

staff's fresh favourites: Rhubarb

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... everyday to gourmet ...

Delicious bits and bites from 'BEYOND' THE KITCHEN DOOR

Rhubarb - what to look for ...

Although technically a vegetable, rhubarb is treated like a fruit in the kitchen. Dubbed the "pie plant" rhubarb is delicious paired with sweet fruits such as strawberries, raspberries or peaches - to temper its tartness. Oranges are another common flavour pairing.

In Season: from late winter to spring, rhubarb's peak season is from April to beginning July.

Selecting: look for crisp, firm red stalks without blemishes. If stalks are floppy, it indicates they were picked too long ago. Any leaves attached to the stalks should be fresh looking, not wilted, although the leaves should not be eaten as they are toxic.

Storing: Whole stalks can be refrigerated for up to 5 days. Store them in the crisper in perforated plastic bags. You can also freeze sliced or diced rhubarb in freezer bags for up six months. Frozen rhubarb tends to release more liquid and doesn't hold its shape as well as fresh rhubarb, so use it where texture is not essential, such as muffins.

Preparing: Trim away the leaves and stalk ends and peel any brown spots. If stalks are fibrous, remove the strings with a vegetable peeler. Stalks more than 1 1/2 inches wide should be halved lengthwise.



Fresh Now - Rhubarb Compote

A favourite of Jim's he serves this simple fresh fruit treat with waffles, pancakes, over ice cream or with a dollop of whip cream. The best part he notes is this is so quick and easy to make!

1 cup	granulate sugar
1/4 cup	water
6 cups	chopped fresh rhubarb
1	strip orange rind
1 cup	sliced strawberries

In top of double boiler over direct heat, bring sugar and water to a boil. Then place over gently boiling water in double boiler; stir in rhubarb and orange rind. Cook, covered and without stirring, until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Turn off heat; let stand until cool. Chill. To serve, remove the orange rind; gently stir in the fresh strawberries. Enjoy!

Rhubarb Strawberry Pie

An all-time favourite pie in Sue's home.

Pastry: 2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp grated orange rind
1/2 tsp salt
1 1/4 cups unsalted butter
1/4 cup ice water



In large bowl, combine flour, orange rind and salt; with pastry blender cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stirring with a fork, add enough of the water to make dough hold together. Press into 2 balls; flatten into discs. Wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll out 1 disc to fit into a 10 inch pie plate; trim, leaving 1/2-inch overhang. Fold overhang under; flute edge. Roll out remaining pastry and cut into strips for a lattice pie crust topping.

Filling:

1 cup granulated sugar	2 Tbsp quick cooking tapioca
2 tsp cornstarch	1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg	1/4 cup fresh orange juice
4 cups chopped rhubarb	1 1/2 cups sliced strawberries
1 Tbsp unsalted butter	

In large bowl, blend together sugar, tapioca, cornstarch, salt and nutmeg. Add rhubarb; toss to coat. Stir in the orange juice. Spoon into pie shell. Scatter strawberries over top; dot with butter. Arrange lattice strips over top.

Bake in bottom third of a 425°F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°F; bake for 35-40 minutes longer or until pastry is golden and filling is cooked and bubbly. Let cool on rack.

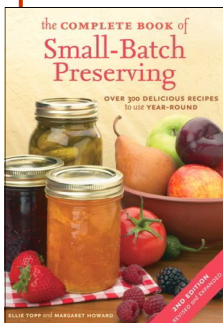
The Perfect Pie Crust Shield



Bake pie edges to a perfect golden brown - without burning - by protecting them with the lightweight pie crust shield. "A great gadget, notes Theresa it keeps pie edges from over baking and darkening before the pie is cooked.

The shield sits atop the pie as it bakes, without crushing the crimping and detailing of the crust".

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Gingered Rhubarb Jam with Honey

Theresa loves the combination of ginger and honey with rhubarb. In one of her favourite jam recipe from *Small-Batch Preserving* the candied or crystallized ginger adds a pungent spiciness while the honey offsets rhubarb's tartness.

