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real food • natural health • green planet

Glorious gifts

16 homemade indulgences & natural sweets

Lights out!
How to sleep better

Party snacks
FOR KIDS

Honey Sesame
Brittle and
Fruit & Nut Bark
(page 32)

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Festive appetizer spreads

| TASTE TEST |



Ciolo Foods Lemon Artichoke Tapenade. Lemon and artichoke, the star ingredients of this gluten-free dip, complement each other for a fresh taste and substantial texture that isn't too oily. Serve with toasted pita chips or on top of fresh endive leaves.



Meditalia Roasted Eggplant Tapenade. This gluten-free and dairy-free dip has a smooth, smoky flavor with a hint of lemon. It's a quick alternative to baba ghanoush. Serve with pita bread or grilled veggies.



Stonewall Kitchen Mango Lime Salsa. This sweet and citrusy salsa has a tropical flair. Add flavor and texture by mixing in avocado cubes and sprinkling with fresh cilantro. Serve in a lettuce wrap with grilled fish or with fresh tortilla chips.



Tassos Olivara Bruschetta. Sun-dried tomatoes and feta cheese balance out green olives to give this spread a mild olive flavor. Pair with sliced tomatoes and fresh mozzarella on toasted bread.



Wild Thymes Thai Chili Roasted Garlic Dipping Sauce. Also gluten free, this spicy-sweet mixture gives a tasty kick to grilled finger foods. Use as a dipping sauce for meat, shrimp, or tempah. —E.C.

| HERBS & SUPPLEMENTS 101 |

Red algae

{ **What it is** } There are more than 4,000 species of the nutrient-rich algae *Rhodophyta*, which gets its red color from the pigment phycoerythrin. It's an important component of food (like nori) and cooking in Japan, where it has been cultivated for more than 300 years.

{ **Benefits** } Because red algae photosynthesizes and lives in very deep waters, it develops high levels of protein, vitamins, and minerals, including vitamins B6 and B12, iron, and potassium. Sulfated polysaccharides, isolated from many red algae, may have antiviral and immune-boosting activities that could help inhibit viruses, such as herpes and influenza. Research shows that one type of red algae, *Callophycus serratus*, has potential to fight cancerous cells and bacteria. Plus, red algae's potent antioxidants may lessen the effects of age-related diseases.

{ **How to take it*** } Available in capsules and tablets. Take one 350 mg pill one to three times per day.

*Consult your health care practitioner before starting any new supplement regimen. —J.R.



NATURAL BEAUTY | Spice up your skin care

You probably already sprinkle cinnamon on your oatmeal or turn to ginger to soothe an upset stomach. But have you considered spicing up your beauty regimen? Applying spices topically with lotions, tonics, and washes helps maintain the health of your body's largest organ—your skin, says Jackie Keller, certified wellness coach and nutrition educator. Look for products containing these spices.

CHILE PEPPER

Capsaicin, the purified, extracted alkaloid from red chile peppers, helps fight skin pain and itching when applied topically. By depleting a neuro-peptide that transmits pain from the skin to the spinal cord, topical capsaicin goes beyond soothing the skin; it reduces joint pain in arthritis patients.

CINNAMON

Studies show just a small concentration of *Cinnamomum cassia* effectively fights bacteria on the skin. Cinnamon also stimulates blood circulation, bringing nutrients and oxygen to the skin to help eliminate blemishes.

MUSTARD

The oil in mustard seed contains high levels of selenium and zinc, important antioxidants that may help fight free radical damage. Its rich stores of beta-carotene and omega-3 fatty acids can reduce signs of aging and counter inflammation.

TURMERIC

This Ayurvedic spice's potent antioxidant, curcumin, helps keep skin wrinkle free by fighting skin-damaging free radicals. Plus, its anti-inflammatory properties make it a prime skin soother. Some research even suggests turmeric may slow skin cancer growth. —J.R.