

# Get a slice of rhubarb

**M**anitoba rhubarb began nuzzling its way skyward in mid-April.

It is like a rite-of-spring around here as we await our first dish of stewed rhubarb or that first slice of its magical tartness in a pie.

As I write this, my rhubarb is about five inches high, but I froze some last spring and have been enjoying it as I await the new batch. When using frozen rhubarb, thaw it slightly to separate the chunks, but leave it firmish. This eliminates excess moisture.

Rhubarb cakes are no strangers to us. Every good cook claims to have the best recipe. Be sure to try our recipe that uses honey in addition to brown sugar as the sweetener; it's a winner and low in fat.

### Rhubarb Honey Cake

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup liquid honey
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 3 cups fresh or slightly thawed frozen sliced rhubarb
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Beat together oil, brown sugar, honey, eggs and vanilla. Combine flour, salt and soda. Add dry ingredients alternately with buttermilk to the oil mixture, mixing until blended. Fold in rhubarb. Spread into a greased and floured 13x9-inch pan.

Combine the 1/2 cup brown sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle over batter, patting into batter with back of spoon. Bake at 350 F for 35 to 40 minutes. Cool in pan on rack. Cover tightly with foil.

### Rhubarb Blueberry Muffins

- 1 egg
- 1 1/4 cups packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 cups diced rhubarb
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

**Topping:**  
1 tbsp. melted butter or margarine

- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Combine egg, sugar, oil, vanilla and buttermilk. Combine flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; add to oil mixture. Fold in rhubarb and blueberries (do not overmix). Fill greased muffin cups 3/4 full.

Combine topping ingredients and sprinkle evenly over muffins. Bake at 375 F for about 20 minutes or until muffins are slightly browned. Makes 20.

### Strawberry-Citrus Rhubarb Cobbler

*A cornmeal biscuit topping adds some crunch to this favourite.*

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 small basket strawberries, hulled and halved
- 2 cups 1/2-inch thick slices fresh or frozen rhubarb
- 1 tin mandarin orange segments, drained

#### Topping:

- 1 cup flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup cornmeal
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 3 tbsp. chilled butter or solid margarine
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

For filling, mix sugar, 2 tbsp. flour and cloves in large bowl. Add strawberries, rhubarb and orange segments; toss to coat with sugar mixture. Transfer to 10-inch glass pie dish.

For topping, mix together sugar, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add butter and rub in with fingertips until mixture resembles coarse meal. Gradually add buttermilk, tossing with fork until moist clumps form (do not overmix). Spoon topping evenly over filling.

Bake at 400 F until topping is golden brown and filling is bubbling and tender, about 40 minutes. (Test the centre biscuit to be sure no raw batter remains.) Serve warm or at room temperature. Six servings.

### Rhubarb Sauce Drop Cookies

*Be sure to use only 1 cup of the rhubarb sauce for these tart soft cookies.*

- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 3/4 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp. EACH baking powder, baking soda and salt



JANET NIXDORF

- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. EACH ground cloves and nutmeg
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1 cup thick rhubarb sauce (recipe follows)

Cream margarine and sugar together; stir in egg. Sift and combine flour, baking powder and soda, salt and spices. Mix in raisins and rolled oats. Add to creamed mixture in 3 portions, alternately with 1 cup thick rhubarb sauce in 2 portions, mixing well after each addition. Drop dough by teaspoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 375 F for about 12 minutes or until a light golden. Makes 3 dozen.

**Rhubarb sauce:** Boil 3 cups cubed fresh rhubarb with 1 cup water for 10-12 minutes or until mixture is thickened and reduced. Add 3/4 cup sugar. Stir and let cool.