

## Between Food and Drugs: Spices from Antiquity to Early Modern Time

### *Entre alimentos e drogas: especiarias da Antiguidade até o início da Idade Moderna*

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From 1st to 17th centuries, spices have been a commodity as well as a necessity for the Western Europe. These “aromatic items of commerce with a high unit cost... imported from distant lands”, as they are defined by Paul Freedman, included many dry products that were mainly culinary ingredients, but also perfumes of high quality which could be used in cooking. Most of spices were supposed to have medical properties too: they were drugs, in the wide meaning that the Ancient Medicine gave to this term. The medical impacts of spices partly explain how, in 14th and 15th centuries, Far East spices offered the wider range of tastes and scents that European cuisine has ever known. But even when the French Cuisine has got rid of eastern spices from the middle of the 17th century, these ones remained quite important in a medicine that kept alive the principles of the Ancient Medicine. How the changing tastes affected the discourse on spices? We will answer this question through a long-term study of cook recipes, medical instructions and travel writings.

**Keywords:** spices; cook recipes; food history; drugs.

**Palavras-chave:** especiarias; receitas culinárias; história da alimentação; drogas.

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