

SPICE CLUB: GINGER



Botanical Name: *Zingiber Officinale*

Description: Ginger is a flowering tropical plant whose bulb or rhizome is widely used as a spice and a folk medicine. It is an herbaceous perennial which grows annual pseudo stems about one-meter-tall bearing narrow leaf blades.

Origin: Ginger is cultivated in Africa, India, Australia, and Jamaica. Jamaican ginger has the most delicate flavor and aroma.

Varieties: There are about four hundred types of ginger. Young ginger, which is pale yellow with a thin skin and can be eaten raw, pickled, or used in marinades. When recipes call for ginger, use mature ginger, which is beige-brown with a thicker skin that must be peeled. It has a wonderfully sweet, warm, and citrus like aroma and a powerful protein-digesting enzyme called zingibain. For this reason, it is often used as a natural meat tenderizer. The more you grate or chop the ginger the stronger its flavor will be. If you prefer a mild flavor, cut it into large chunks instead. When buying ginger, choose pieces that are firm with shiny unwrinkled skin for best flavor. Wrapped in plastic wrap, it will keep fresh for up to 10 days in the refrigerator. For a longer shelf life (about 3 months), grind the ginger, place in a glass jar, and freeze.

Flavor Profile: When used in fresh form, ginger's flavor is lemony, sweet, and spicy. In powdered form, ginger tastes similar, but lacks the lemony tones. Ginger can range in spiciness.

Nutrient Profile: Raw ginger is 79% water, 18% carbohydrates, 2% protein, and 1% fat. In 100 grams, raw ginger supplies 333 kilojoules (80 kilocalories) of food energy and contains moderate amounts of vitamin B6 and the dietary minerals, magnesium, and manganese, but otherwise is low in micronutrient content. When used as a spice powder in a common serving amount of one tablespoon (5 grams), ground dried ginger (9% water) provides negligible content of essential nutrients, except for manganese.

Preparations: Although ginger is most famous for flavoring Asian food, it is also found in Arabic cooking particularly in North Africa, where it's often combined with spices like saffron, black pepper, coriander, and turmeric.

In Southeastern Asian cuisine, it is used in spice rubs, stir-fries, soups, curries, and in baking. Dried ginger works well in sweet desserts and with squashes, and it also brightens the flavors of slow-cooked stews.

Facts: A good quality ground ginger is brilliant yellow, not dull beige, and has a mild aroma of ginger.

Add a few slices of ginger to your tea to stimulate appetite, improve circulation, and relieve nausea. Ginger Tea is also used to help with cold or flu.

To makes 5 cups:

Bring 1 to 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger and 5 cups water to a boil in a medium pan. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain and add 3 tablespoon fresh lemon juice and honey to taste.

Ginger Biscuits

Ingredients

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¾ cup chopped crystallized ginger
- 1 ½ tsps. ground ginger
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 ¼ tsps. table salt
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted (optional)



Directions

Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees.

Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In medium bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, crystallized ginger, ground ginger, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Microwave cream until just warmed to body temperature, 60 to 90 seconds, stirring halfway through microwaving. Stir cream into flour mixture until soft, uniform dough forms.

Spray 1/3-cup dry measuring cup with vegetable oil spray. Drop level scoops of batter 2 inches apart on prepared sheet. Respray measuring cup after every 3 or 4 scoops. Use your fingertips to gently reshape dough into level cylinders.

Bake until tops are light golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking.

Transfer sheet to wire rack. Brush hot biscuits with melted butter, if using, and let cool for 5 minutes.

Serve warm.

Salmon with Ginger Butter

Ingredients

- 1-pound skinless salmon fillet
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- One 3-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and cut into long, thin matchsticks
- 1 small shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 scallions, both white and green parts, chopped
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1 tsp soy sauce, or to taste.



Directions

Pat the fish dry with paper towels. Cut the fish into 4 pieces. Set aside.

Heat the olive oil and butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the ginger and shallot and cook until light brown in color, about 5 minutes.

Add the scallions, chicken broth, oyster sauce, and soy sauce. Bring just to a boil. Taste and add more soy sauce if needed for saltiness.

Add the fish pieces and cook for 5 minutes on each side, until most of the liquid is absorbed into the fish and the fish is warm in the center.

Transfer the fish to a serving platter, top with the cooked ginger, shallots, and scallions and serve immediately.