SPICE OF THE MONTH CLUB

Keller Public Library
A SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

December 2021

Join us to discuss

12/28 @ 6:30pm / Meeting Room OR online

Spend the month cooking with your spice and join us to discuss your opinions, experiences, and recipes!

Zoom Registration: bit.ly/KPLSpiceDec

Sign up for our e-mail list

We'll send you notices when kits are ready to pick up, meeting reminders, and shared recipes!

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This month's spice: GINGER!

History

Although it is grown in many tropical climates where the inhabitants claim it as their own, Ginger is not known to occur in a true wild state anywhere in the world. But ancient references to it can be found in both China and India, suggesting that it may have originated somewhere between northern India and Eastern Asia.

Because Ginger was so easily transported growing in pots aboard vessels, it began to be traded extensively in the Middle Ages. By the 14th century, Ginger was the most common spice in Britain after pepper.

Arabs took Ginger to establish plantations in East Africa, the Spanish did likewise in Jamaica, and the Portuguese in West Africa. Ginger quickly grew in popularity in all types of cuisines.

Use

Ginger's tangy freshness, slight spiciness, warmth, and sweetness complement a whole range of dishes from sweet to savory. Ginger is used in many Asian dishes where it pairs perfectly with garlic, lemongrass, chile, lime, and coriander. It is also often added to cakes, pastries, and cookies. Ginger can be used fresh, pickled, candied, or ground (this kit contains ground Ginger).

The Spice & Herb Bible (Third Edition) by Ian & Kate Hemphill
& AtoZ Food America by World Trade Press

Garlic Ginger Pork Stir Fry

Change up your weeknight meal routine with this quick and easy garlic ginger pork stir fry! Serves 4.

Sauce

- **1 cup beef broth (reduced sodium recommended)**
- **2 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- **3 Tbsp. light soy sauce**
- **2 tsp. dark soy sauce (optional but recommended)**
- **2 Tbsp. light brown sugar**
- **1/2 - 1 tsp. sambal oelek chili paste**
- **1/8 tsp. ground ginger**
- **1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**

Stir Fry

- **1 lb. boneless pork chops or loin, sliced into thin strips against the grain (about 1/4" thick)**
- **2 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided**
- **4 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1/8 tsp. ground ginger**
- **1 cup snow peas**
- **1/2 cup shredded carrots**
- **1 cup mushrooms, sliced**
- **drizzle of toasted sesame oil**
- **chopped green onions, for garnish**
- **crushed peanuts, for garnish**
- **8 - 12 oz. hokkein, udon, or other stir fry noodles (optional)**

1. Make the sauce: In a small bowl, combine cornstarch and broth until smooth. Stir in the soy sauces, brown sugar, sambal oelek, ginger, and red pepper flakes; set aside.
2. In a wok or large skillet, stir-fry pork in 1 Tbsp. oil over MED HIGH heat for 2-3 minutes, until browned. Remove to a plate.
3. In the same pan, add remaining 1 Tbsp. oil, garlic and ginger, cooking for 30 seconds, then add stir fry vegetables and cook until crisp tender.
4. Stir sauce again and add to the pan of vegetables. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 1 minute or until thickened.
5. Add noodles and pork; heat through. Drizzle with sesame oil, then top with garnishes and serve.

Sticky Gingerbread

Gingerbread falls into two main categories: the people-shaped, crisp cookies that kids adore and a more grown-up cake, bright with molasses and syrup and often more heavily spiced with ginger. This cake improves with age: it is best around the second or third day after baking. Yields one 12"x8" cake.

- **1 cup butter**
- **1/3 cup golden syrup or honey**
- **1/2 cup packed light brown sugar**
- **3/4 cup molasses or treacle**
- **1 1/4 cups milk**
- **1 1/2 cups all-purpose flower**
- **1 tbsp. ground ginger**
- **1 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **1 1/2 tsp. baking soda**
- **2 eggs, lightly beaten**

1. Preheat oven to 300° F
2. Grease and line a 12" by 8" cake pan with parchment paper
3. In a saucepan over low heat, melt butter, syrup, sugar, and molasses and stir to combine. Remove from heat and stir in milk. Set aside to cool.
4. In a large bowl, combine flour, ginger, cinnamon, and baking soda. Make a well in the center and pour in butter mixture. Add eggs and stir gently, until well combined. Pour into prepared pan.
5. Bake in preheated oven for 40 to 50 minutes or until a skewer inserted in center comes out clean and cake feels quite soft and spongy to the touch. Remove from oven and cool completely in pan before cutting into squares. Cake will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.
6. Prior to serving, dust with powdered sugar or top with a dollop of whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Ginger Pear Jam

It's amazing what a little ground ginger will do for your pear jam. This Ginger Pear Jam recipe is easy to make and doesn't require pectin. Optional canning instructions to lengthen the shelf-life of your jam are included. Yields 6 half-pint jars.

- **8 cups pears, peeled and chopped**
- **4 cups sugar**
- **1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- **1/4 tsp ground ginger**

1. Prepare pears by peeling and chopping. Add pears to a large pot or dutch oven. Add sugar, ground cinnamon and ground ginger. Stir to combine. Cook uncovered over medium heat at a simmer for 1-1/2 to 2 hours or until jam thickens. Stir frequently.
2. Remove from the heat and skim off any foam. Ladle into prepared half-pint jars.
3. *Optional Canning Instructions*: Make sure jars have 1/4" headspace. Remove air bubbles, wipe rims and affix lids. Tighten jars finger tight. Process in water bath canner for 10 minutes. (Start 10 minute timer after water comes to a boil.) Carefully remove jars to a towel covered countertop. Allow jars to rest undisturbed for 24 hours.

Pamela Baker, The Birch Cottage (7/13/2021)