

He Who Controls the Spice Controls the Internet

by Mix

So, this is kind of a weird one.

There's an Australian grocery chain called Oasis that recently got some internet buzz because of their pithy descriptions listed on some of their products a la Vitamin Water, but more widespread. Well, it turns out that their website actually has, uh, all of them! And there even seems to be some products that have multiple descriptions. So, here we are.

Since this is all pretty much from [their website](#), I didn't bother including the link itself since there's nothing else there worth looking at. As always, doc's split into different sections, and any comments by me **will be in cyan**.

Shell

Gany

Chai

Nutshell

Bozarth

Spices and Herbs

Italian Herbs

From Imported ingredients. Roberto Saviano's novel 'Gomorrah' provides a firsthand expose of the savagery & underhanded dealings of southern Italy's Camorra (a powerful Neapolitan mafia-like organization). One of the unscrupulous business practices detailed in the novel is the construction industry's use of inferior building materials to save on costs. In the L'Aquila earthquake of April 2009 several modern buildings were thought to have collapsed because sea sand had been used to produce the concrete. The salt content of the sand had rusted the steel reinforcing elements causing a loss of strength & subsequent failure during the relatively minor 6.3 magnitude earthquake. Rest assured the Camorra have not infiltrated the production of Italian herbs - it's salt free & very robust. Check out the sublime marinara sauce recipe on the back

Chinese 5 spice

From Imported ingredients. I was watching Iron Chef the other night, the mystery ingredient was salmon. Did you know that almost all the commercially available salmon on the market comes from salmon farms? The problem with farmed fish is that the fish do not lead a very natural or happy life. Plus the energy cost associated with farming fish is far in excess of the energy required if the fish were wild raised & caught. One of the dishes Iron Chef Chen Kenichi made was salt baked salmon with miso paste. He didn't use Chinese 5 spice, but you know what? I think if he had, it would have tasted awesome. Look, try to buy wild caught fish whenever you can & preferably try to buy fish caught from sustainable catchments. This is the only way we can leave a future for the children, the little children...

Tarragon

Origin: India. Tarragon, the dwarfs, the elf & the wizard set off to Middle Earth to defeat the evil foe Sauron. Along their road they had many an adventure, drunken brawls & sessions with the bong. Tarragon, the would-be King of the herbs - played with great vigour & lack of nude fight scenes by Viggo Mortensen - finally acceded the throne in Part III, with Liv Tyler as his queen & respected Shakespearean actor Ian McKellen as his Court Jester

Sumac

Origin: Jordan. Sumac was the favourite spice of French author Albert Camus, not because he particularly liked the taste of it, but because writing his family name backwards spelled out 'sumac' (he was a vain man). I often wonder about the existential nature of sumac - a spice that's able to transcend all common notions of time & space & form. I also often wonder about equilibrium. Everything changes & yet it always levels off to a new balance point. Le Chetelier [sic] (another Frenchman) devoted a large part of his scientific studies to the principle of equilibrium. I first learned about equilibrium in year 11 chemistry. In this class I also learned not to touch my eye after handling fresh chillies - the hard way!

Sweet Paprika

Origin: Hungary. Hungary has captured the world's taste buds with paprika. Native to South America, today paprika is cultivated mostly in Hungary & the Hungarians take their paprika very seriously. On my last trip to Europe I had a stopover in Hungary on my way to Romania. With a few hours to kill, I took a cab into Budapest. I was greeted by the most amazing sight: there was a festival occurring that seemed to shut down the city. You guessed it, they were celebrating the paprika harvest ... now that's pride

Mustard Powder

Origin: India. It's time this affliction stopped being a laughing matter & garnered the respect & admiration it deserves. Many great Eskimos have suffered from bipolar disorder & managed to earn great success in the non-descript arts of taxidermy, apiary & home brewing. We need to rise up as one force & say "Australia says no to wearing 'Live strong' bracelets!" We need to think about a future where our children stop being used as guinea pigs for the testing of pharmaceuticals & start being used for their intended purpose: as a source of organs for transplantation into wealthy businessmen

