

# Forward Thinking: Turmeric, an Emerging Ingredient

Novel applications from beverages to personal care

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**T**urmeric, also known as Indian saffron (*haldi*), is a ground root related to ginger that is grown in India and other parts of Asia and Africa. It is described by iFood as having a “peppery, warm and bitter flavor and a mild fragrance slightly reminiscent of orange and ginger.” This versatile ingredient is widely used as a natural food colorant, cooking spice and herbal supplement. Most popular in cooking, it is used in curry and mustard, giving both spices their bright yellow color. Because of its anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and antibacterial properties, it is often associated with Indian ayurvedic medicine and used in many health and beauty remedies. In addition, turmeric is used in Indian rituals such as weddings and births. It is customary to apply turmeric paste to the bride and groom’s face and arms, and to the forehead of a newborn baby. In 2007, the ingredient finally entered the mainstream market through ready to drink (RTD) beverages and is now an emerging key ingredient in personal care products.



## Culinary and Beverage Use

Turmeric is a versatile, functional culinary spice used to add color to food and depth to flavor. For example, because of its natural yellow color, turmeric is used to color *Zumbro River* brand’s whey crisps. And, capitalizing on many of its health properties, there are a variety of herbal supplements available such as *GNC Herbal Plus Turmeric Curcumin Herbal Supplement*. For recipes, I recommend *5 Spices, 50 Dishes* by Ruta Kahate, an Indian recipe book based on five common spices—coriander, cumin, mustard, cayenne pepper and turmeric. Teas using the ground root are popular; do-it-yourself turmeric tea recipes can be found online at sites such as [www.ehow.com/how\\_2156206\\_make-turmeric-tea.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2156206_make-turmeric-tea.html).

Meanwhile, RTD beverages with turmeric variants or turmeric as an ingredient began launching in 2007 with introductions such as *Dr. Weil Ito En Tea—Turmeric*, *Sajen Jamu Turmeric Earth Drink* and *Ginger-Turmeric Earth Drink*. Last year’s launches highlighting turmeric as a main ingredient included *Adina Holistics: Peach Amalaki*, *Solixir Sparkling Botanical Beverage Orange Mate* and *Zrii—The Original Amalaki*. Recently, *Zrii* added *NutriiVeda* a “100% natural weight management product” to its line, which also features turmeric as a key ingredient. This year’s notable beverage is *Turmeric Alive*—containing turmeric, lemon, ginger, sea salt, cayenne, honey, cardamom and mint—available in two formulas, regular and vegan.

## Personal Care Use

Manufacturers and consumers alike continually search for new and unique ingredients with benefits. Turmeric is a key emerging ingredient being translated into personal care products. *Dr. Andrew Weil for Origins Conditioning Lip Balm with Turmeric* was one of the first introductions in this area. Most recent market activity, however, has taken place in the facial skin care arena, with several launches such as *MyChelle Fruit Enzyme Cleanser with Tumeric Root Extract*, *Glo Brightening Polish with Tumeric Extract* and *Juara Turmeric Antioxidant Radiance Mask*. Additionally, *DDF Doctor’s Dermatologic Formula Advanced* skin care line contains a “breakthrough turmeric complex,” while the *Giovanni Organic Hair Care Colorflage* range includes tumeric root extract.

Turmeric will continue to be examined for its scientific health benefits in both culinary and personal care products and eventually become a mainstream ingredient. Expect to see new functional formulations using this versatile ingredient in both industries.