



Ginger

Usually described as a root, ginger is in fact the underground rhizome of the ginger plant, known botanically as *Zingiber officinale*. It is thought this name is derived from the Sanskrit word *singabera* (meaning "horn shaped"), no doubt referring to the physical characteristic of ginger. It is presumed cultivation of ginger began in tropical southeastern Asia - whose cuisine still feature very much this herb. Ginger is mentioned in ancient Chinese, Indian and Middle Eastern writings, and has long been prized for its culinary and medicinal properties.

Medicinally, ginger has a long tradition of being effective in alleviating symptoms of gastrointestinal distress. It promotes the elimination of intestinal gas, relaxes and soothes the intestinal tract. Modern scientific research has also revealed that ginger is effective in preventing the symptoms of motion sickness or symptoms associated with motion sickness such as dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and cold sweating. If

consumed in reasonable quantities, ginger has no known negative side effects and is generally recognized as safe.

Ginger rhizome has yellow flesh, brownish skin, thick or thin, depending upon whether the plant is harvested mature or young. The plant produces inflorescence of white and pink flower buds that bloom into yellow flowers. Because of its aesthetic appeal and its adaptation to warm climates, ginger is often used as landscaping plant around subtropical homes.

Ginger is available in fresh or powder form. It is also available in several other forms such as crystallized, candied and pickled. Powdered dry ginger is typically used as a flavoring for recipes such as gingerbread, cookies, cakes, ginger ale, ginger beer, etc. Candied or crystallized ginger is the ginger root cooked in sugar until soft. Japanese sushi ginger is sweet, thinly sliced young ginger that has been marinated in a solution of sugar and vinegar. Fresh ginger can be stored (unpeeled and wrapped up) in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks; in the freezer it will keep for much longer - it turns soft, not ideal for grating but quite alright for cooking or making syrup

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A few ideas on how to use and serve ginger:

Lemon Ginger tea is made by simply combine freshly grated ginger, or ginger syrup, lemon juice, honey and hot water. This hot drink is very soothing when you have a sore throat or a touch of cold.

Ginger adds an interesting flavor to the standard oil and vinegar salad dressing.

Add ginger and orange juice to puréed sweet potatoes.

Add grated ginger to your favorite stuffing for baked apples. Pears poached in ginger syrup make a delicious dessert!

Spice up your sautéed vegetables with freshly minced ginger.

Galangal and Turmeric

Galangal



Galangal and Turmeric are 2 notable members of the ginger family.

Galangal: Galangal is similar to ginger in appearance. Its skin is thicker, reddish-brown in colour, while its flesh is creamy-white. Galangal has a strong, fiery flavour, reminiscent of a mixture of ginger, pepper and lemon. It is usually used cooked. The whole fresh rhizome is very hard; slicing it requires a very sharp knife. The leaves and young shoots are also edible.

Turmeric: Turmeric grows wild in the forests of south and Southeast Asia. It is one of the key ingredients in many Asian dishes - mostly savoury dishes, and is used

almost always in powder form. Turmeric powder is a significant ingredient in most commercial curry powders. Elsewhere, turmeric is more often used as an agent to impart a rich, custard-like yellow colour. It is used in canned beverages and baked products, dairy products, ice cream, yogurt, yellow cakes, orange juice, biscuits, popcorn, sweets, cake icings, cereals, sauces, etc.

In some regions in south Asia, turmeric leaves are used to wrap and cook food. This is the practice in areas where the plant is grown locally, since the leaves used are freshly picked. Turmeric leaves impart quite a distinctive flavour.

Although typically used in its powder form, fresh turmeric can be pickled like ginger. In medieval Europe, turmeric became known as Indian saffron because it was widely used as an alternative to the far more expensive spice saffron.

The use of turmeric as a colouring agent for fabric is well recognized.



Turmeric