

## Piper Nigrum-King of Spice

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### Abstract

Black pepper is known as the King of Spice and is native to South India, South Asia and Indian. It is been used in Asian cooking since 2000 BC. The source of pepper exports to neighboring countries was the Malabar Coast, which is present-day Kerala. Dried fruit of Black pepper is called as peppercorn and is extensively used in culinary. Its extracted oil is used in making ayurveda medicines because it possess anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial activities.

**Keywords:** Piperaceae, Riboflavin, Vitamin E, Colon ulcers, Vitiligo, Sinuses

### Introduction

Black pepper is native to Kerala, a flowering plant which belongs to family *Piperaceae* and is known by its scientific name of *Piper nigrum* [1]. Fruit of black pepper is used in cooking/ seasoning after being dried and is available throughout the year [2]. Its dried form is called as peppercorn while green pepper is the unripe fruit that is not dried [3,4]. Dried Black pepper is extensively used in culinary and its extracted oil is used in making ayurveda medicines because it possess anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial activities [5]. It has spicy bitter taste because of the presence of chemical piperine [6]. Besides it is an enriched source of potassium, sodium, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, thiamin, niacin, folate, vitamin B6, riboflavin, vitamin E, vitamin K, protein, fibre and carbohydrate [7]. Black pepper seeds could be easily stored in an airtight glass jar for unlimited amount of time [8].

The following table (Table 1) outlines some health benefits of Black pepper:

**Table 1: Health benefits of Black pepper**

S.no		Functions
1	Promotes digestive system health	It stimulates the secretion of digestive enzymes It aids relieve in stomach gas, latulence and abdominal pain Enhances body's ability to break down and assimilate food It can also relieve peptic ulcers [9,10,11]
2	Prevents cancer	Provides protection against different cancer types Intensify absorption of nutrients such as, curcumin, selenium, beta-carotene, etc. by intestines Prevention of cancer Reduces rectum stress and prevents colon ulcers [12,13,14]

3	Decreases blood pressure	Enhances curcumin bioavailability for controlling high blood pressure [15]
4	Reduces weight gain	Effective option for treatment of fat-related issues Constrain fat cell formation [16]
5	Treat cold /cough	Increases circulation and mucous flow Eliminates congestion and sinuses Reduces asthmatic symptoms [17,18]
6	Antimicrobial	Displays larvicidal effects Prevent infection and its spread [19]
7	Antioxidant	Combats disease causing free radicals and boost immunity Prevention of cancer Escalation of nutrients bioavailability [20,21]
8	Promotes oral health	Relieve toothache and other oral infections Reduce gum inflammation [22]
9	Promotes brain health	It inhibits the activity of enzyme that disrupts dopamine production Delay brain aging and prevent Alzheimer's Cure seizures by enhancing nerve activity [23,24]
10	Increases fertility in men	Raise testosterone levels Elevates sperm count and its concentration Enhance sperm development and its mobility [25,26]
11	Aids in quit smoking	Reduce smoking withdrawal symptoms [27]
12	Treatment of diabetes	Slow down glucose absorption [28]
13	Skin benefits	Anti-aging property Treat acne and vitiligo Reduces wrinkles, fine lines, and even dark spots Cleanses the skin Exfoliate the skin and remove dead skin cells [29,30].
14	Hair benefits	Treat hair issues like dandruff and hair fall Reinforce the hair roots and help prevent baldness [31,32]

## Side-Effects of Black Pepper

- Cause stomach burns when taken in high concentration
- Burning sensation in the eyes if accidentally enters the eyes
- May cause irritation to pregnant women, and may cause some allergies to breast feeding mothers.

## Conclusion

Thus Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) besides being used in cooking offers numerous medicinal health benefits for the treatment of many ailments.

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