

Ginger for January Camerota's Cupboard January 2011

Happy, Healthy New Year to All! May 2011 bring good health and good food to our group. The AICR (American Institute for Cancer Research) offers the timely advice that we warm up this winter with spices. They write, "Like all plant foods, spices contain natural phytochemicals. Ancient cultures used many spices as remedies, and now scientists have confirmed that substances in spices protect our health." Although the amount of spices in one serving of a dish is small, if you use spices often in a healthy diet, their benefits many provide added cancer protection over time.

In this first column of 2011 the focus is on ginger, which contains numerous disease-fighting antioxidants. Preliminary laboratory studies suggest the antioxidant gingerol may help destroy cancer cells and block cancer-related inflammation. Fresh ginger, that gnarled, knobby root, is available at supermarkets in the produce section. It keeps well in the freezer and is easy to grate when frozen. It is frequently used in stir-fries, soups and curries. Dried, ground ginger maintains a slight spicy pungency great for adding zing to baked goods, soups and vegetable dishes.

This month features 3 recipes using ginger: an entrée, **Grilled Lemon Ginger Chicken**; a vegetable side dish, **Braised Carrots with Ginger and Orange**; and a dessert or breakfast dish, **Pumpkin-Spice Muffins**. Ginger blends well with other flavors, such as citrus and pumpkin.

Grilled Lemon Ginger Chicken

(From The Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati's **More Nutritious Still Delicious**)

¼ cup lemon juice
¼ cup reduced sodium soy sauce
3 tablespoons honey
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger root
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 to 1 ½ pounds total)

- In a gallon size, re-sealable plastic bag, combine lemon juice, soy sauce, honey and ginger. Seal; shake gently to mix.
- Add chicken breasts; marinate 2 to 4 hours in refrigerator.
- When ready to cook, remove chicken from marinade. Discard marinade.
- Grill chicken breasts over medium heat for 10 to 12 minutes, turning 2 to 3 times. Check that juices run clear before serving.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 193 calories; 33 gm protein; 9 gm carbohydrate; 0 gm dietary fiber; 2 gm fat; 0.5 gm saturated fat; 82 mg cholesterol; 463 gm sodium

Braised Carrots with Ginger and Orange

(Adapted from Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*)

1 pound carrots, peeled and cut into ¼ -inch thick slices
1 tablespoon canola oil
¼ cup orange juice, preferably fresh squeezed
1 tablespoon grated orange zest
1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
¼ teaspoon salt
Few shakes of freshly ground black pepper
Minced fresh herbs – parsley, mint, or cilantro for garnish

- Place the carrots, oil, orange juice, orange zest, honey (or maple syrup), salt and pepper in a medium saucepan over high heat; bring to a boil and cover. Turn the heat to medium-low and cook for 5 minutes.
- Uncover and raise the heat a bit. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has evaporated and the carrots are cooking in oil.
- Lower the heat and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, a couple of minutes longer.
- Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary, then garnish and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Pumpkin-Spice Muffins

(From AICR) These healthy muffins make a delicious gift any time of the year.

Canola oil cooking spray

1 ½ cups whole-wheat pastry flour

½ cup all-purpose flour

2/3 cup brown sugar, firmly packed

1 ½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon baking soda

¼ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground ginger

½ teaspoon nutmeg

¼ teaspoon cloves

1 cup canned pumpkin

1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce

1/3 cup canola oil

1/3 cup fat-free or low-fat buttermilk (or mix 1/3 cup nonfat milk with 1 teaspoon lemon juice)

2 large eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla

¼ cup chopped walnuts

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray cups of two 12-cup muffin pans with canola oil spray. In large bowl, place all dry ingredients and whisk well to combine.
- In medium bowl, whisk pumpkin, applesauce, oil, buttermilk, eggs and vanilla until well combined. Add dry ingredients and stir until combined. Mix in nuts. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups. Bake about 20 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean when inserted in center of muffin.

Makes about 15 muffins.

Nutrition information per serving (one muffin): 172 calories; 7 gm total fat (1 gm saturated fat); 24 gm carbohydrate; 3 gm protein; 2 gm dietary fiber; 123 mg sodium.