Caraway Seed

Origin: India. Caraway belongs to the transportation family of spices. Its siblings include busaway, trainaway & boataway. The transportation family of spices is renowned the world over for being the only spices that actually harvest, process, package & transport themselves to their final destination of sale. Scientific research into this unusual behaviour has yielded zero conclusive results as to how these spices are able to do what it is that they do. To further the uncertainty surrounding these spices, several scientists have disappeared under mysterious circumstances whilst studying these spices. Keep this spice in a secure area as it may very well spontaneously transport itself out of your pantry & back into the wild where it feels at home



My mate Laurie is getting married later this year. My wedding gift to him and his LP (that's, Life Partner) was the gift of words: I told him that I'd write their wedding vows. Problem is, I developed a bad case of tennis elbow which metamorphosed into a case of heartburn which then transposed into writer's block. I'm not sure if including the phrase "...subservient to your every need, whim, desire, & foot fetish" would be appropriate, particularly since both Laurie & his LP are missing their feet (freak skipping accident!). Another theme I wanted to incorporate into the vows was the theme of despair & complacency. To wit, I've been trying to work in the phrase "...you're not the best looking guy/girl around, or the smartest, or most hygienic, but you'll do"

Sage Leaves

Origin: Jordan. My gift to my very good mate Lawrence Mazzopollo & his bride-to-be Victoria on their wedding day will be the gift of words: I'm writing their wedding vows. Problem is, I'm having trouble finding suitable words to rhyme with womaniser, lecherous, Bangkok, tacky & carpark. I'm open to any suggestions. Please help

Cloves (Fine)

Origin: India. It's 9:35pm & can't think of anything to write. Brain shut down hours ago. Will make it up to you next time

Cloves (Whole)

Origin: India. Now it's 9:37pm. I should have gone home hours ago. What the hell's wrong with me that I should be at work at this time?

Garlic & Herbs

From Local and imported ingredients. World leaders - elected &/or otherwise - were in New York once again to rant & gesticulate at the UN General Assembly. I happened to be in New York & decided to pay homage to the failed institution that is the UN. Feeling dejected after being denied an opportunity to speak at the Assembly, I walked north along FDR Drive underneath the UN building. The Secret Service accosted me & demanded to know of my identity. I told them I was the Chicken Man & that I had to get uptown for a charity fundraiser to raise money for seeing-eye-dogs that needed corrective eye surgery. They said that garlic & herb seasoning works really well with chicken. So I tried a little on my arm: I tasted good

Lemongrass

Origin: India. Baby chickens: Is there any other sight that can soften even the most heartless of tyrants? I recently became the proud father of a dozen baby chicks, on account of one of my hens doing what it is that hens do with roosters. Looking at these baby chickens, I feel that I have hope: a reason to keep on going. Life finally has meaning. I must raise these chickens as any proud father would raise his son. I must care for them & look after them in a decent & loving manner. I must raise them to be 2.2kg each & roast them with a lemongrass, saffron & rice stuffing with a side of golden roasted potatoes. Post script - Our new baby goats have rekindled the same feelings of joy & wonderment that the chickens had caused me to feel. Christmas dinner will surely be special this year

Lemongrass Powder

I never anticipated the backlash against one slaughtering & eating their own chickens (with lemongrass & saffron rice). I've been blackballed

Chili Powder

Origin: India. This stuff is explosive (when mixed with TNT & detonated). Please do not mix with TNT & detonate. Just eat it

Chilli Powder (Roasted)

Origin: India. I don't say it nearly enough, so here it is in its entirety, in writing - "Thank you staff! Oasis Bakery wouldn't amount to a hill of beans without your help & hard work. See me after your shift for a shot of arak"

Cinnamon

Origin: Sri Lanka. From a purely historical perspective, cinnamon is a truly amazing spice. As far back as biblical times, the bark was traded across the longest, most convoluted of routes. Arab traders brought cinnamon back from the far East to the Mediterranean, North Africa & Europe, making it a staple ingredient for hundreds of years. Cinnamon has become so revered that it has even been beatified by the Catholic Church; Saint Cinnamon is the patron saint of obesity & diabetes

Celery Seed

Made up facts #57

Celery is the only food that requires more energy to digest than you obtain by eating it! True
Throw some seeds in your garden & watch the layers of winter contentment fade away

Baharat [Mixed Spice]

From Imported ingredients. I've been working here at the Oasis Bakery for eight years now & you know what spice I get asked for the most? Mixed spice (baharat), & me, a cocktail bartender!

