



Using Ginger

FOR COLD AND FLU RELIEF



Christine J. Dalziel





Notes:

Health Disclaimer: This information is for educational purposes only and is not meant to diagnose, prescribe, treat, or cure any disease. Please consult your personal health professional for your personal needs.

Ginger Materia Medica

You may not have thought of ginger as a medicinal herb, but it is so useful as an herbal remedy. If you live in zone 9 or higher you can grow ginger outdoors year round, in a shallow container. If you live in zone 3, as I do, you can start ginger in March in a container, and put it outdoors once all danger of frost has passed. You'll need to bring it indoors again before your first frost in the fall. It takes about 10 months to grow ginger to maturity, so you'll need to finish it somewhere warm while the top dies back. Once the top has died back you can harvest the roots from the pot.

Ginger is a grass. The rhizome is the part we use for cooking and for medicine, but the leaves also have a pungent, spicy scent.

When purchasing ginger from the grocery store, choose organic ginger. Look for ginger with firm rhizomes with smooth, tan colored skin and naked swellings where the new shoots are beginning to grow. Avoid ginger that's beginning to shrivel. It's passed its prime.

Store your ginger at room temperature if you will use it within a month. Ginger kept in the fridge is prone to premature decay. Ginger roots can also be grated fresh, and then frozen in Ziploc bags. Use grated frozen ginger as you would fresh ginger.

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

Zingiberaceae

Part used: Rhizome

Constituents: 1 to 3% volatile oil containing zingiberene; Oleo resins containing gingeroles, gingerdiols, gingerdiones, zerumbone, shogaols;

Energetics: Warming, Stimulating, Moistening

Actions:

- Anti-inflammatory
- Antimicrobial
- Antioxidant
- Antispasmodic
- Aromatic
- Carminative
- Cholagogue
- Diaphoretic
- Emmenagogue



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- Hypoglycemic
 - Hypotensive
 - Pain relieving
 - Rubefacient,
 - Stimulant

Ginger is used to treat motion sickness, morning sickness, and even the nausea after chemotherapy. Ginger helps with menstrual pain and the pain of arthritis. It's used as a tonic and digestive. Ginger speeds up gastric emptying, speeding up digestion. By doing this it relieves bloating, gas, nausea, and heart burn.

Ginger helps with all kinds of pain and inflammation including menstrual cramps, headache, muscle ache, and joint pain. It is strongly antimicrobial and antioxidant and so is an ally when you have a cough, sore throat, fever, or stomach cramps, nausea, and diarrhea. Ginger also inhibits clotting and lowers the risk of stroke due to blood clots after injury. Ginger is most commonly used as a digestive aid because it reduces gas and bloating, improves digestion, supports liver function, and lowers blood sugar levels. Ginger is also warming and increase circulation which is helpful when you feel cold or are fighting a virus.

Studies done at Anderson Cancer Center at the University Texas showed that *zerumbone*, an extract from ginger, activated genes that lead to angiogenesis of colon cancer cells and also did the same for kidney, breast, and pancreatic cancer cells. Zerumbone also activated a "tumor suppressor" gene. Similar studies at Anderson Cancer Center found that ginger plays a role in stopping metastasis. (Aggarwal, 2011)

Researchers in Taiwan found that ginger decreased platelet stickiness decreasing blood clots that can lead to stroke and heart attacks. For this reason, medicinal use of ginger should be stopped prior to planned surgery.

Researchers from the Headache Care Center in Springfield, MO found that ginger could provide an alternative to migraine medication with 41% of patients reporting that a supplement with feverfew and ginger provided equal or better pain relief than their prescription medication.

Cautions:

Ginger is heating and can aggravate heartburn. It may be too stimulating in large amounts for folks who run hot. Avoid if you have gallstones.

Always talk to your doctor if you are taking prescription medication to find out if ginger is helpful in your personal situation. Pregnant and nursing mothers should speak to their health professional before consuming large amounts of ginger.



If you are allergic to turmeric or cardamom you may also be allergic to ginger since they are in the same family. Do not use ginger if you are allergic to it.

If you are going to be having surgery talk to your doctor about when to stop using ginger, since ginger use can inhibit blood clotting.

Make ginger infused honey/candied ginger

Take ¼ pound of peeled and thinly sliced ginger. Place in a wide mouth pint jar. Pour just warmed raw honey over the ginger in the jar. Cap tightly and leave for 4 weeks, in the fridge.

Strain the ginger out of the honey. Use the honey as syrup for nausea, congestion, pain relief, headache relief, and sore throat. It will keep indefinitely.

Meanwhile don't throw out the ginger pieces. Place them in a saucepan. Add 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar. Stir to fully dissolve the sugar. Simmer over medium heat until the liquid boils off. This will take about 30 minutes. Remove from heat.

Place the ginger pieces on parchment paper to harden. Once they are fully dry, store them in a jar with a tight fitting lid.

