

Long pepper

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Long pepper (*Piper longum*), sometimes called **Javanese**, **Indian** or **Indonesian Long Pepper**, is a flowering vine in the family *Piperaceae*, cultivated for its fruit, which is usually dried and used as a spice and seasoning. Long pepper is a close relative of *Piper nigrum* giving black, green and white pepper, and has a similar, though generally hotter, taste. The word *pepper* itself is derived from the Sanskrit word for long pepper, *pippali*.

The fruit of the pepper consists of many minuscule fruits — each about the size of a poppy seed — embedded in the surface of a flower spike that closely resembles a hazel tree catkin. The fruits contain the alkaloid piperine, which contributes to their pungency. Another species of long pepper, *Piper retrofractum*, is native to Java, Indonesia.



Dried long pepper catkins

Long pepper reached Greece in the sixth or fifth century BCE, though Hippocrates, the first writer to mention it, discussed it as a medicament rather than a spice.^[1] Among the Greeks and Romans and prior to the European discovery of the New World, long pepper was an important and well-known spice. The ancient history of black pepper is often interlinked with (and confused

with) that of long pepper, though Theophrastus distinguished the two in the first work of botany. The Romans knew of both and often referred to either as just *piper*; Pliny erroneously believed that dried black pepper and long pepper came from the same plant. Round, or black pepper began to compete with long pepper in Europe from the twelfth century and had displaced it by the fourteenth. The quest for cheaper and more dependable sources of black pepper fueled the Age of Discoveries; only after the discovery of the New World and of chili pepper, called by the Spanish *pimiento*, employing their word for long pepper, did the popularity of long pepper fade away.^[2] Chili peppers, some of which, when dried, are similar in shape and taste to long pepper, were easier to grow in a variety of locations more convenient to Europe. Today long pepper is a rarity in general commerce.

Long pepper

Long pepper's leaves and fruit

Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Magnoliids
Order:	Piperales
Family:	Piperaceae
Genus:	<i>Piper</i>
Species:	<i>P. longum</i>

Binomial name

Piper longum
L.

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Uses

Today, long pepper is an extremely rare ingredient in European cuisines, but it can still be found in Indian vegetable pickles, some North African spice mixtures, and in Indonesian and Malaysian cooking. It is readily available at Indian grocery stores, where it is usually labeled *Pippali*.

The Ayurvedic texts list Pippali as one of the most powerful Rasayana herbs, meaning it is a longevity enhancer. Pippali is one of the most widely used Ayurvedic herbs. It is one of the best herbs for enhancing digestion, assimilation and metabolism of the foods we eat.

International naming

- **cabe puyung** in Bahasa Indonesia - currently used mostly in natural medicines (Jamu) in Indonesia.
- **Pepe di Marisa** in Italian
- **ಹಿಪ್ಪಲಿ** ("Hippali") in Kannada
- **Pippali Rasayana** in Sanskrit
- **கண்டந்திப்பிலி** ("Kandanthippili") in Tamil
- **തിപ്പലി, പിപ്പലി** ("Tippali, Pippali") in Malayalam
- **tiêu lóp** in Vietnamese

Notes

- ↑ Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, Anthea Bell, tr. *The History of Food*, revised ed. 2009, p.
- ↑ Philippe and Mary Hyman, "Connaissez-vous le poivre long?" *L'Histoire* no. 24 (June 1980).

References

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- McGee, Harold (2004). *On Food and Cooking (Revised Edition)*. Scribner. ISBN 0-684-80001-2. pp 427-429, "Black Pepper and Relatives".

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