

Nutmeg has a secret story that isn't so nice

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

Ah, nutmeg! Whether it's sprinkled on eggnog, baked into spice cake or blended into a latte, this pungent spice can evoke memories of holidays past.

But a lot of blood has been shed over this little brown seed.

"Nutmeg has been one of the saddest stories of history," says culinary historian Michael Krondl. If you listen to my story, you'll hear the gruesome, grisly tale of how the Dutch tortured and massacred the people of the nutmeg-producing Banda Islands in Indonesia in an attempt to monopolize the nutmeg trade.

So, why was nutmeg so valuable? Well, Krondl likens it to the iPhone of the 1600s. It was fashionable among the wealthy. It was exotic and potent enough to induce hallucinations – or at least a nutmeg bender, as detailed in this account from the *Atlantic*.

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