apple cider on a cold winter day. Cloves are rich in calcium, magnesium, vitamins C and K, and omega-3 fatty acids, and manganese, a mineral needed to make bone tissue and cartilage. Clove is a great add to curries, chili, and stewed fruits.

Cumin. An important ancient Egyptian medicine, these seeds are similar to caraway seeds. Early Romans used ground cumin much like we use pepper today. Cumin is popular in Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, and North African cuisine. Cumin is a great source of fiber as well as bone minerals like magnesium, zinc, selenium, manganese, potassium, calcium, copper, and iron. A recent study showed that cumin could reverse osteoporosis in mice. Researchers gave the credit to cumin's high levels of unsaturated fatty acids as well as its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Cumin nicely complements orange vegetables.

Coriander. As an amalgamating spice, coriander mixes well with most any other spice, sweet or savory. Many consider it to be the most useful spice in the kitchen. This spice comes from the seeds of the herb known as cilantro or Chinese parsley. It's packed with bone-building minerals like calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, and iron. Even if you're one of those people who hate cilantro (the plant the coriander seed originates from), you may love coriander. It has a sweet and toasty aroma. You can place it in a spice/pepper grinder and just sprinkle on food.

Dandelion. Dandelion shoots (the stems, leaves, and flowers) are not only rich in the essential bone-building nutrient, calcium, they also contain plentiful amounts of boron, which is critical to strong bones. Dandelion shoots have one of the highest amounts of the mineral boron of almost any food. Dried dandelion stems, flowers and leaves can be dried and made into tea. Add one teaspoon of dried dandelion per cup of boiled water. Let steep for at least 10 minutes. Or purchase dandelion tea at most grocery or health food stores.

Garlic. There's almost nothing this spice can't do. Sometimes called "poor man's penicillin, it has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties. It's also full of key bone nutrients, from vitamins A, B6, C, and K to phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, zinc, calcium, and iron. In animal studies, garlic oil was found to prevent bone loss following ovary removal. Studies of garlic have found it to lower blood pressure and cholesterol. It's a staple in many soups, dips, or sauces, or you can roast it and eat it as-is. Many people enjoy it raw. One tip for using fresh garlic: after peeling cloves, smash them with the side of a knife and let them "rest" for 15 minutes to allow the healthy sulfide compound allicin, a powerful anti-fungal and anti-bacterial, to form. Adding garlic to cooking food just before finished for affords the most potency.

Ginger. Classed as one of the more versatile spices, ginger is widely used in Asian cooking, has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions, as well as significant amounts of potassium, magnesium, selenium, and phosphorus, which are all good for bone health. The dried root is "hotter" than fresh. Dr. Tieraona Low Dog, MD, states that drinking dry ginger tea three days before, though, and three days after chemotherapy can significantly reduce nausea. In addition, ginger is high in sulfur which aids in detoxification. Make ginger into a tea, salad dressing or slice fresh thinly and cook it in stir fry or with fish as it neutralizes overly "fishy notes."

Nettle. A popular nutritive herb, nettle is rich in iron, calcium, magnesium, protein, and other nutrients. Also known as stinging nettles due to the little, hair-fine stingers on the stalks of the fresh plant, nettles are a nutritional powerhouse, containing an abundance of calcium in a form that is readily absorbed. Dried nettles do not exert a stinging action. Add one teaspoon of dried nettles per cup of boiled water. Let steep for 10 minutes. Strain and drink three times daily for best results. You can also add dried nettles to soups or stews to give these foods a nutritional boost. It is mildly diuretic.

Thyme. This small, low-growing shrub is a popular spice to use in cooking. It also is a medicinal plant that dates back to ancient times. Thyme has been used to enhance immune function and treat respiratory, nerve, and heart conditions. One study examined how taking 1,000 milligrams of thyme daily for six months would affect 40 postmenopausal women. Researchers found that regular consumption of thyme improved bone mineral density better than a calcium/vitamin D3 supplement. Thyme may be most effective when used with sage and rosemary. Bone mineral density levels were higher with this combination than with thyme alone. Thyme complements soups, stews, stuffings, and rich sauces and gravies.

Turmeric. A favorite of Indian and South Asian cuisine, this spice helps protect the body from oxidative stress that leads to cell damage, bone loss, and disease. It has a number of compounds that offer immune system benefits; the best known is curcumin, but there are others too. Use it in curries, toss with rice, or add it to cooked vegetables. This is one of the spices in Indian curry. An Italian study found that turmeric may boost bone density. Scientists worked with a group of fit, healthy older people with an average age of 70. Some were given a tablet containing turmeric while the others took a placebo. After six months the turmeric group boosted their bone density by seven percent compared to the placebo.



A Few Places to Buy Herbs & Spices

- **Bulk Herb Store** <https://www.bulkherbstore.com/>
Smaller selection of organic herbs. Great pictures if you're new to buying herbs.
- **Pacific Botanicals** <https://pacificbotanicals.com/>
Nice selection of organic herbs and spices. They do have a \$50 minimum purchase
- **Monterey Bay Herb Company** <https://herbco.com/>
Nice selection of herbs, spices, and teas.
- **San Francisco Herb Company** <https://www.sfherb.com/>
Nice selection of herbs, spices, baking and food items. In business since 1973
- **Zack Woods Herb Farm** <https://zackwoodsherbs.com/>
Smaller selection, but run by a lovely couple who are also great stewards of the land they farm

Resources:

- Groves, Maria Noel *Body Into Balance: An Herbal Guide to Holistic Health*, Story Publishing 2016
- Easley, Thomas *The Modern Herbal Dispensatory* North Atlantic Books 2016
- Hemphill, Ian *The Spice and Herb Bible-Second Edition* Robert Rose, Inc. Publishing 2006
- Mars, Brigitte *The Desktop Guide to Medicine Making – Second Edition* Basic Health Publications 2016
- [verywellhealth.com/herbs-for-osteoporosis-5206635](https://www.verywellhealth.com/herbs-for-osteoporosis-5206635)
- punchng.com/four-herbs-that-build-strong-bones
- betterbones.com/bone-nutrition/top-spices-that-build-strongbones
- food4healthybones.com/blog/spice-up-your-bones

Prepared by Susan Williams susan@iPIVOT-now.com

Disclaimer: I am not a medical doctor, and no information here is a substitute for medical advice; I'm a registered herbalist RH(AHG), a board certified health and wellness coach (NBC-HWC) and I hold a master's degree in education (MEd). No content I create on any platform is in any way meant to treat, cure, diagnose, or prevent any disease or illness. Please be sure to obtain medical advice from a medical professional before using herbs, supplements, or essential oils. The FDA doesn't regulate herbs, supplements or essential oils; thus nothing included here has been evaluated by the FDA. Website links included here are not affiliate links and I am in no way compensated. They are provided for your convenience only.