

# RHUBARB *rhapsodies*

It came from Russia, and now there are recipes galore to love.

FROM THE HOME DIGEST KITCHENS

Among the many delights that accompany spring are the first edible offerings from the garden. Along with asparagus and fiddleheads, rhubarb is one of the tastiest and most versatile. Although we use it in cooking as we would fruit, it is in fact a vegetable and was introduced into England, and ultimately Canada, from Russia.



and often in combination with strawberries. When selecting rhubarb look for the smaller, crisp stalks. Discard the ends of the stalks and never cook with the leaves, as they contain harmful oxalic acid. Rhubarb is easy to freeze, so make sure to keep some on hand to enjoy later on.

Because of its somewhat sour and acidic taste, it is usually found in dessert recipes,

to enjoy this humble vegetable, and what better way to begin than with ...

Home Digest offers up a few yummy ways

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## 1

### Old-Fashioned Rhubarb Pie

Ingredients:

4 cups young, unpeeled, diced rhubarb stalks

1-1/2 cups sugar

1/4 cup flour

1 Tbsp. butter

Pastry (homemade or frozen) for one double-crust 9" pie

■ Preheat oven to 450°F. Line a 9" pie plate with pastry. Coat rhubarb with sugar



and flour. (Note: the addition of flour will make the filling a bit thicker, so if you prefer a moister filling, omit the flour). Spread rhubarb into pas-

try shell and dot with butter. Cover with top crust, sealing edges of pie and making

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a few vents for the steam to escape. Bake at 450°F (220°C) for 10 minutes and then reduce heat to 350°F (180°C) and bake for 40-45 minutes.

### Strawberry and Rhubarb Pie

If you want to add fresh strawberries, just use 2 cups of rhubarb and 2 cups of strawberries, washed, hulled and sliced. Bake as above.

### Rhubarb Galette

The galette is a free-form tart you bake on a baking sheet, so that the finished product can be easily transferred to a serving plate. The pastry is folded up around the edges to hold the filling in place, but the centre of the pie is left open.

Ingredients:

Pastry for 12" circle  
2-1/2 cups washed, unpeeled rhubarb, cut into 1" chunks  
3/4 cup sugar  
2 Tbsp. flour  
1 Tbsp. grated ginger root

■ Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). For this variation of the old-fashioned pie, you need to roll out a circle of pastry, approximately 12" in diameter. Transfer to a baking sheet. Mix rhubarb with sugar, flour and ginger (again, omit flour if you like a runnier filling) and spread over pastry, leaving a 3" edge around the diameter. Fold up the edge to cover the filling slightly and hold it in place. Bake about 40 minutes, until crust is golden and filling is bubbling. Cool slightly and serve with whipped cream.

### Rhubarb Pecan Bread

Makes 1 large or 2 small loaves.

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups brown sugar  
2/3 cup oil  
1 egg  
1 cup buttermilk  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. salt  
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1-1/2 cups chopped, unpeeled rhubarb  
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Topping:

1/2 cup brown sugar  
1 Tbsp. butter  
1/2 tsp. ground ginger

■ Combine ingredients in the order presented here and pour batter into greased loaf pan(s). Mix butter, sugar and ginger for topping and sprinkle over batter. Bake for about 1 hour, being careful not to over-bake. Allow to cool and remove from loaf pan.

### Stewed Rhubarb

This easy-to-make sauce is great over a plain cake, like Angel Food or white cake, but is equally good over gingerbread cake.

4 cups washed, unpeeled, chopped rhubarb  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/4 cup water

■ Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring until

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sugar dissolves. Simmer until rhubarb is tender, about 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cool. Can be served warmed or at room temperature.



### Rhubarb Strawberry Ice

Cold and refreshing, ices are easy to make even without an ice-cream maker.

1-1/2 cups chopped, unpeeled rhubarb  
1 cup sugar  
1-1/2 cups water  
2 cups fresh strawberries, puréed  
2 Tbsp. orange liqueur (optional)

■ Combine rhubarb, sugar and half the water in a saucepan and simmer over medium heat until rhubarb is tender. Purée mixture and transfer to a bowl. Add puréed strawberries, liqueur and remaining water. If not using an ice-cream maker, pour mixture into a metal pan and freeze until just firm. Process in food processor or beat with electric mixer until smooth. Place in freezer container and freeze until firm. Let soften at room temperature for 15-20 minutes before serving, so ice is soft enough to scoop. Serve in sherbet or wine glasses with more fresh strawberries. 🌸