

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

# Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**<sup>®</sup>  
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 84: How to Use Ancient Spices to make  
Weight Loss Easier & Boost Health

Katie: Hi, welcome to "The Healthy Moms Podcast," I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. This episode is brought to you by two companies that I absolutely love and whose products I use all the time. The first is Kettle & Fire Bone Broth, which is the only USDA certified grass-fed bone broth made with organic ingredients. And their broth is made with bones from grass-fed, pasture raised, antibiotic, and hormone-free cows. And it's also delicious. The best part is it's nonperishable, so it's available in many stores but it can also be shipped anywhere in the US without refrigeration, which makes shipping less expensive and more environmentally-friendly.

The second company is Thrive Market, which is a hybrid of Whole Foods, Amazon, and Costco. And what I mean by that is it has a membership fee like Costco to let you into the low prices, then it's online like Amazon, and it carries natural products like Whole Foods. And if you live in a real food desert like I do where it's hard to find many specialty items, Thrive Market may be your answer. So check both of those out in the show notes for today's episode. And without further ado, on to today's episode.

Welcome to "The Healthy Moms Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And I'm here today with me Nagina Abdullah, who is the founder of masalabody.com, which is a blog and weight loss coaching program for women, especially professional entrepreneur women. And her story is really cool. She lost 40 pounds after having 2 kids while still working 60-plus hour days. So I know a lot of women, that's a struggle and she figured out how to crack the code of that. So she helps women effortlessly--keyword effortlessly--lose weight by adding some fat burning spices combined with healthy whole foods. And she's been featured across the web, everything from people.com to Huffpost to so many more. So, thank you so much for being here. This is gonna be such a fun conversation.

Nagina: Thanks, Katie. I'm so excited.

Katie: Yeah, it's great to talk. I mentioned right before we started recording, I know your brothers, Maneesh and Ramit. And they're both amazing. And actually, I've talked to both of them because I was like, "What are your parents doing? You guys just have an incredible family." So I'm excited to get to talk to another member of your awesome family.

Nagina: Oh, thanks. I'll pass that on to my parents too. They'll be flattered.

Katie: Oh, that's awesome. So let's just jump in. Can you talk about your own health journey and kind of, like how did you get to the place where you were struggling to lose weight? And then what changed that for you? What was the moment of change?

Nagina: Definitely. Well, I had struggled my entire life to lose weight. And part of it is because I have just always had a sweet tooth, where I just needed sweets. And my other weakness was fried food. Basically, I would describe myself as a foodie. I love food, I love food that tastes good. And I also didn't have the typical metabolism where I could just burn everything I ate.

So throughout my late teens and in my 20s, I struggled the entire time to just get my body to where I wanted it to be, where I was comfortable and to where I could, you know, wear clothes that I wanted to wear, go to the beach and not feel self-conscious, and all of those kinds of things. And it just didn't happen. Like I would go to the gym, workout for hours and I would lose like five pounds and then I would put it back on if I missed the gym for two weeks. So it was this yo-yo cycle I was constantly in.

And then after I got older, I started working in a very demanding management consulting career where I was traveling all around the country and I was working 60 hour plus weeks and then I got pregnant. And so I had my first baby and shortly after, I got pregnant again. So I had my two kids pretty close together. And then I was left with an additional 20 pounds, you know, in addition to my pre-pregnancy weight after having my two kids. And so that's where I started to feel really discouraged and I just started to feel hopeless because I knew if I had already had a hard time losing weight, if I felt it was in my genetics to put on weight quickly, then after

having two kids and now being older, I just didn't know how I was ever gonna lose this weight.

And something like...I mean, I started to, like I would look at myself in the mirror, I wouldn't feel like myself. I couldn't put on any of my clothes that I needed to wear to get back to work after maternity leave. And one day, I was sitting in the family room with my two kids. They were crying and they wanted to go outside and they were wanting to go to the park and get some fresh air. And in that moment, all I could think about was that I was too tired to take them anywhere. I was too lethargic, I didn't want to go and stand up and push them on the swings and I didn't want to walk a stroller pushing them.

And that's the moment where things changed for me. Because I realized, like is this the mom I wanna be? You know, like is this the mom...like being tired and thinking about not taking my kids places because I'm exhausted. And I knew as they got older, they would need me more and they would need my energy more. So that energy, the lack of energy, combined with me not feeling good about myself when I looked in the mirror, that's when I realized, okay, I need to do something. And so then I started researching lots of ways to eat, lots of ways to change what I was doing because I didn't have any time to go to the gym like for hours a day. I just didn't have that kind of lifestyle. I worked, I had kids, I knew I wouldn't be able to do that.

And that's when I fell upon Tim Ferriss' Four-Hour Body. And the foods that he talks about were actually different than any foods that I had tried to lose weight before. And he really talks about, you know, instead of focusing on eating less calories and eating lower carbs, it's more about eating the right kinds of food. So eating slow carbs which are beans and lentils and other healthy carbs, increasing your protein, and then also systematically making things simple, like eating similar foods every day instead of changing it up.

So I started adopting his method but he doesn't talk about flavor. And that's like I said when I started, I'm a foodie and so I need food to taste good. And so, in my life, I grew up in a traditional Indian family where we used spices and flavors and I knew how to do that like the back of my hand. So I just started adding like a little bit of cumin, a little bit of coriander, a little bit of cayenne pepper. And pretty soon, the food was tasting so gourmet. Like it was tasting like I went to the restaurant and got it but...and as I was eating it, I was thinking, "There's no way that this is going to help me lose weight because it tastes so good." And my husband would eat it with me because it tasted so good.

So time went on and within four weeks, I went on the scale, I had lost 10 pounds in that 4 weeks and I hadn't even worked out in that 4 weeks. And I felt like I was eating definitely glam gourmet food that just tasted so amazing. Then I continued eating it because I saw such great results. I started adding two workouts a week, where I started focusing on strength training versus cardio. And within three months I lost 20 pounds and that I was back to my pre-pregnancy. And I kept eating like that because it was so easy and I was so full all the time. And within nine months, I had dropped 40 pounds and gotten to 20 pounds less than before I had kids.

And this is like from somebody who I've always struggled to lose weight and it just came off. It felt like it melted off my body. So that's kind of my story of how I lost weight and it was really by eating whole, real foods mixed with those flavorful spices that I found out later also have fat-burning properties to them.

Katie: That's what I love that's so unique about your system because I know people who have done Tim Ferriss' version of this low carb diet and they all eventually quit because they were like, it's so bland and so boring. And I can imagine, like that would be a really hard adjustment if you're coming from all these amazing flavors and probably, I'm sure, recipes that your family has that are incredible. So let's talk about the spices. You call them "Skinny Spices." What are they and how are you adding them to recipes?

Nagina: Okay. Well, I have over 21 skinny spices. And really, many spices have weight-loss benefits but I'm gonna talk to you about my three favorite that are the most powerful ones like they work really easily and they go with a lot of food. So the first one, and I love this one because it's sweet, that's cinnamon. So cinnamon, it actually lowers your blood sugar. And really, a lot of diabetics have it prescribed to them to add more cinnamon to their diet. And so cinnamon, it lowers your blood sugar and what happens is you don't get that crash or you

don't get that high that sugar gives you and then that crash if you add a little bit of cinnamon. And then the other thing is like as you start using it in your day, you start naturally not wanting sugar as much because it's sweet. But then, you know, it also lowers your blood sugar and you get that sweet taste without the actual sugar. So it has so many benefits to it.

Cinnamon is like, it's so easy to use. I sprinkle just a pinch of it a day into my coffee in the morning. Or if you're having tea, sprinkle a pinch of cinnamon. And I also will add about a half teaspoon or maybe sometimes just even less than that, like a quarter teaspoon because it has a good strong flavor, into my morning smoothie if I'm having a smoothie. And then I'll just put it on to, you know, anything that requires a little bit of extra sweetness. It's like that little kick, a little sweet kick, and then you know you're lowering your blood sugar. So I really love cinnamon. That's one of my favorites.

And then turmeric is the next one. So turmeric is also a spice that a lot of doctors prescribe. And a lot of that is for anti-inflammation, like for joint pain. But inflammation also happens all throughout your body. So a lot of times we are inflamed in our belly areas, which is often a big problem area. Like that used to be my major problem area. And so turmeric, it actually decreases inflammation. And the other thing is that it blocks storage of fats. And so when you add just a teaspoon of turmeric a day, it has such amazing benefits. You'll start seeing your body, your body will start to firm up, just naturally, and your skin starts to shine.

Like my husband added turmeric into, he started making turmeric tea. So at night what we do is I used to have a wine craving at night. And so he started making this tea where he just puts turmeric in it and then he strains that out and we also add a little bit a ginger into it. And at night we drink it and it's so comforting. Like I don't even need a glass of wine anymore because it replaces that. And he started seeing, he had like under-eye circles, which we didn't even realize he had that because men don't really look at themselves. You know, like I would notice it if I had it all the time. But his whole face cleared up and then he started just feeling so much better.

So turmeric is amazing and it's really good to add to eggs in the morning. Because it has a really bright golden yellow color but it doesn't taste like anything. So when you add it to things you're getting all the benefits, you just, you don't taste anything. So it's definitely not spicy in any way. So I will add it, like I always add a half teaspoon of turmeric to my eggs in the morning and then I also drop a half into my smoothie if I have a smoothie, because you just don't taste it and so it's just like an easy way to drink it down. And then I use it on everything, like my meat, fish, vegetables, I just sprinkle it on. And it's actually really beautiful. So that's my second favorite skinny spice.

And then the third one, this is cayenne pepper. So this is the one of the three spices that I've mentioned that's spicy. You know, the first one, cinnamon, was sweet, the second one, turmeric, is mild, and cayenne pepper is the one that's a little spicy. And that's because it has this ingredient called capsaicin in it. And capsaicin, it's the ingredient in any kind of hot pepper. Like it could be in jalapenos or red chili flakes that you put on your pizza, or a little bit of it is in paprika. So if you use any of those, you get the benefits.

But capsaicin, what it does is it increases your metabolism, so it's like you're almost doubling your metabolism as you're eating. And you can actually feel that this is happening because if you sprinkle it on, you'll feel like, you'll just feel your heart racing slightly. I mean, it's not like a lot, it's actually exciting to eat. And the other thing it does is it curbs your appetite. So if you have something and you sprinkle some cayenne pepper on it, like for example, it's another good thing to put on your eggs with turmeric. You'll actually feel satisfied quicker and while you're eating it, your metabolism is increasing.

So cayenne pepper is, you know, there's actually this famous diet. It's called...like you have lemon, water, and cayenne pepper in the morning. So you squeeze a lemon and then sprinkle a little cayenne pepper, that's one way to use cayenne. For me, that's kind of like you really wake yourself up really fast if you do that, maybe sometimes too fast. So I usually use cayenne pepper. I like to use it like at dinner time to sprinkle it into stir-fries, which is amazing, like with black pepper and salt. And also on top of any vegetables and like I said, on

my eggs. That's how I like to use cayenne pepper.

So those are my three kind of favorite spices. And the thing I love about it is that you actually lose weight by adding these to your day. So you're not depriving yourself by focusing on taking something out of your diet, you're actually adding a pinch or a teaspoon of this a day. And you start seeing the benefits because they're so powerful.

Katie: That's really cool. Yeah, I think diets are so often associated with deprivation and that's what I think is so neat about your system is it improves things instead of feeling like you're taking away. And I always love to hear people who come from other food traditions because I think there's so much that we can learn. I think in the US as a whole, our food tends to be pretty bland and uninteresting compared to the rest of the world. So I'm curious, what does a normal day of eating look like for you? And maybe, what are some of the recipes that are like go-to favorites for you that maybe others aren't familiar with?

Nagina: Oh, definitely. Okay, so over time, you know, and being a mom and being very busy, I definitely try to simplify my day. And so I try to keep things easy. One of the things that I do is, you know, I try to have a similar breakfast every day so that I'm not spending my morning thinking about what to have. And I also have the ingredients on hand all the time.

So my morning is usually, I have two eggs with half a cup of egg whites because that gives me extra protein. Two eggs a day is good, I don't recommend having more than that just because of the cholesterol. But two eggs day is fine and actually good for you and actually encouraged, especially for weight loss and for maintaining a healthy body. So I'll have two eggs with a half cup egg whites. I sprinkle salt, fresh black pepper, cayenne pepper and turmeric powder. And turmeric, I put a half teaspoon and cayenne pepper I just sprinkle on just a bit. It's probably less than a fourth a teaspoon because it's a little spicy. So I have that and then I have a side of greens like I love to have spinach. Or I might have a side of, like a half cup of berries on the side. So that's one breakfast.

And another breakfast that I might have once in a while, because sometimes I have two breakfasts and I go in between, would be a smoothie because it's so super easy. And so I love having this smoothie called a PB&J smoothie. And I think it's fun because it's like with my kids, they literally have their PB&J sandwiches but I have my PB&J smoothie. And what that is, is it is a cup of almond milk, unsweetened almond milk, then it's a cup of spinach. And it's pretty surprising, you actually don't taste the spinach and you get a whole cup of spinach in the morning. Then I put a scoop of protein powder in it, or for people that are uncomfortable with protein powder, you could use 5.5 ounces of Greek yogurt, like plain, vanilla Greek yogurt.

And then I put two tablespoons of flaxseeds, and that gives you a lot of fiber. Then you can add like any fruit you want, berries, mango, you can kind of put anything. That's the J part of it. And then the peanut butter, one to two tablespoons of peanut butter. You could put a little, like one serving of peanut butter powder if you want. Then you put the...and then I drop in a fourth teaspoon of cinnamon and a half teaspoon of turmeric, just because why not? You know, it's like I want all the benefits. And so I blend it together and it just tastes so good. It has healthy fats in it, you know, very low sugar. It's high fiber, so I'm full until lunchtime with that kind of breakfast. So that's kinda my breakfast.

During lunch, I usually keep it easy and I have five ounces of salmon. I just sprinkle salt and pepper on it because salmon is so flavorful. And it's so great, it has such great omega 3s in it. So I do sea salt because it's a nice salt, fresh black pepper, and then I have asparagus on the side. And then I have a bowl of lentils. So my lentils, what I do is I usually make them on Sunday and they last for the week. I make them in a crock pot or I make them on the stove. And that has, like the one I just had today, it's called China Doll. Or you could use like yellow lentils. And it has turmeric, ginger, salt, pepper. All of that is boiled with the lentils.

And the lentils is a slow carb, so it's like after I eat it I get my carbs, I have my energy. But it's maintained energy. So I'm not gonna eat, like if I were to eat a bowl of rice, I would feel really full and I would have energy

for about 30 minutes and then my energy would drop and then I would start to feel hungry again. So the lentils takes me through the afternoon and I just, like I never have a 2:00 p.m. slump anymore like I used to. I used to feel like I needed a nap every day at 2:00 p.m., whether I was at home or at work. I would look for a room and I might have to rest my eyes. But that just doesn't exist for me anymore because of the, it's both the whole nutritious foods that I'm eating, as well as the flavor of it, which makes me able to eat it. And then I'm also getting the benefits, the weight loss benefits.

So that's like my breakfast, lunch. And then for dinner, I would do something like a smoked paprika fish, because I'm a pescatarian. But my husband, he eats meat. So what I do sometimes I do smoked paprika, I marinate fish and then I make chicken for him with the same spices. And so what I would do is like blend smoked paprika, garlic, ginger, salt, pepper, some white vinegar, because that really brings out the flavor. And then let's see. Usually, I might put in a little cayenne pepper in it because I actually like it spicy and smoked paprika is not spicy. And then a little cumin because cumin adds like a nice, kind of earthy taste to it.

And then what I do is I just bake the fish and I stir fry the chicken, so it's like it only takes 15 minutes because the fish only takes 15 minutes to make, the chicken only takes 15 minutes to make. And I'm making them at the same time. And I make more than one day's like I usually make at least three to four meals at once so that I'm not cooking all the time. And my kids also love it too. So like my kids love smoked paprika chicken, of I'll leave the cayenne pepper a little bit less for what I'm making for them. And I'll serve it to them with rice and with some veggies. And then for myself, I'll have veggies and then I'll have some like black beans or something like that with it.

So it's like smoked paprika fish, you know, black beans, usually I add some flavors into that as well, some nice veggies like roasted red bell peppers. It's just like it...it feels so gourmet and I really can't wait to eat it. And the amazing thing about spices is that every day the meal tastes better. So like when you store it in the fridge, it's not like the typical leftovers where maybe you're like, "Oh God, I have to eat that again." It's more like, you know, "Oh my God, it's gonna taste even more amazing," because all the flavors have had even more time to like really get into the meal and really marinate even further.

So that's kind of a typical day. It's like filled with spices and whole un-processed food. And I try to keep it simple by eating similar foods and then also cooking in bulk, so it lasts me for longer. And those are kind of a few tricks in terms of like how to stay healthy and lose weight when you have such a busy schedule and when you're a mom.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I'm definitely with you on the bulk cooking. We do that too at our home.

Do you love the taste and the benefits of bone broth but don't love how time-consuming it is to make with the time you spend sourcing the best ingredients and then simmering it for hours on end on the stove? Kettle & Fire solves that problem with their bone broth. So they use only bones from 100% Grass-fed, pasture-raised cattle that are never given hormones and antibiotics. It's also unique because they focus on bones that are especially high in collagen, which is one of the healthiest things you can put in your body.

Another great thing about them is they use really eco-friendly, minimal packaging. And their bone broth is nonperishable. So unlike many bone broths on the market, it ships without the need for refrigeration, which is also much more eco-friendly. It is available in many stores, so definitely check your local area. But if it's not, like it isn't for me, you can order it online and have it shipped to your door, which is what I do. So to check it out and to find out more about why their bone broth is so wonderful, go to [kettleandfire.com/wellnessmama](http://kettleandfire.com/wellnessmama).

If you're like me and you live in an area where it's sometimes hard to find any kind of specialty ingredients, especially if you're talking about organic ingredients, gluten-free foods, or allergy-friendly foods, I highly recommend that you check out Thrive Market. So Thrive is like a combination of Costco, Amazon and Whole Foods. And here's why I say that. So like Costco, they have a yearly membership fee and this lets you access all of their special pricing and deals. Like Amazon, they're online and they also have very fast shipping and it's

usually free with most orders. And then, like Whole Foods, they carry high-quality food and specialty ingredients and especially focus on GMO-free and organic foods. So it's really been helpful to me and I know that you're gonna love it too. You can also get a free jar of coconut oil with your first order. So check them out, go to [thrivemarket.com/wellnessmama](http://thrivemarket.com/wellnessmama).

I know one question people may be thinking like you mentioned it a little bit. But like do spices have to be spicy? And can you still get the benefits even if you aren't into like really spicy flavors at all? Or maybe even if you don't like cayenne, can you add teeny amounts, and does that still provide any benefit?

Nagina: Oh, such a great question. Yes, absolutely. I mean, only, really one or two of the spices are spicy, like cayenne pepper and paprika. I mean, and paprika is not even that spicy, it's more a little bit of sweetness. So you can just like I actually have a lot of people I know that they, like even for them, even black pepper is a little bit spicy. So, you know, I have like that side of it. And then on the other side people that just like jalapenos for appetizers. So you can stay healthy and you can lose weight without the spicy spices because there's only a couple of them.

There are so many other amazing spices, like the ones I mentioned already, cinnamon and turmeric. But there's other ones like cumin. And cumin has been proven--and this was a very recent study that was done--and it was proven that cumin will help you lose three times as much fat usually around your belly if you just add a teaspoon a day. And so cumin is like, it's not spicy at all.

Coriander is another great spice and it decreases water retention. So I like to use coriander, especially if I have some kind of event that's coming up that I just need to get to be like I need to fit into a dress. I just wanna get to, you know, the final steps that I need. I'll have coriander and I'll use it with asparagus because asparagus is a vegetable that also is debloating or it decreases water retention. So I'll roast some asparagus, put coriander, salt and pepper on it. And you know, it like actually really, really makes a difference.

So, you know, those are a couple other ones. But spices are more about being flavorful. They are not, they do not have to be spicy, and you can absolutely lose weight and have flavorful food while, you know, not eating spicy food but just using spices.

Katie: Totally. So what about people on the kind of opposite end of that spectrum who love hot sauce and those kind of things? Are hot sauces that are made without sugar, obviously, are those another good way to get the benefits of the more spicy like cayenne and that kind of thing?

Nagina: Oh, absolutely. Yes. So definitely, the thing is to look at the sugar because there are a lot of hot sauces that have sugar in it. So the main thing is if the hot sauce doesn't have sugar in it, then that is really, you know, that's really the best one. I mean, I usually like, like I like Cholula Hot Sauce is really good. I have like some spicy mustards that are, you know, any spicy mustard is really good if it has lower sugar.

One day actually, it was so funny but I didn't have any food that I felt like I could really cook that day. It was just like we just didn't go grocery shopping in time. So that's the time where, you know, probably you may identify, Katie, or other moms listening, that's when you're like, "Okay, let me start looking at these takeout menus and think about what to order." You know, and it's like the last thing that you really want to do but you just don't feel like going grocery shopping and preparing a meal when it's like already five o'clock.

So what happened is I checked the mail and my brother had sent me a gift and the gift was like a spicy mustard and two hot sauces. And I was like, "Oh my God, you just saved my whole night," because now I can just eat anything and I just have hot sauce with it and it'll taste so good. Like, it will dress it up. So then I just grilled some fish and put this new hot sauce on it and then ate veggies. And it was like, oh, it was so tasty. So sometimes if you don't feel like cooking with spices or you're not sure how to blend them, then just find a really good hot sauce or a spicy mustard. And that's really nice to eat too.

Katie: I'm definitely a fan as well. So another question I would guess that maybe listeners have is are your kids on board with this? I know there's a perception that kids don't like spices or flavors or strong flavors, which I actually disagree with. But I'm curious to hear your take on it and how your kids handle it.

Nagina: Yes. So it's definitely, it's something that it's just like anything, you know. Like if you give it to your kids earlier, it's gonna be easier for them to eat spices and easier for them to eat flavored food. And it's kind of, you know, for what I think is it's great to open your kids up to different flavors and to different palates so that wherever they may go in the world, they're gonna be comfortable and they're gonna be open to trying and eating foods because they've already had it. Or, you know, at least they're open to trying it.

In terms of the spice, it's kind of the same thing. Like, I don't go overboard on giving my kids spicy foods. I try to integrate it a little bit because anyone can actually increase their ability to eat spicy food. It's like a taste. It's just like wine, you know, you have to acquire a taste for it. And you actually get used to eating spicier food. Sometimes I choose to do that but in general, like if you're using spices like smoked paprika, cumin, coriander, turmeric, black pepper, your kids...it's not gonna be spicy. They'll actually like it. Like my kids love it when I use...I have this other spice that I like to use a lot called lemon pepper. And so I'll make lemon pepper chicken or lemon pepper fish and my kids love it. And it's not spicy at all, you know, it's kind of like tangy.

And it's nice when you can cook for the whole family. I think it's a lot harder when you have to make meals like for yourself to lose weight and then you have to make something else for your husband or make something else for your partner and make something else for your kids. It's nice if there's those foods that you can just make one of them and, you know, everyone eats it. So it's absolutely possible for kids to eat spices. I would say don't start with the spicy spices, you know, start with the mild spices.

And, you know, one other thing I do want to mention is like I actually have had some women that have nursed to their kids and they've been on the program that I have where I teach women how to eat spices and how to lose weight doing it. And they actually nurse their babies and their babies are totally fine. They produce the same amount of milk. Their kids are getting that taste from an early age, so it kind of opens them up even sooner.

Katie: Yeah, I'm on board with that too. And I definitely, I know some women do avoid spicy things when they're nursing. And I was always the opposite, thinking like I want my kids to have a taste for this really early. And we kind of just intuitively, like I add cinnamon to their first foods, even like bananas and that kind of thing to kind of even tone down the over sweetness of bananas but also just our normal cooking. I don't make bland baby foods, I typically just give them smaller, really cut up amounts of what we're already eating. Because when you're eating real food it's easy to do that.

Nagina: Yes. Oh my Gosh, exactly. And I love that idea. It's like when you're making, even it's like pureed carrots or pureed peas and then you add a little bit of cumin or a little bit of mint in it, you know. It's just so nice. That's how kids start acquiring it, like if you're able to do it at that time. And it's just makes the food so much tastier.

Katie: Definitely. So what about drinks and herbal teas, are there ways to add extra spices to those? Because I ask, when my husband had SIBO when we were working on that, he was drinking a lot of cumin, coriander, and fennel tea. And we both kind of developed a taste for it and I love it now. But are there other ways to add less common spices to drinks besides just making herbal tea, for instance?

Nagina: Yes. Yes. Yes. Okay, well I have a couple of things. So one thing is like having a tea is really good, so I have a special recipe. It's called fire tea. And so this is something I also often drink at night because it's really comforting and it feels really indulgent so I don't have that need for wine or chocolate or anything like that when I'm drinking this tea. So it's a combination of ginger, which helps improve your digestion. So like after a meal when you have ginger, it just helps you wash your food down, helps your stomach kind of flatten out and feel good and digest your food. Cinnamon and then a little bit of honey on the top.

So for fire tea, what you do is you simmer ginger, cinnamon and water for 20 minutes. And it's like about a half teaspoon of grated ginger and a half of a cinnamon stick. So you'd simmer that with two cups of water and, you know, bring it to a boil and then let it simmer for 20 minutes. And that is a lot of time so what I like to do is make it, you know, double the recipe and then I just store the rest of it and drink it the next night. Or maybe I even make more than that sometimes.

Then when it's done simmering, like while it's been cooking, the cinnamon stick, all of the flavor, all the fresh cinnamon has been coming out of that cinnamon stick. And it's really like a luxurious flavor. It's different than just sprinkling cinnamon. It's really different when you use a cinnamon stick. So when it's done, you strain the water into a mug, you separate the tiny pieces of ginger and the pieces of the cinnamon stick. And then you can add a little bit of honey, if you want, if you feel like you need the sweetness. But you don't have to. And then you just drink it and it's a sweet, spicy combo because cinnamon, it actually has a little, it's sweet and then after you simmer it like that, it has a slight spicy. It's like a sweet, spicy combo. It tastes really amazing.

