

Saffron is a spice obtained from the flowers of the saffron crocus, a member of the iris family first cultivated in ancient Greece. Although the plant no longer occurs naturally, the domesticated saffron crocus is cultivated throughout the Mediterranean region today.

Spanish Saffron is a spice produced from the dried flower stigmas of *Crocus sativus*, commonly known as wild crocus. It has purple flowers and red stigmas. The stigmas and styles are harvested in the fall. Although it is commercially grown in several European and Asian countries today, saffron was first domesticated by the ancient Minoans that inhabited the island of Crete in the late Bronze Age.

Harvesting saffron is a laborious task because the delicate thread-like strands must be hand-picked from each flower. It takes an estimated 210,000 flower stigmas to obtain a single pound of saffron. When you consider the fact that each crocus flower only produces three threads, it's easy to understand why saffron remains one of most expensive spices in the world sold by weight.

Saffron is also known as "Sunshine Spice" for the uplifted experience it provides. Clinical tests have shown that 30-60mg Saffron is as [effective as some anti-depressants](#) on the market today. Saffron also has an anti-inflammatory effect. It has historically been used to treat pain and fevers. Today, researchers are also exploring whether saffron can treat health conditions, including heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and depression. Researchers are also exploring whether saffron can help short-term memory and cognitive function in people with neurodegenerative and memory disorders. Learn more about saffron from [MD Anderson Hospital](#) or [Banner Health](#).

**Saffron should NOT be used by pregnant persons, or those who might be pregnant.**