



Fresh Ginger Tonics

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 5 / **Cook Time** 10 / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

boil: to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

Equipment

Ingredients

Fresh Ginger Tonics

- 1/4 small ginger root
- 1/2 C white sugar or honey
- 4 C water

Food Allergen Substitutions

Fresh Ginger Tonics

Instructions

Fresh Ginger Tonics

cut + boil

Cut **1/4 of a ginger root** into 1/4-inch pieces, and place them into a pitcher. Combine in a large pot with

1/2 cup sugar, and **4 cups of water**. Bring this mixture to a boil.

steep + cool

Pour the hot sugar water over the ginger in the pitcher and allow it to steep for at least 5 minutes. Cool until you are ready to serve.

recipe tidbit

Ginger is an ancient medicine. Try this tonic when your throat is sore to help relieve pain or when you have a queasy stomach.

Featured Ingredient: Ginger!

Hi! I'm Ginger!

"My name is Ginger, and I'm happy to make your acquaintance! You may have tasted me in lots of sweet foods and drinks, like gingerbread, ginger snap cookies, pumpkin pie, and ginger ale. But, I also add my unique flavor to savory dishes, like stir-fries and potstickers! If you use my fresh rhizome or root in a recipe, delicately peel my beige, papery skin (the back of a metal spoon works great!) and grate my juicy flesh into the food! I also come in a dried and ground form and as crystallized ginger. As a bonus, I might even make your tummy ache feel better!"

History

Ginger is a native plant of India and China and is a common cooking spice used throughout the world.

Ginger is one of the oldest plants used for medicine.

Which spices do you think are most commonly found on kitchen tables around the world? If you said salt and pepper, you'd be right! It truly depends on where you are in the world. In the ninth century, Europeans placed powdered ginger on the table alongside salt and pepper.

A long, long time ago, ginger was used to preserve food and keep it from getting rotten.

Greeks used to eat ginger wrapped in bread to treat digestive problems. After a while, they added ginger to bread dough to create the first recipe for gingerbread!

Ginger grows in many tropical countries, including the Caribbean islands. However, ginger from Jamaica is considered by many to be the best! Do you know where your ginger originated?

Ginger is also grown in Florida, Hawaii, and along the eastern coast of Texas.

Anatomy & Etymology

Related to cardamom and turmeric, the ginger plant is part of the Zingiberaceae or Ginger family. We use the "rhizome" part of the plant, which are underground stems. Sometimes we can eat the rhizome part of a plant, and sometimes we can't! For example, bamboo plants are rooted underground by rhizomes, but the

rhizome is not the part of the plant we eat—instead, we eat the bamboo shoots that come up out of the ground. But we do eat the rhizomes of plants such as ginger, turmeric, and arrowroot! Rhizomes are also the storage compartment of the plant. What do rhizomes store? Starches, proteins, and other nutrients—that's why we eat this part of the plant (because it's nutritious!).

Ginger Root is characterized by its aroma: it smells strong, sweet, and woody. Its skin is not something we eat—we peel the skin to reveal ginger's coarse, stringy, aromatic flesh.

The ginger plant looks like a reed and has been used in the kitchen and as medicine for the past 5,000 years. A ginger plant can reach three to four feet tall.

The word "ginger" comes from late Old English "gingifer," from medieval Latin "gingiber," from Greek "zingiberis," and from Pali, a Middle Indo-Aryan language "singivera."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Fresh ginger is available year-round, where you can find it in the grocery store produce section. When selecting fresh ginger, choose robust, firm roots that feel heavy, and have a spicy fragrance and smooth skin.

Ginger root length is a sign of age, and mature rhizomes will be spicier and more fibrous than younger roots.

Ginger should not be cracked or withered—these are signs of aged ginger past its prime.

To store ginger root, wrap it in a paper towel or plastic wrap or put it in a plastic bag before placing it in the refrigerator for two to three weeks. You can also freeze it for up to three months.

According to many chefs and cooks, fresh ginger is best and can be added to sauces, soups, and stews. Dried and powdered ginger has a more spicy, intense flavor and is often used in baked desserts like gingerbread, gingersnaps, and ginger cake.

Ginger can be sliced, minced, grated, or left whole to steep in recipes (minced ginger has the most intense flavor). It can also be dried, pickled, crystallized, candied, or preserved.

Ginger tastes sweet, spicy, and pungent and increases flavor in a range of dishes, from stir-fried beef or tofu to ginger tea.

Nutrition

Ginger continues to be used to treat nausea and to prevent seasickness.

Ginger may also have anti-inflammatory properties and increase digestive function.

Despite its natural properties, any medicinal use of ginger should be discussed with a doctor. Limiting the amount you take will help avoid heartburn. It may also interfere with anticoagulant medicine.