So that's one that I love, fire tea. And then another drink that...another thing I really recommend doing is adding herbs and spices to water and infusing it. Because we all know that we're supposed to drink more water but for me, I get bored of drinking like eight glasses of water that doesn't taste like anything all day. And it's often hard for me to do that. So what I started doing is making a pitcher of infused water and putting in my fridge and then I would just pour it out every day. And it made me look forward to drinking water.

So I have this water recipe. It's called "Flat Tummy Water." And what I do is I fill up a pitcher with six cups of water, I add one tablespoon of ginger, which improves digestion, I add one cucumber, and I slice it. And you can keep the peel on or you can take it off if you want but you can keep it on. And cucumber is a dehydrating spice, so it also decreases water retention in your body when you drink it, or have it. And then one lemon that's sliced. And you can like squeeze in a little bit of lemon or you can just slice it and put it in there. And then also a half cup of mint leaves. And mint leaves help you decrease overeating because of the scent. So it's been proven that it helps you with your decreasing overeating and also it helps you with sugar cravings.

So you add all this into the pitcher and then you put it in the fridge and let it infuse overnight so all the flavors are there. First of all, it looks beautiful. It looks luxurious, it looks like a treat. Like you don't feel like you're depriving yourself again. Like it's so key just to focus on taking care of yourself and giving yourself foods that you want and drinks that you want, you're just so much more likely to follow it. So it infuses, it's beautiful to look at. It's beautiful to smell. And then you pour it in your glass and it like, it just feels like you're at a spa, you know. And this is good for you.

So that's another way. And you can really experiment with lots of different things that you have on hand, you know. Like you could put anything. You could put a lime, you could put cilantro in it. You could put, you know, any herbs that you might have, basil. I've had like a basil-strawberry water. So those are other ways to make it really easy. And then I mentioned the smoothie recipe before. Smoothies are a great way, like if you're gonna make a smoothie, just add a half teaspoon of any spice you have on hand and it's just gonna, it's gonna help you.

Katie: Yeah, such an easy tip. And I bet that water tastes amazing. You mentioned in passing your system, which is called "Spice Yourself Skinny." Can you talk about that real quick and how your system works and kind of what women experience on it?

Nagina: Yes, definitely. Well, I have...so the "Spice Yourself Skinny" system, it's an eight-week weight loss system using fat burning spices and whole natural foods to spice off your weight. And I have four parts to the system. So it starts with a detox. So the first two weeks., what we do is we use spices--for example, turmeric, which helps you decrease your inflammation and it heals your body--so we use seven spices that are detox spices. And they just help you clean your body out.

I teach you, I give you exact meal plans of what to eat for the two weeks and when to prep them and when to cook them. Because a lot of...like my program is meant for other women like me who are busy, working women or just, you know, really busy, ambitious women and moms who don't have a lot of time to think about when they're gonna prepare things or they don't have a lot of time to cook.

So I tell you, usually what I do is I focus on like a Sunday prep day where you make a few things and then over the week it becomes easy. So I use seven detox spices, give exact meals, exact recipes. That's the first phase. Then the second phase is de-bloat. And that's where I focus on spices that help you decrease water retention. So you're really reducing all that weight, that weight that's just hanging on. It's just, you know, it's just easy to get off. You just have to eat the right foods.

So I focus on spices like coriander, which decrease water retention. And I'll add more foods like asparagus and cucumber to your diet because those also help decrease water retention. So the combination of the seven de-bloating spices and the whole foods and the natural foods, it helps women de-bloat. And a lot of times in the first two weeks, women have lost literally up to 10 pounds in the first 2 weeks. And that's, you know, it depends where you're starting from but a lot of women think they're eating healthy but they're just not eating the foods that are working for their body. And it's all about not depriving yourself. Because when you deprive yourself, that's not good for your body either. Then your body starts holding on to like whatever you give it.

So we have the detox, the de-bloat. Then the next phase is be-burn. And that's when we really start focusing on burning your fat, which has been happening the whole time anyway because all these foods are so good and all the spices are so good. So we'll focus on be-burn, which are spices like a little bit more of, a little bit of cayenne pepper or paprika. Or, you know, there's other spices that help you really start activating your fat burning. And that's when I start adding, you know, more of the healthy carbs and adding more protein to your diet. Or you've already been having it but we're amping it up.

And then the final phase is be-tone, and that's where you start integrating a few workouts. So I give you three workouts for the, three workouts a week for those two weeks. But you're also getting a combination of, you know, of really good foods that you can integrate with your workouts.