Kafta Spices

From Imported ingredients. The key to authentic kafta is within your hands: in fact, it is your hands. Well, your hands plus 'Kafta spices' anyway. You see, to make authentic kafta, you have to mix the ingredients using your hands & you have to use this genuine Lebanese blend of spices (+ salt) to season the mixture. Tip: add some pomegranate molasses & a bit of tomato paste (+ sugar) to the mixture for colour & flavour (Props to Allam & Vicky for this tip)

Shawarma Spices

From Imported ingredients. "Lamb? chicken? or mixed?" You'll be asking your family this same question when you start using 'Sharwarma spices 3000.' Sharwarma spices 3000 has been scientifically

technologically foodologically formulated to give you MAXIMUM taste & EXTREME flavour, WITHOUT added sugar. TRY SOME TODAY! TODAY! TODAY! ...

Chicken Spices

From Imported ingredients. Phillip K. Dick wrote a book entitled "Do androids dream of electric sheep?" This book formed the basis the seminal 80's sci-fi flick 'Bladerunner,' starring Harrison Ford (of recent celebrity for dating Callista Flockheart, not so much for any decent film roles), Rutger Hauer (my favourite Teutonic actor) & Sean Young (a real flipper). Now let me ask you something: In the brief 42 day life of a chicken, do you think they dream about being marinated in this aromatic spice blend (+ olive oil) & then being seared to perfection over hot coals & if they do so dream, then does this make them more human (ie self aware) or merely self destructive? This is sure to be a question for the ages. Let us ponder?

BBQ Rub (mild)

From Local & imported ingredients My old barber was an Irishman. He went to Japan to teach Japanese kids English. My next barber was Malaysian. He wouldn't stop talking. I ditched him for an Italian named John (Red Sea Salon, Chape Street big discounts for me?). Anyways, BBQ rub (mild) is great for those after-haircut occasions where you want to get back to your carnivorous roots. Rub it on your selected cut of meat & BBQ away.

Coriander

Origin: India. This is the Indian variety of coriander. Coriander forms half of the cumin - coriander 'backbone' of Indian cooking. The flavour of coriander really comes to the fore when used in the delicate kormas & biryani of the Kashmir. Did you know that coriander is one of the distinguishing flavours of American hotdogs? The other distinguishing flavour is sawdust

Fennel

Origin: India. Fennel is rumoured to have been the cause of World War 1. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was visiting his good pal Count Von Uberalles at his holiday house in Barbados. The Count offered the Archduke a traditional Caribbean snack named 'ham, cheese & tomato sandwich.' Now, a HCT sandwich does not usually contain fennel as a condiment, but the Count being a joker - he once had show on Vaudeville where he would do observational comedy - put some fennel in the Archduke's sandwich. The Archduke did not take well to this & immediately ordered the dropping of the A-bomb on Hiroshima. In 1980, the Archduke was assassinated by John Hinckley. Hinckley later confessed that Jodie Foster's dog had told him to assassinate the Archduke. He was dismissed as a crackpot, as Ms Foster never owned a dog

Fish Spices

From Imported ingredients. Ever wondered what Nemo tastes like? Let me save you from experimenting: he tastes like pixles.

Lavender Flowers

Origin: India. Soap, air freshener, grandma: what do they all have in common? Two things i) you never thought you'd see these three things listed together on a product label & ii) lavender. But wait there's more...

Lemon Pepper

From Imported ingredients. Invest in gold

Mace

Origin: Indonesia. Mace is the lacy red covering that grows around the nutmeg seed. It is in fact an aril, a fruit part whose colour & sugars attract birds to carry it & the seed away so that the plant may spread its seed & procreate. ('Lacy red covering ... attract birds ... procreate,' am I still talking about mace, or am I talking about the dating game?) The mace is harvested at the same time as the nutmeg. It is allowed to dry & then ground.

Mixed Herbs

From Imported ingredients. Thyme? Marjoram? Sage? Feel daunted by the choices? Then try mixed herbs: for any herb usage occasion you'll find this mixture adds just the right amount of, how do the French say it... flavour?

