

# A PASSION FOR SPICES

FROM THE ADVENTURES OF 'SPICE-HUNTERS' WHO SAILED FROM PORT-LOUIS, LORIENT AND SAINT-MALO, TO THE SOPHISTICATED FLAVOURS OF BLENDS CREATED BY FAMOUS CHEFS, THE STORY OF BRITTANY AND ITS SPICES IS A TALE THAT'S STILL BEING TOLD...

## BRITTANY, ON THE SPICE ROUTE



The view across to the Isle of Groix from the walls of the citadel of Port-Louis is crystal-clear. The history of this peaceful little spa resort in southern Brittany is closely linked with that of the spice trade.

In 1664, Colbert chose this site, on the Blavet estuary, to set up the French East India Company that he had just founded to develop trade with Asia. On the other side of the harbour, naval shipyards were built, around which the town of Lorient grew up. For the next 40 years, Port-Louis and Lorient acted as transit points not just for spices but also for the tea, fabrics,

silk and porcelain that made the fortune of the East India Company. Wars with Holland, Spain and England destabilised the maritime trade. Eventually, in the early 1700s, the Company veered towards bankruptcy, ending up in the hands of the so-called 'Messieurs de Saint-Malo', the nickname given to St-Malo ship-owners and corsairs. Those same 'spice-hunters' were responsible for building the 'Malouinières': sprawling country houses brimming with history, some of which are now open to visitors.

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[www.musee.lorient.bzh](http://www.musee.lorient.bzh)

## THE 'KARI GOSSE': A CURRY THAT IS PURE BRETON

*Its recipe has been a closely-guarded secret since the 19th century. It was passed by a shipwrecked Indian sailor to Mr Gosse, an apothecary with a store in Auray in Morbihan who welcomed the Indian to his home.*

*Xavier Pézat, his descendant, continues to make it, in some secrecy. The 'Kari Gosse' is a pure Breton curry powder characterised by its distinctive fragrance with notes of clove, and its beautiful ochre colour. The blend also includes ginger, turmeric, chilli, cinnamon and pepper and is a perfect accompaniment to any shellfish dish, especially lobster.*

*On sale at some pharmacies in Auray and Lorient*



## DIDIER CORLOU: A NOSE FOR SPICES

He is said to have a 'nose for spices', and Morbihan chef, Didier Corlou, certainly uses his sense of smell as well as every other sense to create his own blends.

Didier Corlou has been an expat in Vietnam for 25 years, where he runs five highly-acclaimed restaurants. In Vietnam he found the perfect environment to express himself and create new flavours. A confirmed globetrotter, he never stops searching mountains and plateaux in Vietnam to hunt down the best producers of cassia cinnamon, star anise, black cardamom, turmeric, Vietnam pepper and talauma. The Breton chef has begun marketing his spices in France, a range that includes Ha Long, Hanoi, Tangier, December and Siam Curry, to which "a dried green lemon leaf brings freshness and exoticism".

+ FIND OUT MORE  
[www.epices-corlou.com](http://www.epices-corlou.com)



## SPICES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD AT PAIMPOL, VANNES AND SOON RENNES

A schooner serves as the company logo in a nod to Paimpol's maritime past. 'La Cale aux épices' (Ship's hold of spices) was born of the long-haul voyages undertaken by the globe-trotting spice enthusiast Christophe Lemaire, who also crushes them himself and then shares his discoveries and creations.

After Paimpol, Vannes was the next location for a store, to be followed shortly by Rennes. In his retro-look stores with apothecary-style counters, Christophe Lemaire sells around 20 of his curry compositions as well as 30 or so marinade blends, and around 80 peppers and berries. Even now, he selects his own products from sources all over the world, returning from each pilgrimage armed with new recipes.

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[www.lacaleauxepices.com](http://www.lacaleauxepices.com)



## OLIVIER ROELLINGER SPICES: THE GOLD STANDARD

*Two of the most recent creations from Olivier Roellinger, unrivalled master of the art of spices, are a 'Cajun powder' - a tribute to the Acadians who reinvented the cuisine of Louisiana - and a 'Breton gomasio', a blend of Breton buckwheat, Egyptian sesame, nigella, Indian coriander etc. Roellinger's inspiration is simply flawless.*

*The famous Breton chef grew up in Cancale Bay and set up his laboratory in his Saint-Malo homeland, where he works on his famous powders. Most of the raw spices, roasted and ground on-site, come from organic farming or fair trade. Olivier Roellinger chooses the spices himself in their country of production, carefully selecting the rare bulbs, leaves, flowers and barks that go into his blends. The range is impressive: the chef-explorer has more than 80 blends on his shelves in their instantly-recognisable red and blue jars. Olivier Roellinger ground spices are available at the Epices-Roellinger stores at Cancale, Saint-Malo, Paris and on the website.*

+ FIND OUT MORE  
[www.epices-roellinger.com](http://www.epices-roellinger.com)

