

## Spice up your diet

### By Marie MacGregor RD(SA)

You can bring excitement, flavour and health to your diet by using a variety of herbs and spices. Not only do they taste great, but they contain phytochemicals that can protect against heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Use our upcoming series on spices and herbs to expand your culinary skills.

#### Aniseed



Aniseed, also known as anise, is the fruit or seed of a flowering plant which is found in the Mediterranean. It has a liquorice-like taste and is related to fennel and dill. It has traditionally been used as a digestive aid with the seeds being eaten after a meal to settle the stomach. In the Middle East and India it is added to soups and stews and is often used in the seasoning blends for curries, hoisin and sausages. It can also be used in sweet dishes and is added in crushed or whole form to biscuits, cakes and pastries. Interestingly, it is the liquorice flavour added to certain liqueurs such as absinthe and Greek ouzo.

Try this delicious, spicy, winter-warming soup and see whether you can pick up the aniseed. Use the coconut milk rather than the yoghurt for a dairy-free option.

#### Vegetarian Mulligatawny Soup (serves 4)

<p><b>Soup</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>¾ cup split red lentils</li> <li>3 tsp oil</li> <li>½ cup finely chopped onions</li> <li>¾ cup finely chopped carrots</li> <li>1 tsp finely chopped garlic</li> <li>1 tsp finely chopped ginger</li> <li>3 ¼ cups water</li> <li>¾ cup chopped tomatoes</li> <li>¼ tsp turmeric</li> <li>½ cup coconut milk or plain yoghurt</li> <li>¼ cup cooked rice</li> <li>½ tsp lemon juice</li> <li>Salt to taste</li> </ul>	<p><b>Masala powder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2tsp coriander seeds</li> <li>2tsp cumin seeds</li> <li>2tsp <i>aniseeds</i></li> <li>¼ tsp fenugreek seeds</li> <li>2 small sticks cinnamon</li> </ul> <p><b>For serving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>½ cup chopped cashew nuts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Method</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combine all the ingredients for the Masala powder in a non-stick pan and dry roast for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Allow to cool slightly, blend to a smooth powder and keep aside.</li> <li>• Heat the oil in a deep pot or pressure cooker and add the garlic, ginger, carrots and onions. Sauté for 1-2 minutes.</li> <li>• Add the lentils, Masala powder, tomatoes, turmeric, 3 ¼ cups water and cook until soft.</li> <li>• Blend the soup and strain and pour into a deep, non-stick pan. Add the coconut milk, rice, lemon juice and salt and cook for 2 minutes stirring continuously (if using yoghurt, stir it in at the end).</li> <li>• Serve hot sprinkled with cashew nuts.</li> </ul>	