Nutmeg (Ground)

Origin: Indonesia. Imagine a return on your investment of 10,000 percent in three years. This was exactly the financial lure of the spice trade for the English, Spanish & Portuguese oceangoing traders of the fifteenth century, & it was the quest for nutmeg from exotic lands that started the spice race. These days, to get a return on your investment of 10,000 percent in three years you'd have to be in the same business as Tony Montana. My favorite scene from that movie is the montage, for two reasons: 1) awesome Giorgio Moroda music, & b) it signifies the high point of Tony's ambitions, business dealings & personal relationships - it's all downhill from there onwards. From apex to nadir, a victim of his own success ... sha la la la ...

Nutmeg (Whole)

Origin: Indonesia. In fifteenth century London, certain circles held fast to the idea that "a handful of nutmeg mixed with the thread of the crocus (saffron), into a full draft with hot pepper, could cure death itself if administered within the moon." Now, here at Oasis Bakery we're not prone to making up lies in order to move product, so the best we'll do is say that whole nutmeg when taken as an infusion, three times per day, will help promote longevity, tanned complexion, increase your height, make you attractive to the opposite sex (or same sex depending on your predisposition), make you full of vigor & pith, & increase your hair follicle count, all whilst making your breath "nutmeggy fresh"

Onion Powder

Origin: China. When I was studying chemical engineering, I was introduced to the concept of an 'onion diagram.' Basically, some chemical engineer in her infinite wisdom sought to draw a parallel between the layers of an onion & the setup of a chemical processing plant. The precise nature of each layer of the diagram eludes me right now, as does most everything I was taught during my six years studying both chemical engineering & law. All I can remember about onion diagrams is that in final year I stayed up for over 45 hours completing the Design Project & that I included an onion diagram in this 147 page epic time to time-wasting. Onion powder on the other hand gives the flavour of onion, without the tears

Vege Spice

From Local and imported ingredients. In the history of condiments, the versatility of vege spice is only rivalled by that of salt. A truly marvellous condiment, vege spice is dervied, as the name would suggest, from dehydrated vegetables. In this case, carrots, celery, onion & parsely (yes I know parsely is not a vegetable, but hey, look at the monkey, look at the monkey ...). Add vege spice to anything. It will help to heighten the flavour of any dish

Zhoorat

Origin: Jordan. A traditional herbal tea combining sage, thyme, rose, lemon verbana & zezafoon.* Zhoorat is my dad's all time favourite herbal tea. I make him a pot every time he visits me at the shop. He'll sit down, read the Telegraph, or some other Arabic newspaper, drink his tea & then have nap. I like naps & I like my dad. I tell him I love him, he says 'Thank you'. My dad's heading towards his 80th birthday in 2010. Many happy returns dad. May you have a long future filled with goats, chickens, olives & naps. * Somebody please tell me what this is

General Products

Chilli Flakes

Origin: India. Back at law school my mate, Dave Van Sanden (now senior legal counsel with Australian Unity) told me of a method of torture in Sri Lanka that involved a human-capacity hession sack, a couple kilos of chilli flakes & a naked prisoner. Now, torture is BAD. Be it physical, emotional or mental (Ok Donald Rumsfeld. You hear me?). So please, don't buy these chilli flakes if you want to torture someone. Please only use them for cooking related purposes. And remember, torture is BAD & besides, if you want to torture someone, make them watch re-runs of 'The Biggest Loser' - it's a far more effective way of getting them to crack

Birdseye Chilli

Origin: India. Birdseye chillies + salt + vinegar + time = Tabasco sauce. It's been a while since I was a student at Monash studying Chemical Engineering & my memory isn't what it used to be, but I'd be damned if I ever came across the equation above during my studies - not even in Perry's Chemical Engineers' Handbook (a whopping \$126 back in '95, I've still got the price sticker on it). But you know what I did come across? Logarithms. What a fantastic way to multiply & divide numbers. Birdseye chilli

scores in the range of 30,000 - 50,000 on the Scoville pungency scale - a logarithmic scale. Pimentos score 0. Anyway you do the math, these babies are damn hot

Cinnamon Sticks

Origin: Sri Lanka. Cinnamon is the dried inner bark of trees in the tropical Asian genus *Cinnamomum*. When the inner bark is cut from the trees, it curls to form the familiar long 'quills' or sticks. Today, most cinnamon is used in sweets & candy. In the time of the ancient Egyptians, it was used in embalming. Imagine having a cinnamon stick shoved inside you. It would hurt a hell of a lot, especially you know, if it was shoved into your eye, ouuuch ... but I guess, that they wouldn't embalm you whilst you were still alive, so the ability to feel pain is irrelevant

