



Ginger Snaps

Sometimes a certain aroma can evoke memories of a time or place in your life.

For example, whenever I smell the combination of crusty Italian bread and Polish sausage, I am instantly taken to the kitchen of my grandparents' house when I was small. Or, for some unknown reason, a scent will resemble the plastic scratch 'n' sniff fragrance that Strawberry Shortcake used to have, the one that really never seemed to fade completely.

The scent and bite of ginger holds this appeal with many people, whether it is a common ingredient in traditional cooking or a special spice used in holiday treats that you can't stop eating. Although typically thought of as a root, ginger is actually a rhizome that possesses buds and nodes. Native to India and China, it has been a crucial element in Chinese medicine for centuries and is referenced in the writings of Confucius. It also is mentioned in the Koran and was one of the earliest known Western European spices, used since the ninth century.¹

In the kitchen

In cooking, ginger is enjoyed in many ways: whole raw and fresh roots, dried roots, powdered, preserved, crystallized and pickled. It can be sliced and eaten as a salad, but more commonly is used in Asian pickles, chutneys and curry pastes, as well in cakes, cookies, jams, ginger beer, wine and tea.¹

At The Spa at Ananda in the Himalayas in India, the wellness packages often begin with the facility's Early Morning Ananda signature drink, which consists

of ginger, lemon and honey in hot water. Another delicious wake-up drink that can be enjoyed at the Bath House Spa in New Forest, England, is called the Ogen Melon, a smoothie that combines ginger and orange. The Grotto Spa at the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort and Conference Center in Parksville, British Columbia, has Roasted Carrot and Ginger Bisque topping its tapas menu; and at Agave, The Arizona Spa, at The Westin Kierland Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, the menu offers Soy Ginger Broth Braised Chicken with Fennel and Roma Tomatoes from its Pacific Rim selections. For a refreshing and delicious twist on a ginger dessert, check out **Lime and Ginger Pots de Crème** from wellness chef Laurie Erickson at The Spa at Sea Island in Sea Island, Georgia.

In the spa

For the skin, ginger is known mainly for its anti-inflammatory and muscle-relaxing properties, as well as its calming, aromatherapeutic qualities. Its spicy scent uplifts, stimulates, helps relieve mental fatigue and improves memory.² These benefits are no secret to the spa world. At The Spa at Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut, the Ceremony of the Sacred Sun features an Exotic Lime and Ginger Salt Glow. The Renewal Spa Package with a stress-reducing Peppermint Ginger Plunge can be enjoyed at Los Angeles's Le Petite Retreat

Quick Facts

- In Scotland, "ginger" is a term for any carbonated soft drink.³
- "Ginger" is common slang in the United Kingdom for red-haired individuals.³
- Ginger takes its name from the Sanskrit word *stringa-rena*, which means "with a body like a horn."¹
- Ginger became so popular in Europe in earlier centuries that it was included in every table setting, like salt and pepper.¹
- English pubs in the 19th century put out small containers of ground ginger for people to sprinkle on their beer—the origin of ginger ale.¹
- Ginger has long been considered an aphrodisiac. It was mentioned in the *Kama Sutra* and has been employed in the Melanesian Islands of the South Pacific to gain the affection of women.¹
- In the Philippines, ginger is chewed to expel evil spirits.¹
- Ginger is a known diaphoretic—it causes a person to sweat.¹
- Henry VIII instructed the mayor of London to use ginger's diaphoretic qualities as a medicine for the plague.¹
- Ginger is found to be more effective than some over-the-counter medications for relieving motion sickness.¹



Photos courtesy of The Spa at Sea Island, Sea Island, Georgia

Lime and Ginger Pots de Crème

From Laurie Erickson, Wellness Chef for The Spa at Sea Island, Sea Island, Georgia

Makes 5 servings

- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh lime juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup 2% milk
- 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Whisk together all the ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Place five 4-ounce ramekins or custard cups in a large baking pan. Fill cups $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full with mixture.
4. Carefully pour very hot water into the baking pan until it comes halfway up the sides of the ramekins.
5. Place baking pan in oven and bake for 30 minutes, or until just set. The centers should be slightly liquid.
6. Remove pan from oven and let custards cool in the water bath.
7. Chill and serve.



L. Erickson

Day Spa. The chain spa Bliss offers The Ginger Rub, which utilizes freshly grated ginger along with warmed detoxifying essential oils, at a number of its locations, and at 30 Newbury Spa in Boston, the Green Tea and Ginger Facial calms with a mud mask that uses the spice's benefits along with ocean ingredients. The Ginger Honey Body Therapy treatment at Mauna Lani Resort at Kalāhuipua'a in Kohala Coast, Hawaii, includes locally grown ginger root to stimulate circulation and bring the body into a state of balance. The Ginger Peach Deluxe is a signature body treatment offered by Allegria Spa at the Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort in Avon, Colorado, that combines freshly ground ginger, orange peel, raw sugar, honey and essential nut oils for a luxurious scrub.

Spa products are utilizing this delicious rhizome, as well. Dr. Hauschka Skin Care's Lemon Body Wash contains a hint of ginger to refresh during a shower. Pure Radiance Bioactive Mist from Aloette tones and firms, using ginger as one of its ingredients. PCA Skin Care's pHaze 35 Acne Gel is a spot treatment that clears blemishes and reduces oil production with the help of ginger, and Elemis' Exotic Lime and Ginger Glow stimulates skin to encourage moisture balance and softness. Wild Ginger Whipped Body Cream from The Thymes features the effervescent essence of ginger and Nature Pure Labs' Vivatone Lotion is a mild toner and freshener that removes surface impurities and contains aromatic ginger oil.

Brand with ginger

Use the aromatherapeutic values of ginger to brand your spa. Whether through treatments, cuisine or as a fragrance for your business, bring the warm feelings that the aroma evokes to your clients—who won't soon forget their experience at your spa, especially when they smell calming ginger elsewhere. It's enhancement to your spa's menu will most certainly end in a memorable experience.)

REFERENCES

1. www.theepicentre.com/Spices/ginger.html
2. www.funtrivia.com/en/subtopics/AromatherapyEssentialOils-10456.html
3. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ginger
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