You have made candied ginger.

Lemon-Ginger-Honey Drink for Colds and Flu

Ginger promotes your body to sweat which diffuses internal heat to your arms and legs and helps you feel better. It also relieves sinus congestion and the aches and pains of the flu. Lemon juice also helps cut the mucus that is prolific during a cold or the flu and soothes sore throat. Try this easy to make remedy to ease the aches, congestion, and nausea of cold and flu season.



Ingredients:

- 1 inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Boiled water to fill mug
- ½ to 1 teaspoon of organic honey

Directions:

Place lemon juice in a mug. Put ginger in a tea strainer or tea ball. Place the strainer into the same mug as the lemon juice. Pour boiled water over it. Cover and let steep for 10 minutes. Remove the strainer and stir in honey to taste. Drink while still warm for best results.



Hot Toddy to Banish Your Nasty Cold

A classic oft-prescribed cold remedy can be made even better by adding a little ginger to the warm beverage. Try it.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 strip of lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger
- 1 cup boiled water, divided
- 1 to 3 teaspoons of honey
- 3 tablespoons whiskey or rum
- 1 stick of cinnamon

Directions:

Place lemon juice and lemon zest in a mug. Add the grated ginger to a tea strainer. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of boiling water over the tea strainer so that the ginger is fully submerged. Cover and let sit for 10 minutes. Remove the ginger. Add whiskey or rum and fill the mug with the remaining boiled water. Stir in honey to taste. Add the cinnamon stick. Enjoy.



Ginger for Nausea and Travel Sickness

Ginger is a prime digestive. It stokes the inner fire and warms up sluggish digestion, which makes you feel better. Ginger is good for upset stomachs and nausea, too. Remember the classic remedy – flat gingerale that nurses used to serve to their pediatric patients after surgery? That remedy was high in sugar and GMO high fructose corn syrup. But you can make your own ginger remedy with less fuss.

Add Ginger to Cooking

Purchase raw ginger root in the produce section of the grocery store. Use it in sauces, in cooking, in hot tea.

A helpful hint: Peel ginger using the edge of a spoon. It makes peeling fresh ginger easy and quick.

Candied Ginger

Candied ginger is the perfect remedy for travel sickness. Carry some with you in the vehicle or in your carry-on for long trips. It's readily available in grocery stores. Even Costco carries it in a large bag in their candy section.





We frequently have children visit us on the farm, and complain of car sickness after the long car trip from the city. I send a little baggie of candied ginger pieces with Mom for the trip home. It's easy. The pieces are big and chewable, so there's little danger of choking, unlike with hard candies.

After Dinner Ginger-Fennel Tea

This remedy is safe for pregnancy, for nursing, and for very young children. So use it liberally for all family members.

Yield: 2 cups

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon fennel seed
- ½ teaspoon fresh, grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon chamomile blossoms, dried

Directions:

Place the ingredients in the mesh basket of a tea pot or teshubin. Steep covered for 5 minutes. Serve after dinner.

Make this ahead and place in tea bags, for travel. You can add the tea bag to a cup of hot water in a hotel room or in a restaurant, for relief of anxiety, nausea, congestion, and indigestion. Getting control of digestion is also a good way to reduce anxiety. When digestion is fired up, cortisone levels in the body are reduced.



Ginger and Lemon Throat Coat

When the throat is raspy, sore, and you find it hard to talk, try this warming and soothing throat coat with its soothing actions.

Yield: 8 ounces

Ingredients:

- 2 lemons, thinly sliced
- 3 inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 large bunch of fresh thyme, washed
- 1 cup of honey
- 1 cup of apple cider vinegar



Directions:

Place prepared lemon slices and ginger in a sanitized glass pint jar. Snip thyme into small pieces using herb scissors. Place the prepared thyme in the jar with the ginger and lemon. Cover with honey and apple cider vinegar. Stir to combine. Place in the fridge. Allow this to macerate in the fridge for 2 weeks. There is no need to strain this before using.

To use:

Take a teaspoon to soothe and coat the throat as needed. Alternatively, place a teaspoon in a glass of hot water. Stir to dissolve. Drink warm.

Other ways to use ginger:

Ginger Snap Cookies were originally used as a digestive remedy. Served after dinner they helped fire up stomach fluids to ease flatulence, bloating, and nausea. There are many variations on ginger cookies. Try this one for [gingerbread pizzelles](#).



For achy muscles and stiff, painful joints try this [cayenne and ginger salve recipe](#), to warm and ease them. This salve isn't the best for overheated conditions like rashes, as it can be too warming.

References:

David Hoffman. Medical Herbalism, the Science and Practice of Herbal Medicine (2003)

Bharat B. Aggarwal. Healing Spices, How to use 50 everyday and Exotic Spices to Boost Health and Beat Disease (2011)