

Indian spice substitutes chart

The 30 everyday spices. Out of one? Use this instead.

Out of	Use instead
Asafoetida (Hing)	A little garlic and onion powder together give a similar savoury effect.
Black cardamom (Badi elaichi)	A little smoked paprika plus a green cardamom pod gives a similar effect.
Black pepper (Kali mirch)	White pepper or a little chilli powder.
Black salt (Kala namak)	Regular salt with a pinch of chaat masala.
Carom seeds (Ajwain)	Dried thyme is the closest swap.
Cinnamon and cassia (Dalchini)	Cassia and true cinnamon can replace each other; use a little less cassia.
Cloves (Laung)	A pinch of allspice is the closest swap.
Coriander seed (Dhania)	A mix of a little cumin and a pinch of fennel gives a similar warmth. Fresh coriander leaves are a different flavour and not a substitute.
Cumin (Jeera)	Caraway or shahi jeera are the closest whole-seed swaps. For ground cumin, use a little extra ground coriander with a pinch of chilli.
Curry leaves (Kadi patta)	No real substitute. Lime zest gives a hint of the citrus note.
Dried fenugreek leaves (Kasuri methi)	Dried celery leaves give a similar note. Fresh methi leaves can be used in larger amounts.
Dried pomegranate seeds (Anardana)	Amchur or a squeeze of lemon.
Dried red chillies (Sabut lal mirch)	Red chilli flakes.
Dry ginger (Saunth)	Fresh ginger (about four times as much).
Dry mango powder (Amchur)	Lemon or lime juice, or a little tamarind.
Fennel seed (Saunf)	Anise seed is the closest swap; use a little less.
Fenugreek seed (Methi dana)	A pinch of mustard seed with a little maple syrup gives a rough approximation, but most recipes are fine without it.
Green cardamom (Elaichi)	There is no close substitute. A small mix of cinnamon and nutmeg works in baking.
Indian bay leaf (Tej patta)	European bay leaf works, though it tastes different. A pinch of cinnamon helps.
Kashmiri chilli (Kashmiri mirch)	Sweet or smoked paprika is the easiest swap for colour. Byadgi chilli, from Karnataka, is similar.
Mace (Javitri)	Nutmeg (use a little less).
Mustard seed (Rai, sarson)	Cumin seeds give a different but workable tempering. Yellow mustard seeds are milder.
Nigella seeds (Kalonji)	Black sesame plus a pinch of onion powder.
Nutmeg (Jaiphal)	Mace, or a little allspice.
Red chilli powder (Lal mirch)	Cayenne pepper is the closest swap. Mix with Kashmiri chilli or paprika to get colour with less heat.
Saffron (Kesar)	There is no real substitute. For colour only, a pinch of turmeric.
Sesame seeds (Til)	Sunflower seeds.
Star anise (Chakri phool)	A pinch of fennel or anise seed.
Tamarind (Imli)	Lime juice with a little brown sugar, or kokum.
Turmeric (Haldi)	There is no real substitute for flavour. For colour only, a tiny pinch of saffron or Kashmiri chilli changes the shade, but not the taste.