



# Nightshades



Nightshades, also known as Solanaceae, are a family of plants that includes thousands of species of flowering plants. Nightshade can be used in cooking worldwide and include

## Common nightshades

- bell peppers
- eggplants
- potatoes
- tomatoes

## Nightshade based spices:

- Capsicums Seed,
- Chilli Pepper,
- Paprika
- cayenne pepper

Tobacco, the plant found in cigarettes, is also a nightshade.

There are a large proportion of nightshades which are NOT edible, and many are poisonous if eaten. They also vary a lot in their shape, size, structure, and colour. However, all nightshades are genetically similar.

Allergies to nightshade plants are considered very rare, reactions can be caused by glycoalkaloids, which are concentrated, for example, in the potato skin and it is a natural compound produced by all nightshade plants.

Because nightshades are a common food within our diets, it is important to understand the affects they can have on someone with an allergy, and not be dismissive of their symptoms. as their reactions can be just as sever and potentially cause anaphylaxis.

Potato starch, often known as maltodextrin, is a common thickening agent used in sauces, salad dressings, marinades and processed foods. Paprika is sometimes used in food colouring, as well as seasonings.

**Note:** Sweet potatoes and yams are not nightshades.

## Reactions

It can sometimes be difficult to tell whether a spice is causing an allergy or if the person is experiencing a physiological response to the spice itself. For example, eating chili can cause the eyes to water and mouth to burn because of the chemicals in the spice, which can irritate the mucous membranes of the nose and mouth. In this instance, the effect is physiological and the response immediate.

**Allergic Reaction:** With a spice allergy, there may also be other symptoms such as swelling of the lips, nasal congestion, hives, bloating, nausea, or diarrhoea. Some people may experience shortness of breath or develop a rash where the spice has come into contact with skin known as contact dermatitis.

## Other medical reasons for avoiding nightshades

People who suffer from arthritic pain and joint inflammation will avoid these foods as the chemical solanine can aggravate their pain.

Some people will avoid foods with small seeds for example Diverticulitis, and IBS

## Further reference material

[https://www.foodsmatter.com/allergy\\_intolerance/nightshade/index\\_nightshade.html](https://www.foodsmatter.com/allergy_intolerance/nightshade/index_nightshade.html)