- 1 lemon
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup liquid honey
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups chopped fresh or frozen rhubarb
- 1 large tart apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 1 1/2 Tbsp finely chopped candied ginger

Remove outer rind from lemon with a zester to obtain fine strips. Place rind in medium saucepan. Squeeze juice from lemon and reserve 1 tablespoon.

Add rhubarb, apple and water to saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, cover, reduce heat and boil gently for 15 minutes or until the fruit is tender.

Add sugar, honey, ginger and reserved lemon juice. Return to a boil and boil rapidly, uncovered, until mixture forms a gel*, about 8 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat.

Ladle into hot jars; process in water bath for 10 minutes.

*Test for determining gel formation:

Freezer Test: place 2 or 3 small plates in the freezer ahead of time. Place a spoonful of hot fruit mixture on one chilled plate. Immediately return to freezer for 2 minutes. If the jam is sufficiently cooked it will form a gel that moves slowly as the plate is tilted. If it runs off the plate, cook for another 2 minutes and repeat until freezer test shows gel is formed.

Creamy Rhubarb Pie

A delicious pie from Sheila's wonderful recipe box. "Always use an Emile Henry pie plate. You won't believe the difference in the quality of your pie!" says Sheila.

1 - 9 inch pie shell, unbaked

Chop 4 cups rhubarb and add to pie shell

Combine the following and pour over the rhubarb:

- 1 egg
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup sugar
- zest from 1 orange

Bake in a 425°F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°F and continue to bake 35-45 minutes or until fruit is cooked.

En Garde with the Oven Guard



The oven guard prevents bubbly fruit pies from dripping onto your oven and making a mess. The raised hole in the bottom allows air to circulate and pies to bake perfectly while it catches any spill overs. Simply place your pie on this shield before baking. Super!

Rhubarb is rich in vitamin C and fiber and also contains significant amounts of calcium, vitamin K and potassium.

Sheila's Rhubarb Muffins

Cream together:

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup sour cream or yogurt
- 1/2 cup oil or 1/4 cup oil with 1/4 cup applesauce

Blend in:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp soda
- 1/4 tsp salt

Add:

- 1 1/2 cups rhubarb, cut fine
- 1/2 cup walnuts or pecans, chopped

Topping mix together:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon (South China Seas)

Using a scoop fill 12 muffins cups. Sprinkle topping over each one and lightly press into muffins before baking. Bake in a 350°F oven for 20 minutes.



Rhubarb Cake

"This rhubarb cake I use to make all the time. I haven't made it for a while said Marilyn, but now that I found the recipe I can hardly wait to taste it again".

- 1 1/2 cups fresh rhubarb, cut fine
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 egg
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

Cream together the shortening and sugar. Add in egg and salt and mix well. Add remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Add rhubarb and lightly combine. Pour into a 9x12 inch baking pan. Sprinkle top with 1/2 cup sugar mixed with 1 teaspoon cinnamon (South China Seas is the best!). Bake for 30-35 minutes in a 350°F oven.



RHUBARB & ORANGE CRISP

"Rhubarb is one my favourite fruits (it's really a vegetable!). The orange seems to draw out and temper the tart flavor of the rhubarb with delicious results, says Suzanne".

- 4 cups fresh rhubarb, chopped
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- pinch of ground ginger
- 1 orange, zest & juice
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 8 Tbsp unsalted butter, chilled, cut into small pieces
- 1/4 cup hazelnuts, skinned, toasted, and chopped
- 1/2 pint fresh strawberries or raspberries

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine rhubarb, granulated sugar, orange zest and juice in a large bowl.

In another bowl, combine flour, brown sugar and cinnamon. Add butter and combine until well incorporated and large crumbs form. Add oats and nuts and combine.

Turn rhubarb into a 1 1/2 quart baking dish, scatter raspberries evenly over top and cover with crumb topping. Bake 45 minutes or until topping is brown and crisp and juices are bubbling. Let cool slightly before serving.

To stew rhubarb, put 6 cups chopped rhubarb, 1 cup sugar and 2 Tbsp water in a pot over medium heat; stir until sugar is dissolved, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes.