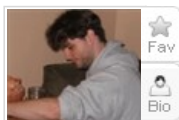


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## Christmas holidays uses and other uses for ginger root

December 6, 1:51 PM • Knoxville Gourmet Food Examiner • Jim Lindsay



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Chinese fried dishes nearly always include fresh ginger, but they aren't its only use!

Photo by the author

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Ginger root seems to be a bit of a mysterious ingredient for many folks, but it doesn't have to be. It's splendidly spicy, has a characteristic flavor that goes well in teas, desserts, and many dishes, and is quite good for you. From Christmas-time uses like gingerbread and ginger-infused drinks to Asian fried dishes, ginger is quite versatile and should be a common ingredient in everyone's kitchen. As an added benefit, Chinese medicine says that ginger root is warming (good for winter) and excellent for digestion. In fact, it is also an effective aid in reducing motion sickness, it's stomach-calming effects are so potent!

Don't be afraid of ginger! Here are some excellent ideas on how to use this wonderful spice, fresh or dried.

- \* Gingerbread is a holiday favorite. If you don't just buy some ready-made and want to make your own, check out [this popular recipe from The Food Network](#). Making gingerbread and designing gingerbread houses is a wonderfully fun thing to do with the kids around the holidays.

- \* Ginger can go a long way to making tea a more warming and satisfying drink, particularly when it's cold outside. Slice fresh ginger root thinly into "coins" and drop one to three of them, according to your tastes, into the bottom of your teacup or teapot before adding the water to infuse your

tea. If you use tea bags, that's fine too. You can eat the ginger if you want, but it's quite spicy!

- \* Adding ginger to teas isn't just tasty, it's healthful too. Ginger is very warming, and [adding some to tea, particularly black tea](#), in the fall and winter, it can help keep you warmer and healthier. It also is a great aid to digestion during this season of overindulging at the table.

- \* Add fresh ginger, either in thinly sliced coins, matchsticks, or by mincing it to your beef stews. It's surprisingly good. Usually about "an inch" of the root for a large stew is appropriate, but use this seasoning to your tastes.

- \* Any [Asian fried dishes](#) or soups will call for ginger. These are great with your [homemade pasta](#), particularly the [shaved pasta](#), which is very common in [Chinese home cooking](#).

- \* Add a little dried ginger to the filling mixture for cinnamon rolls, which are absolutely delightful this time of year. You can find a [popular recipe for cinnamon rolls here, from The Food Network](#).



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▪ A small amount of finely minced fresh ginger is absolutely delicious in peach or berry pies and cobblers.

▪ Add several coins of fresh ginger to [your stocks](#) or some matchsticks, grated, or minced fresh ginger to your soups (like [this one](#) and [this one](#)) for a nice depth of flavor and a bit of indistinct, pleasant spiciness.

▪ If you have a fresh juice making machine (like the Jack LaLanne Power Juicer), add some ginger for more health and great flavor. It goes in almost anything. In particular, juicing four or five apples, a lemon, and a half inch of fresh ginger makes a great ginger-lemonade. With a little less lemon (perhaps a quarter of one) and a bit more ginger (a whole inch or so), if you mix the result 50-50 with club soda or seltzer, a drink quite similar to ginger ale comes out. With even more ginger, you can approximate ginger beer at home without kits or fermenting anything.

▪ For the bold, flavor-loving, experience-seeking types, slice fresh ginger into very thin coins and enjoy them raw. It's quite spicy with a distinctive, interesting flavor.

▪ Make very small matchsticks with fresh ginger and add them to salads. This is particularly good if a very light touch of sesame oil is added to the dressing.

To make ginger "coins," slice the ginger in thin cross-sections to obtain a nearly round coin shape. To make matchsticks, stack up several coins and cut them into thin strips, all in one direction. To obtain a fine dice or mince on your ginger, take the matchsticks, and cut them into tiny pieces cross-sectionally.

**Buy it locally!** Ginger root is available in almost every grocery store in the Knoxville area - no special trips are required to find this great ingredient and make it part of your own homemade Knoxville dishes!

For more great recipes and cooking ideas, follow the [Knoxville Gourmet Food Examiner](#) by subscribing at the top of the page. You can also read more, including many Asian dishes and stews that include fresh ginger, on his personal cooking blog: [The Untrained Gourmet](#).

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