

# Ajwain Seed Profile

## Also known as

Carum copticum, Egyptian Anise, Coptic Caraway, Bishop's Weed

## Introduction

Ajwain is a small gray green seed that comes from a small annual shrub with many branches of small feather-like leaves. It was originally from the Eastern Mediterranean, but is now mostly cultivated along river banks in Central Asia, India, and much of Egypt. The aroma and taste is remarkably similar to Thyme with subtle variations in structure and piquancy.

## Parts Used

The seeds are used in cooking and as the main source of the essential oil Thymol.

## Typical Preparations

The seeds are used in all types of Middle Eastern and Indian cooking usually in their whole form.

## Summary

Ajwain seeds are famous in Egypt for their healing powers. It has been written about since the most ancient of times in Egypt and India as a wonderful carminative medicine and Ayurvedic. It is called Omam in the southern part of India and the seeds are distilled into water that is a common household medicine in Southern India and Sri Lanka and that is said to cure flatulence, indigestion, and low appetite. A folk remedy tells that if you soak the seeds in lemon juice and dry them seven times, it is a cure for impotence. Ajwain seeds are the main source for Thymol, an essential oil that is used as a base for cough syrups and throat lozenges. Ajwain goes well with chicken, fish, legumes, and in curries. It combines well with turmeric, paprika, cumin, fennel and coriander.

## Precautions

There are no known precautions to be taken when using the Ajwain seed for culinary purposes.