

Rhubarb



Selecting

There are two types of rhubarb:

- field grown, which has green leaves and a deeper red stalk; and
- hot house, which has yellow leaves and pink to light red stalks.

The colour of the stalk does not impact ripeness. Look for fresh, crisp and blemish free stalks. Mature stalks are 1 to 2-inches in diameter. Younger stalks are smaller and more tender with small leaves.

One pound of rhubarb equals 3 cups chopped and 2 cups cooked.

Storing

Discard the leaves. They contain toxic levels of oxalic acid. Wrap stalks in damp paper towels and store in an air tight plastic bag in the refrigerator. It will keep for several days.

Rhubarb can also be frozen. Wash and cut into 1" lengths and package in airtight plastic bags. Store for up to a year in the freezer. Rhubarb can be cooked from frozen.

Preparing

Wash and slice lengthwise in half or in thirds if the stalk is thicker than an inch. Trim any blemishes. Cut to the size needed for cooking.

Seasonality

The peak time for fresh rhubarb is April/May and early summer. Hot house rhubarb is available from January to June.

Nutrition

One cup of rhubarb has 26 calories. It is high in Vitamin C, Vitamin K, potassium and manganese.

You can refresh rhubarb stalks by standing them in a pitcher of cold water for an hour or longer.

When cooking, avoid aluminum and cast iron cookware as it will cause the rhubarb to darken due to the acids reacting with the metals.

Eating

Rhubarb is usually cooked with other fruits. This allows you to use less sugar since rhubarb is very tart.

Rhubarb can be used in jellies, jams, cakes, baked sauces, muffins and other desserts. It is also used in savory dishes and is good as a sauce with meats and fish.



Here is a yummy recipe for **Raspberry Rhubarb Granola Crisp** from Chef Michael Smith.

www.halfyourplate.ca/raspberry-rhubarb-granola-crisp