Annatto

Origin: India. South America, first you give us the tomato, then coca & now this, annatto. Without annatto we'd be forced to eat bland natural looking butter - "Heaven forbid." You can thank annatto for providing the pigmentation to many "yellow looking" manufactured foods that pack stupormarket shelves. Back to basics, annatto's flavour is described as being earthen & sharp. The best way to use annatto is to make an infusion. To wit, add 1 part annatto to 4 parts mild oil & fry gently. Allow this infusion to cool then strain it to remove the seeds. Store it as you would any oil. This infusion may be added to rice dishes, used to start stocks & sauces, or simply as a condiment

Aniseed

Origin: Turkey/Syria. Aniseed is great stuff. Such a strong, recognisable flavour. Arak would just be a bunch of grapes if it wasn't for aniseed lending its flavours

Curry Leaves

Origin: India. A physician administering a medical exam on Frank Sinatra quizzed him as to his alcohol consumption. Frank replied he had on average 36 drinks a day! This being about a bottle to a bottle & half of Jack Daniels. The doc said he didn't think Frank had the right lifestyle. Frank, always the whip, replied "I don't think I have the right doctor."

Garlic Granules

Origin: China. CHEM101 - GARLIC BREATH Does the chemistry of garlic offer any help when it comes to dealing with garlic breath? Believe it or not, a major component of garlic breath is attributable to various chemical relatives of skunk spray (eg, methanethiol) that persist in the mouth. Another component (methyl allyl sulphide) is apparently generated by garlic as it passes through the digestive system & peaks in the breath between 6 & 18 hours after the meal. Residual thiols in the mouth can be transformed into odorless molecules by the browning enzymes in many fruits & vegetables, so eating a salad or an apple will help. Mouthwashes that contain strong oxidizing agents (eg, chloramines) are also effective. Sulphides from the digestive system, however, are probably beyond our reach!

Poppy Seeds

Origin: India. Yep, poppy seeds may contain residual minute traces of opiate alkaloids, not enough to have an effect on the body, but sufficient to cause positive drug test results. So that episode of Seinfeld where Elaine tests positive for opium could in fact happen to an unsuspecting poppy seed bagel eater. This pack of poppy seeds contains 458,750 poppy seeds. I have individually numbered each one to aid in arranging them in a line. Such a single-file line of poppy seeds would stretch for more than 5m! That's longer than some pieces of string - & thinner too!

Nuts and Dried Fruit

Juniper Berries

Origin: Poland. Jupiter: this gaseous giant dwarves all other planets in the solar system. It has a diameter of 137,900km ... sorry, my dyslexia took a strangle-hold over me. What I meant to say was this: juniper berries will forever be known as the flavouring agent in gin ('gin' comes from the dutch for juniper, 'genever'). These dried berries carry notes of pine, green-fresh & citrus. In Scandinavia & northern Europe they are much used to flavour game meats & cabbage. They grow on Jupiter ... damn dyslexia ...

Almonds (Raw)

Origin: Australia. Bigger is better! Just stop & think, what do the following have in common: Andre the Giant, Taipei 101, Chadstone, Maybach 63, Airbus 380? Give up? They're not almonds & they're not contained within this pack (obviously because they're too big). Anyways, all we could fit into this pack were these exceptional jumbo Australian almonds. We hope you're not disappointed with the lack of wrestlers within.

Best friends toasted muesli

Like a best friend, this muesli will never judge you (to your face) & will always support you and give you reassurance, just like a good friend should (when they need something from you). But unlike one of those annoying good friends that overstays their welcome drinks all your gin and eats all your boulder chips, you will never get annoyed with this toasted muesli! BTMFF*

*Best toasted muesli friends forever

My girlfriends Granola

When I meet elle, it was love at first bite. I haven't been able to work out whether it's my love for her, or her granola, that keeps us together but either way, I'm looking forward to a beautiful & tasty, future with Elle's granola. I love Elle's granola & you will too! #mygirlfriendsgranola

George Makool, July 2015

Walnuts (Californian)

Origin: USA. One measure of the quality of walnuts is the percentage of intact halves they contain. Another measure is their colouring. These Californian walnut halves measure very highly on the Standardised Californian Walnut Assessment Test.

SCWAT