

Saffron



Iranian Saffron

Saffron and Iran are uniquely linked together. Iran harvests about 96% of the world's production of saffron. Despite its small size, this spice is quite expensive, and is suitable for many applications.

Persian saffron is a natural spice also called Red Gold. It is globally known for its incomparable quality, fascinating fragrance, pleasant flavor, and superb coloring strength.

Introduction

Saffron is a spice derived from the flower of the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*). *Crocus* is a genus in the family Iridaceae. A *C. sativus* flower bears three stigmas, each the distal end of a carpel. Together with the styles — stalks that connect the stigmas to their host plant — the dried stigmas are used in cooking as a seasoning and colouring agent. Saffron, long the world's most expensive spice by weight, is native to Southwest Asia.

Saffron's bitter taste and iodoform- or hay-like fragrance result from the chemicals picrocrocin and safranal. Saffron also contains a carotenoid dye, crocin, which imparts a rich golden-yellow hue to dishes and textiles.

In the EU saffron is identified as E164 under the E number food additive code system.



Etymology

The English word saffron stems from the Latin word *safranum* via the 13th-century Old French term *safran*. *Safranum* in turn derives from Persian زعفران (za'ferân). Some argue that it ultimately came from the Arabic word زعفران (za'farân), which itself derives from the adjective اسفرد (asfar, "yellow"). However, some etymologists argue that زعفران (za'farân) is the arabicized form of the Persian word زردان (zarparân) — "having golden stigmas". Latin *safranum* is also the source of the Italian *zafferano*, Portuguese *açafrão* and Spanish *azafrán* etc. *Crocum* in Latin is a Semitic loan word derived from Aramaic *kurkema* via Arabic *kurkum*, and Greek *krokos*.

One part saffron to 150,000 parts water will turn the water a bright yellow and still leave its distinctive flavor.







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