So the four phases, a lot of women who have kids, who have...even who are new moms, like maybe their kid is not even a year old by the end of the 8 weeks, they have lost up to 22 pounds using my "Spice Yourself Skinny" system. A lot of women, the average is around 12 to 15 pounds. And the beauty of it and my favorite part is that because "Spice Yourself Skinny" is not deprivational, it becomes a lifestyle. It becomes something so easy to continue doing, so women just easily continue it and they've lost up to 30 pounds in the 2 months after "Spice Yourself Skinny," and have kept it off.

So it's really a transformation of your lifestyle because you're learning to eat whole, real, natural foods. You're learning about natural spices that have fat-burning benefits. You're enjoying your food, it's filling you up, and your whole family's eating it with you, including guests when they come over. Like people have had dinner parties with "Spice Yourself Skinny" food because it's that good that people, like it doesn't taste healthy.

Katie: That's awesome. I'll make sure that there's a link to that as well so people can find out more about the whole system and there's a seven-day challenge that they can do. A question I love to ask, kind of in wrapping up, is what are some common misconceptions and misunderstandings people have about your area of expertise? And especially about maybe, for you, like spices and weight loss and being a busy mom. And then what advice do you give them to remedy that?

Nagina: Well, I think, you know, definitely people think to lose weight that you have to go on a diet and that you have to and that it's hard. People think that it's hard. And I used to think it was hard too because it was hard. Because I was counting my calories, I was eating little, tiny portions of foods that weren't good, to begin with. So I had to eat small portions of them. I just always thought weight loss was not meant for me. I thought that it wasn't in my genetics, my metabolism was slow, and I would have to work so hard to ever get the body and the

energy that I wanted.

And it's absolutely false. Like, what is true is when you start eating real food and you start liking what you're eating, like actually loving it and enjoying it, the fat from your body that's not supposed to be there, it just, it melts away. And it's easy. And so that's the thing I just want other women to know is that it doesn't have to be hard. And literally, dozens and dozens of women have told me, "I just can't believe how easy it is to lose weight now." Like, now that I've learned how to eat like this.

So I think, you know, just knowing that it's possible to lose weight and keeping it easy, and it's like keeping it natural, is powerful. And, you know, the other thing is I think sometimes we feel like we have to do everything ourselves and like to learn what to eat. But when you have a plan to follow, like that sometimes just solves everything. Because when we're really busy, we just don't know what groceries to buy and how to combine this. And we try out so many recipes from food.com or Pinterest. And most of them don't even turn out good.

So we're spending so much time just trying things out when if you just have a plan to follow and someone that, you know, has already tried everything for you, that's how you actually lose weight. And that's kind of like what I did is that I just followed a plan. Like I did Tim Ferriss' but I did like create the recipes as I was going. But it was like I didn't just try to just read one magazine here and read something else. It's like when you have a program, then you actually lose the weight.

Katie: Yeah, that makes perfect sense. And you are such an inspiration. I can't wait actually to try some of these recipes myself with the water and the tea and they all sound delicious. Where can people find you? I'll make sure I include links but where do people find you online?

Nagina: Oh, thank you so much, Katie. Well, I prepared a special gift for "Wellness Mama" listeners, and this is gonna be at [masalabody.com/wellnessmama](http://masalabody.com/wellnessmama). And I am gonna share three easy recipes to banish late night sugar cravings. And this includes my delicious, comforting, luxurious "Fire Tea" recipe, it also includes a really amazing healthy dessert, it's my apple cinnamon healthy dessert. It's like sometimes at night when you're craving something sweet, maybe ice cream, this is the perfect replacement for that.

And then I also have a smoothie, which I call "Princesses Spice Smoothie." And it's what Princess Kate drinks but I added two sweet spices to it, so it's even more beneficial for fighting sugar cravings. And it takes like 30 seconds to make. It only has three ingredients. So all of those will be available to you. And then I'll also send you my seven spicy recipes to spice off seven pounds. And they're the recipes I used to lose my first seven pounds. And that's at [masalabody.com/wellnessmama](http://masalabody.com/wellnessmama).

Katie: Awesome. Nagina, you're such an inspiration. Thank you so much for being here. And I'll, like I said, make sure to include these links in the show notes as well for anyone to find them.

Nagina: Oh, thank you so much, Katie. It's been a pleasure talking with you.

Katie: You too. And thanks to all of you for listening and I will see you next time on "The Healthy Moms" podcast.

If you're enjoying these interviews would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families can benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time and thanks as always for listening.