



## Homemade Chai Tea Concentrate

Early in the pandemic and before I had mastered the art of Zoom, I held yoga classes outside well into the winter (December) outside. One of the things I did to try and make it a little more palatable was to make homemade chai that we would enjoy after class. Some of the students loved it, others would prefer coffee or spiced ginger tea (more on that recipe another time). Real chai, as made in India, is a combination of black tea, spices and milk with sugar or honey to sweeten it. The chai that we drink, mostly, in the United States is an overly sweet, chemical tasting concoction served at coffee shops and Starbucks and usually starts in a powder form with water added. I find it so strange that serious coffee shops make such an effort with their coffee and barely pay lip service to tea and chai. I understand that their focus is coffee but perhaps just not offer tea unless they can elevate the product to even “acceptable” to a tea

drinker!! I almost never order tea out as it usually means a Lipton bag in lukewarm water. Nasty. So back to chai. Every time I drink it I think about all of the little cups of it that I drank in India (and yes, on the side of the road in small villages I am sure I was drinking cow milk versus soy or oat!) Sometimes it is better just not to ask.

### Ingredients:

- 12 cardamom pods, gently crushed
- 8 whole black peppercorns
- 8 whole cloves
- 4-inch piece of fresh ginger, sliced
- 4 cups water
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 3 whole allspice (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar (more or less to taste)
- 2 star anise
- 1 vanilla bean, sliced down the middle (or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract)
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- 4 black tea bags

### Directions:

Bring all ingredients except tea bags together to a boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Add tea bags and let steep for 5 minutes. Pour mixture through a strainer and reserve the liquid for concentrate and let cool to room temperature.

Mix equal parts concentrate with water or milk to make chai tea. Or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to one week (I have kept it much longer 😊).

I double and triple the recipe and keep it in a glass bottle in the fridge. I steep it longer than the recipe suggests and use a little vanilla extract instead of vanilla bean. The spices do not need to be an exact count and you can alter them to your taste. I buy large bags of all the spices at [penzeys.com](https://www.penzeys.com) – a great company, top quality spices. When ready to serve it I either heat it with my milk of choice (about 50/50) and add sweetener to taste versus adding it during the cooking. You can use honey, agave, sugar or nothing. I like mine unsweetened or just a touch of agave.