



# Vanilla Bean

**Botanical Name:** *Vanilla planifolia*

Vanilla may easily be one of the most well-known flavors in the world. The flavor is derived from the ripened fruit of a tropical orchid, *Vanilla planifolia*, the only orchid in the world that produces an edible fruit. In the wild, vanilla vines (which attach themselves to living trees) may grow to a length of 80 feet or more.

The bulk of the world's supply of vanilla is provided primarily by Madagascar. It is the world's costliest spice after saffron, as the growth process is long and painstaking. Vanilla orchids bloom for only a day, during which they must be pollinated by hand. Even after the plants have produced their pods, they must be checked daily so that each pod is harvested at just the right time. After harvest, the pods go through an elaborate process of being killed, sweated, dried, and conditioned in order to maximize the flavor and fragrance. The ripe and fermented fruit (pod), also called the bean, is used whole. Whole beans can be steeped in alcohol to create vanilla extract or placed in sugar to make a vanilla-flavored sugar. The whole bean may be used in food, tea, and cosmetics, and is abundantly found as a liquid flavoring extract in a base of alcohol. It is also used in medicine as a flavoring and to improve appetite.

We recommend that you consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner before using herbal products, particularly if you are pregnant, nursing, or on any medications. This information has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. For educational purposes only.

This ingredient is sourced from Madagascar.



**Now that you know more about Vanilla Bean, discover other unique African ingredients by visiting our website or social media!**

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