



Philadelphia Food and Drink Montgomery County Food Examiner



The spice of life - one teaspoon at a time

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SmartSpice - smart choice
photo by Vadim Kagan

On a cold morning, a small not-quite-awake crowd at an investment event in College Park was contemplating a typical conference breakfast: unremarkable coffee, paper caps and industrial pastries not that much different taste-wise from the foam plates they were served on. Grey suits, pale shirts, power ties. Then, two ladies, one in a warm yellow-orange-pumpkin jacket, the other in a matching skirt, entered the room. "You should try this in your coffee," the first one said, offering flat white packages only a bit thicker than a stick of Wrigley's. "Cardamom" – announced brownish-orange letters. The morning suddenly became much brighter.

How many of you have Costco-sized containers of spices sitting in your pantry, dating back to Clinton administration? Go ahead; throw away ancient oregano, nearly odorless thyme and that chunk of something that used to be chili powder. Spices do not

hold forever. Light, oxygen and water, the sources of life, are the enemies of powders, flakes, grains and cloves. The idea behind SmartSpice © is to give one just the right amount – one packet is one teaspoon – of whatever spice is needed for that particular dish, while keeping the rest tightly sealed in foil, safe from the damaging agents. Need more? Use two packets. SmartSpice © spices packets come four per package, and they are available in HarrisTeeter and some of the WholeFoods stores in the area (for example, the one in Rockville had four or five items last weekend).

While pricier than Costco bulk products, «per use» cost of SmartSpice © is lower, explain the founders of the company, since you never throw anything away, and you always have fresh aromatic organic spices with no artificial add-ons (many of the larger brands add anti-caking agents.) SmartSpice © offers 16 spices currently - from cinnamon to oregano to thyme.

Now, whether or not using SmartSpice © depends on your cooking habits. I go through so much rosemary, for example, that a regular container does not last more than a couple of months - and I really prefer fresh rosemary, anyway. The same goes for thyme and basil. But, for example, coriander is not something I use every day, or even every week. Or cardamom, or Herbs de Provence - so these SmartSpices make a perfect sense for me.

Price aside, the best test for any food, spice in particular, are flavor and taste, and this test SmartSpice © passes with flying colors. Try their cardamom on vanilla ice cream – yum!!!

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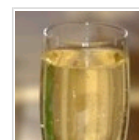
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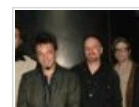
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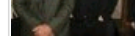
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