

Recipes... HERBS-GINGER



Ginger Root Whole (fresh or dried) — Light tan with knobby, finger-like branches, ginger root is not really a root, but a fleshy rhizome. Fresh ginger is delightful, but the dried root keeps much longer.

Ginger Root Cut — This is a great way to keep ginger on hand for tea. Simply put a teaspoon or more in a tea strainer or muslin tea bag for each cup of water. Cut ginger is also a nice addition to potpourris.

Ginger medicinal qualities. In fact, ginger was used medicinally long before it was used as a food spice. Historically, ginger has been used internally and externally for a range of ailments, including arthritis, sprains, muscular aches and pains, coughs, sinusitis, diarrhea, colic, cramps, indigestion, motion

sickness, fever and flu. It's been used for centuries to aid in digestion, and recent research indicates its value as an antioxidant. Ginger may be drunk as a tea or made into a compress or poultice.

Substitute 1/8 teaspoon of ginger powder per tablespoon of fresh ginger or vice versa. Of course, you won't have the pieces of ginger in your dish, but the aroma and taste will fill in nicely. You can also substitute whole dried ginger directly for whole fresh ginger in recipes. (Some cooks like to add a spritz of lemon juice to the dried ginger when they cut it, to moisten.) And if you have only crystallized ginger on hand, you can rinse off the sugar and finely cut it, then substitute it one for one for fresh ginger.

GINGERBREAD

No need for frosting; simply top a warm slice of this cake with a big dollop of your favorite yogurt.

1 1/2 cups flour
3/4 teaspoon cinnamon powder
1 teaspoon ginger powder
1/8 teaspoon cloves powder
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup butter, melted
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup light molasses
1/4 cup honey

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square baking pan. Combine dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In another bowl, combine butter and sugar. Add egg, molasses, and honey. Beat well. Alternately add water and dry mixture to the butter mixture, beating between additions. Pour into pan, and bake about 35 minutes, or until cake tests clean with a toothpick.

WARMING GINGER TEA

An after-dinner cup of ginger tea can be warming and helps with digestion, too. For a fun punch, combine the sweetened tea with 1 cup of ginger ale, and serve over ice cubes.

1 teaspoon sliced or grated ginger root or 1/3 teaspoon ginger powder
1 teaspoon of your favorite green tea
1 cup boiled water
honey to taste
1 cinnamon stick (optional)

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2 whole cloves (optional)

Pour the hot water over the ginger root and green tea. Cover and steep 10 to 15 minutes, then strain. Sweeten with honey. Add cinnamon stick and a clove bud or two.

GINGER SNAP COOKIES

Ginger adds zing to this traditional namesake cookie. Bake a batch when you want your home filled with its warm fragrance.

2 1/4 cups all-purpose unbleached flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons ginger powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
1/4 teaspoon cloves powder
dash sea salt
3/4 cup butter
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup molasses
1 egg

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, spices, and salt. In another bowl, cream together butter, brown sugar, and sugar. Beat in molasses and egg. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and blend. Form into a ball and chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes or more.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Shape heaping tablespoons of dough into balls, and place on lightly greased cookie sheet. Flatten with a drinking glass that has been dipped in sugar. Bake until bottoms are lightly browned, about 10-12 minutes.

GOOD-FOR-YOU GINGERBREAD

I've given traditional gingerbread a nutritional boost by substituting whole wheat flour for a portion of the all-purpose flour.

1 cup flour
1/2 cup wheat flour
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 egg whites, lightly beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/2 cup light molasses

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray an 8- x 8- x 2-inch baking pan with no-stick spray. Set the pan aside. In a large bowl, stir together the flours, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, baking powder, and baking soda.

In a small bowl, combine the egg whites, buttermilk, applesauce, and molasses. Add the buttermilk mix the flour mix. Beat with an electric mixer until well combined. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan. Bake for 30-35

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minutes for until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Then remove from the pan and serve warm.

GINGER DRESSING/MARINADE

Use this mixture on green salads-- or as a marinade for poultry, fish, or tofu.

1/2 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon peanut butter
1 teaspoon grated ginger root
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Blend all ingredients until well mixed.

CHICKEN MARRAKESH

3 pounds chicken, whole
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup water
1/8 teaspoon saffron threads
oil
pepper
salt

filling
1/4 pound cooked rice
1 cup raisins
1/2 cup almonds, toasted and chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
pinch of saffron threads*
salt

*Soak the saffron in a little warm water until it turns yellow; pour into the pot, discarding the threads if desired. Heat oven to 400 degrees. First, using an oven-proof dish that is large enough to take the whole chicken, and has a lid, heat up some oil on top of the cooker. When hot, put the chicken (unstuffed) into the dish and let it cook for 20 minutes or until brown.

Meanwhile, to make the filling put the cooked rice in a bowl and mix in the raisins, almonds, ginger, cinnamon, and saffron or turmeric and salt. Mix thoroughly. Now spoon the filling into the chicken and secure with skewers. Boil the water and then blend it with the remaining ginger, cinnamon, and saffron. Season. Pour this over the chicken, put the lid on the pot and cook in the oven for 1 1/2 hours, adding more water if required, until the chicken is cooked.

Chef Suggestions

Soak the saffron in a little warm water until it turns yellow; pour into the pot, discarding the threads if desired. If you can not get saffron, use 1/2 teaspoon turmeric.