

## Ground Gourmet Essentials Newsletter September 2007

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the September newsletter which features:

- ❖ **New Stockists**
- ❖ **The Ground Culinary Centre: What's new in store**
- ❖ **Chai Latte**
- ❖ **Spice of the Month - Cassia**
- ❖ **Chef's Recipe of the month – Moroccan Spiced Chicken with Almond Crust**

### **New Stockists**

We are pleased to welcome Andi and Sarah at the **Okere Falls Store** to the Ground stockist team. This gorgeous shop also sells amazing imported German beers. Check them out if you are in Rotorua.

In Riccarton **The Pantry on Mandeville** also stocks some of our range. Helen and her team can also look after you with good coffee and food for lunch.

### **Ground Culinary Centre**

#### **What's New In-store:**

We now have in-store **granite mortar and pestles**. These are similar in style to the one that gets a workout in our deli kitchen every day. They are fantastic for grinding spices and nuts, a process which keeps all the flavours fresh as grinding doesn't release the oils that chopping does and which go rancid pretty quickly. They are also great for making pesto, aioli, dressings etc. As far as we're concerned a good mortar and pestle is an absolute essential in the kitchen and we have three sizes priced from just \$38.

### **Chai Latte**

We're one of the very few places in Christchurch (if not in New Zealand!) where you can get an authentic Chai Latte made with a marsala of hand ground spices and not an artificial syrup mix.

Chai, pronounced with a long "i" as in the word tie, is the actual word for tea in many countries. Chai tea is a rich and complex beverage that has been savored for centuries in many parts of the world, especially India.

In its most basic form, chai is black tea that is brewed strong with a combination of spices and is diluted with milk and sugar. The spices vary from recipe to recipe; our own blend consists of cassia, cardamom, cloves, pepper and nutmeg. Chai tea is traditionally consumed hot and sweet. The sweetness is needed to bring out the full flavors of the spices.

At Ground we not only make a Chai latte to take-out or drink in the Deli but we sell the marsala mix loose so that you can make your own at home.

## Spice of the Month – Cassia

Cinnamon and cassia are often taken for the same thing. They are both made from the bark of tropical, evergreen trees related to the bay, laurel and avocado. Cassia today comes from China, Indonesia and Vietnam. Cassia bark is generally sold in two forms. One is flat pieces of dark-brown slivers 10-20cm long and 2-3cms wide, smooth on one surface and rough and corky on the other. The other form is as quills similar in appearance to 8cm cinnamon quill, except that the curl of bark is thicker and the colour appears reddish-brown.

Cinnamon and cassia are probably amongst the oldest spices with references going back to ancient Egypt where they were used as part of the embalming process. The ancient Greeks and Romans probably also had both and in AD 66 the Roman statesman Pliny the Elder complained that Nero burned a whole year's supply of cinnamon at his wife's funeral.

Ground cassia is more strongly perfumed and pungent than cinnamon. Most commercial bakers use cassia in things like cinnamon doughnuts, apple strudel, fruit muffins and sweet, spiced biscuits because of this. Generally, cassia works best with other distinctly flavoured ingredients such as dried fruits. Cinnamon, on the other complements fresh ingredients well, such as apples, pears and bananas. Some chefs use a half and half mix to get the benefits of both.

At Ground, we use cassia in our Ras al hanout spice blend and you will pick up its distinctive fragrance if you open a jar and smell it. It is also one of the key ingredients in our Chai marsala blend.

## Chef's Recipe of the Month

### Moroccan Spiced Chicken with Almond Crust

This dish serves quite a few people, but it is worth making this amount as it will disappear quickly, and any leftovers can be eaten the next day. It is a little fussy to make but it is worth the effort for the amazing end result that will impress dinner guests no end.

2 chickens, whole,  
Salt and pepper

#### **Marinade**

2 pinches saffron filaments  
2 tablespoons Water  
¼ teaspoon ground cassia  
¼ teaspoon ground ginger  
½ teaspoon Ground's Ras al Hanout

#### **Sauce**

¼ cup of unsalted butter  
1 ½ cups onion, medium, finely chopped  
1 cup water

¼ cup of oil  
1 ½ cups slivered blanched almonds  
1 cup caster sugar  
¾ teaspoon ground cassia  
½ teaspoon Ground's Ras Al Hanout  
1 tablespoon orange flower water  
5 tablespoons water  
½ lemon, juiced  
½ Ground Moroccan Preserved Lemon  
Salt and pepper to taste  
4 tablespoons Italian parsley, coarsely chopped  
2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

Remove all excess fat from the chicken cavity, neck and tail area. Rub all over with salt and pepper. Let them sit for 1 hour. Rinse and drain well.

Toast the saffron in a dry frying pan until aromatic, approximately 10 seconds. Crumble the saffron, soak in 2 tablespoons of hot water. Let it sit for 20 minutes. Combine the soaked saffron with the cassia, ginger, Ras al Hanout, salt and pepper. Rub saffron mixture over the chicken and under the skin. Sweat the onions in butter in a large pan until translucent. Put the chickens on top and add water. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Cover and simmer for 40 minutes. Baste the chicken every 10 minutes, adding more water if necessary.

Preheat oven to 190° C. While the chicken is cooking, prepare the paste. Heat ¼ cup of oil in a saucepan. Add the almonds, fry until golden brown, stirring constantly to ensure even browning. Drain well on paper towels, cool and roughly chop. Combine the almonds, caster sugar, cassia, Ras al Hanout, the orange flower water, water and lemon juice to make a mixture. Season well with salt and pepper.

Once the chickens have cooked, place them on a rack to drain. Degrease the sauce and reduce it to 2 cups. Julienne the preserved lemon as thin as possible into slivers and add to the sauce. Pour the sauce in the bottom of an oven proof serving dish large enough to hold both chickens. Cut the chickens in to breasts and thighs, removing the bones from the breasts. The chickens should be slightly under-cooked. . Place a handful of filling on the underside of each piece of chicken and place the chickens skin side up on top of the sauce. Spread the remaining almond mixture evenly over the chickens, making sure all parts are covered. In a preheated 375°F oven, bake the chickens 20 minutes, or until the almonds brown and the sauce simmers. While the chicken is baking, combine the lemon segments, parsley, olive oil, sugar, and season with salt and pepper. Remove the chicken from the oven, sprinkle with the lemon mixture including the juices, and serve immediately.

\*\*\*\*\*

**That's all for this month. We love your thoughts and feedback so please feel free to contact us.**

## Happy cooking!

---

Ground Ltd  
t/a Ground Gourmet Essentials

PO Box 158  
44A London St  
Lyttelton  
NEW ZEALAND

T: (03) 328 7275

F: (03) 328 7282

E: [info@ground.co.nz](mailto:info@ground.co.nz)

W: [www.ground.co.nz](http://www.ground.co.nz)