

An Artifact Speaks • Artifact Information Sheet

Artifact Name: Masala Dabba

Time Period/Date: 2014

Culture/Religion Group: Used throughout India

Material: Stainless Steel

Reproduction? No



Background Information:

The country of India consists of many individual states, and each state is known for its own cuisine. A large number of spices are used among these varied styles of cooking, but several spices can be found in common use. The masala dabba is a convenient and efficient way to store these frequently used spices, for they are held together in one common container.

The masala dabba (mah-**sah**-lah **duh**-ba) is a traditional Indian spice box. Most often made of stainless steel, the spice box consists of the following parts:

- a large, round bowl
- seven smaller bowls, called *dibbi*, that fit inside the large bowl
- an inner lid that fits down inside the large bowl on top of the dibbis
- an outer lid that fits on top of the large bowl
- one or two small spoons

The word *masala* means a spice mixture. The word *dabba* means box.

The following spices are those often found in a masala dabba:

- ground turmeric
- fenugreek seeds
- cumin (ground and seeds)
- mustard seeds (often black mustard seeds)
- red chili powder
- ground coriander
- garam masala

Garam masala is actually a mixture of roasted spices often including coriander, cumin, peppercorns, ginger, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and bay leaves.

(continued)

Sources:

- Bharadwaj, Monisha. "How To Use Indian Spices." *How to Use Indian Spices*. YouTube, 16 Jan. 2012. Web. 8 Apr. 2015.
- "Masala Dabba." Gourmet Sleuth, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 8 Apr. 2015.
- "Now You're Cooking!" *What Is a MASALA DABBA?* Blogger, 1 Oct. 2011. Web. 9 Apr. 2015. <http://kathryn-cookingnow.blogspot.com/2011/10/what-is-masala-dabba.html>
- Sarkar, Petrina. "The Magic Spice - Garam Masala." *the spruce Eats*. thespruceats.com, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 9 Apr. 2015. <https://www.thespruceeats.com/garam-masala-the-magic-spice-1957585>