



Essential Holiday Spices



Sugar and Spice at Tajima

This time of the year, don't forget to use those essential holiday spices, because we highly correlate those special scents and flavors with the joy of being surrounded by our loved ones. We asked some local San Diego chefs and mixologists to weigh in on their must-have spices for dishes and cocktails for the upcoming holidays.

There is nothin' like enjoying some stuffin' during the holiday season and Executive Chef Andy Weiss, of the Gaslamp District's **The Smoking Gun**, has a delicious recipe that uses Herbs de Provence. This mixture of dried herbs, which typically consists of rosemary, fennel, thyme, basil, lavender, parsley, oregano, marjoram and bay powder (so many essential spices for the season), goes into The Smoking Gun's recipe for **Stuffing and Gravy**. Homemade stuffing made with celery, yellow onion and carrot, among other ingredients, is topped with creamy mushroom gravy, creating a savory side dish.

Grind & Prosper Hospitality's Executive Chef Christina Pancheri mentions allspice as one of her favorite holiday seasonings. Sweet but loud and distinct in its taste and smell, this spice is commonly used as a pepper element that gives a richness and warmth in sauces and braises. Allspice is also used in Jamaican cuisine, like that served at **Miss B's Coconut Club** in Mission Beach. The iconic jerk seasoning, which comes on Miss B's **Jerk Rubbed Chicken Wings**, chicken wrap and chicken plate, is typically made up of a blend of spices, including paprika, cayenne pepper and allspice.

Along with incorporating spices into delicious holiday dishes, they can also be used in festive cocktails such as **Tajima's Sugar and Spice**. Available throughout the month of November at Tajima's Mercury location, this boozy coffee concoction has notes of cinnamon sugar, which just might be the tastiest of spices this time of the year! The cinnamon, a warm spice that compliment many sweet treats such as pies and pastries, is complimented by the addition of sugar, which is used when baking holiday cookies. We'd tell you exactly what is in Tajima's Sugar and Spice cocktail, but it's more fun to go and try it yourself.

Executive Chef Steven Lona of Pacific Beach's **Waterbar** says to not let Thanksgiving creep up without having poultry seasoning on hand. The easy solution is that you'll want to use poultry seasoning on...well, poultry but don't overlook other uses as it is also brilliant with butternut squash, mushrooms, gravy and so many more holiday favorites. Chef Steven recommends the McCormick brand, which is a blend of thyme, rosemary and marjoram. The flavors in this seasoning truly help accentuate the taste of holiday classics we look forward to each year.

Another cheerful cocktail sure to make spirits bright this holiday season is **Park 101's Wreck the Halls**. A festive mixture of Amontillado Sherry Wine, Lillet Blanc, pomegranate, grapefruit and citrus, this adult beverage also incorporates cinnamon, one of the most beloved and aromatic holiday spices. The sweet and slightly savory flavor of the spice pairs perfectly with the zesty citrus from the grapefruit and sour notes from the pomegranate. And to top it all off, the cocktail is garnished with a mint bouquet and dusting of powdered sugar to mimic snow covered trees.