

## Jeera Spa Water

Last week I was the guest culinary instructor at Rancho La Puerta, a spa in the heart of Tecate, Mexico. Clean living, exercise, the outdoors, and health are its *raison d'être*, and to that end, filtered water is the primary beverage. At each meal, glass water bottles generally sport fresh herbs and occasionally small fruits from the site's organic gardens.

Before my trip, I'd interviewed a friend who lives in South India for my yogurt book. She'd told me about *jeera water*, a common drink in which cumin seeds are steeped in water to create a kind of tea. It's a health tonic, easing digestion and promoting hydration and wellness.

I returned from Mexico and immediately combined the two influences: herbs from my garden, toasted cumin for added flavor and depth.

You can keep drinking plain water. But let me show you another way.

Makes 1 bottle of jeera spa water

1-1/2 teaspoons whole cumin seeds

Fresh garden herbs: such as mint, tarragon, parsley, cilantro, thyme, or a combination

Filtered water

In a small, dry skillet, toast the cumin seeds (called *jeera* in India) for 2 to 3 minutes over medium heat, shaking the skillet so they don't burn. Cool briefly.

Stuff a few handfuls of fresh herbs in a tall glass water bottle. Using a funnel, add the toasted cumin seeds. Fill with filtered water. Drink immediately, or refrigerate and continue to top off the water as you use it. I actually enjoy it at room temperature and find I drink much more when it's tepid.

If you have trouble remembering to stay hydrated, try this.