

Cinnamon Leaf Oil: Perks from a Spice Oil

Beyond its alluring fragrance and spicy-sweet flavor, cinnamon provides many benefits for your health, such as its insulin-like effects, which can be useful for diabetics. But did you know that you can also get many of cinnamon's health benefits by using cinnamon leaf oil? Here are facts worth knowing about this oil.

What Is Cinnamon Leaf Oil?

Cinnamon leaf oil comes from *Cinnamomum verum* (also called *Laurus cinnamomum*) from the Laurel (Lauraceae) plant family. This small and bushy evergreen tree is native to Sri Lanka, but now grows in many countries such as India, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Indonesia.¹ There are actually over 100 varieties of *C. verum*, with *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (Ceylon cinnamon) and *Cinnamomum aromaticum* (Chinese cinnamon) as the most consumed. Cinnamon tree can be distinguished by its small, white flowers, shiny, leathery green leaves, and purple oval berries. Its papery, pale brown bark has thick quills that roll inside one another, and are gathered every two years.

Cinnamon is one of the oldest spices known to man. It was valued in ancient Egypt not only as a medicine and beverage flavoring but also as an embalming agent and is also mentioned in the Bible. Cinnamon was so precious that it was considered more valuable than gold throughout some of its history.²

You've probably heard of cinnamon bark oil, but don't be confused – it's an entirely different product. Cinnamon bark oil is extracted from the outer bark of the tree, resulting in a potent, perfume-quality essential oil. Cinnamon bark oil is extremely refined and therefore very expensive for everyday use, which is why many people settle for cinnamon leaf oil, as it's lighter, cheaper, and ideal for regular use.

Cinnamon leaf oil has a musky and spicy scent, and a light yellow tinge that distinguishes it from the red-brown color of cinnamon bark oil.

Uses of Cinnamon Leaf Oil

Cinnamon leaf oil can be used as an additive in soaps and a flavoring to seasonings. When used in aromatherapy – diffused, applied topically (I recommend diluting with a mild essential oil or mixing in your favorite cream, lotion, or shampoo), or added to your bath water – it can have health-promoting effects. Here are some ways to use cinnamon leaf oil for your health and around your home:³

- **Use it as a disinfectant.** With its strong germicidal properties, cinnamon leaf oil works as a non-toxic natural disinfectant. Use it to clean your toilets, refrigerator, kitchen counters and other surfaces, door knobs, microwave, and sneakers. You can even use it to clean and disinfect your chopping boards.

- **Make a facial scrub. Mix it with cinnamon sugar, orange juice, and olive oil to create a rejuvenating scrub that has** antiseptic properties to kill facial bacteria effectively.
- **Gargle as a mouthwash.** Add a drop or two to a glass of purified water, and gargle with it. For people with dentures, simply make a solution of water, hydrogen peroxide, and cinnamon leaf oil, and soak your dentures in it.
- **Add it to your foot soak.** Get rid of nasty fungal infections by mixing a drop of cinnamon leaf oil in a bucket of warm water, and then soak your feet in it. This works great for athletes and people who wear closed shoes for most of the day.
- **Use cinnamon leaf oil as an insect repellent.** Did you know that the scent of cinnamon leaf oil can deter pesky household insects, such as black ants, mosquitoes, roaches, and flies? Studies found that it may even be more effective at [repelling mosquitoes](#) than the toxic chemical DEET. Simply spray or diffuse the oil around your home. You can also spray it over your mattresses and sheets to get rid of bed bugs.
- **Add it to your shampoo.** Add a drop of cinnamon leaf oil to your regular non-chemical shampoo. This will help keep your hair healthy and, in children, help kill stubborn head lice.

Composition of Cinnamon Leaf Oil

The oil extracted from cinnamon leaves contain phenols and beneficial components like eugenol, eugenol acetate, cinnamic aldehyde, linalool, and benzyl benzoate.⁴ It also has low levels of cinnamaldehyde, an excellent flavoring agent and the active component that helps repel mosquitoes and other insects.

Benefits of Cinnamon Leaf Oil

Cinnamon leaf oil can work wonders as a quick pick-me-up or stress buster after a long and tiring day, or if you want to soothe your aching muscles and joints. This oil has a warm and antispasmodic effect on your body that helps ease muscular aches, sprains, rheumatism, and arthritis. It's also a tonic that reduces drowsiness and gives you an energy boost if you're physically and mentally exhausted.

Cinnamon leaf oil offers benefits against viral infections, such as coughs and colds, and helps prevent them from spreading.⁵ It even aids in destroying germs in your gallbladder and bacteria that cause staph infections. When diffused using a vaporizer or burner, cinnamon leaf oil can help treat chest congestion and bronchitis. Cinnamon can also help remove blood impurities and even aid in improving blood circulation. This helps ensure that your body's cells receive adequate oxygen supply, which not only promotes metabolic activity but also reduces your risk of suffering from a heart attack.⁶

Cinnamon leaf oil has gastric benefits as well, mainly because of its eugenol content. It works well for alleviating nausea, upset stomach, and diarrhea. It also works as an antibacterial agent that can promote good digestion.⁷

How to Make Cinnamon Leaf Oil

Cinnamon leaf oil, which is more delicate than cinnamon bark oil, is produced via steam distillation. The leathery green leaves are pruned from the trees and then left to dry for several days. Afterwards, they go through a special water-steam distillation machine that extracts the oil.

Cinnamon leaf oil can also be distilled via traditional methods, where a huge wooden vessel is fitted with a copper head on top that holds as much as 200 kilograms of dried cinnamon leaves. The vessel is then placed in a wood-fired boiler that produces the steam for distillation.

How Does Cinnamon Leaf Oil Work?

The phenols in cinnamon leaves give cinnamon leaf oil its rejuvenating and health-promoting quality. Cinnamon leaf oil contains 80 percent phenols, mainly eugenol, which has anesthetic, antiseptic, antimicrobial, and antioxidant properties. However, eugenol may also irritate your skin, especially when applied near or on the mucous membranes.

Is Cinnamon Leaf Oil Safe?

While the cinnamon powder on your spice rack is safe to consume internally, the same cannot be said for cinnamon leaf oil.

DO NOT ingest it without the supervision of a qualified health practitioner. Do not self-medicate with cinnamon leaf oil, as it can cause irritation, especially on your mucous membranes.

When applying cinnamon leaf oil topically, I advise blending it with safe carrier oils, such as coconut oil, olive oil, or almond oil. It also blends well with other spice oils like black pepper, cardamom clove, and ginger oils. Check and make sure that you don't have any allergic reactions to cinnamon leaf oil before using it. You can do this by performing a skin patch test: apply a small amount of diluted cinnamon leaf oil on your skin and see if any allergic reactions occur.

I also recommend pregnant women and nursing mothers to avoid using cinnamon leaf oil, as it has emmenagogue effects, meaning it may induce menstruation, which is dangerous for the unborn child. Avoid administering the oil on very young children, too.

Side Effects of Cinnamon Leaf Oil

Use cinnamon oil in moderation and properly diluted, as high dosages may lead to convulsions in some individuals. This oil may also lead to side effects such as skin irritation, mouth sores, dizziness, vomiting, and diarrhea. It may irritate your urinary tract, intestines, and stomach lining, if taken internally. If these symptoms occur, consult a healthcare practitioner immediately.