

secret natural ingredient

4 Fresh Uses for vanilla

Sure, it's great in baked goods. But check out all the other stuff this natural wonder can do for you. *By Leslie Barrie*

sweet tip!

Don't know where to store your vanilla beans? Pop 'em in with granulated sugar in an airtight container. Bonus: "The vanilla perfumes the sugar grains slightly," says Alexandra Zissu, co-author of *Planet Home*.

HUNGER BUSTER

Take a whiff of vanilla extract right before digging into any delectable meal, and you might just eat less of it. That's because smelling a satisfyingly rich scent (like, you guessed it, vanilla) can trick your brain into thinking you've eaten more than you actually have, says Alan Hirsch, MD, founder of the Smell and Taste Treatment and Research Foundation. "If you sniff vanilla before you take a bite of food, you'll lose the sensory pleasure of it," he explains. "This cues your brain to eat less, so you'll eat less."

SKIN SOOTHER

Who needs the spa? Vanilla is a potent skin saver, thanks to its antioxidants, which help soothe irritated skin, says Elizabeth TenHouten, author of *Cooking Well: Beautiful Skin*. "It can also help prevent damage from environmental pollutants and toxins," she adds. Try her reviving vanilla scrub: Squeeze juice of 1 lemon into a bowl; discard seeds. Slice open 5 vanilla beans lengthwise, and scrape out seeds with a spoon. Add vanilla seeds, 3 tablespoons brown sugar, and 3 drops vanilla essential oil to lemon juice; mix ingredients well. Apply scrub to your face (avoiding your eyes), and gently massage in for a minute or two; rinse with warm water, then splash with cold water to finish.

...es (and maybe even ...urb—sans chemicals— ...does it lift odors, ...nilla may serve as an ...concoct your own nontoxic ...adding a few drops of pure ...ferably organic) to a few ...ay bottle, says Alexandra ...et Home. Spray it in ...ut your house to make ...aked goods. Sweet!

R ...anilla is a potent skin ...toxidants, which help ...ays Elizabeth TenHouten, ...f: *Beautiful Skin*. "It can ...age from environmental ...," she adds. Try her reviving ...juice of 1 lemon into a ...lice open 5 vanilla beans ...out seeds with a spoon. ...blespoons brown sugar, ...sential oil to lemon juice; ...apply scrub to your face ...and gently massage in for ...with warm water, then ...splash with cold water to finish.

HEALTHY BUG SPRAY

Say sayonara to stinky mosquito spray—vanilla's your new natural pest deterrent. "It's extremely effective at repelling mosquitoes because they can't stand the smell," says Sara Snow, author of *Sara Snow's Fresh Living*. Combine 2 ounces vanilla extract and 2 ounces water in a small spray bottle; spritz onto your exposed skin. Bye-bye, bug bites. ☺



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