

## 20 Rhubarb



The rhubarb season runs from April to September, although it can be grown forced, which accounts for its availability from mid January till mid March.

- When buying rhubarb choose fresh crisp stalks, peel off any stringy covering before use. Stand the stalks in cold water for an hour or so to refresh them before cooking. Otherwise, store in the fridge and eat within three days of purchase.
- Rhubarb leaves should be completely removed and discarded before preparing or cooking as they contain toxic levels of oxalic acid.

To freeze: Chop into 1/2 inch pieces, spread them on a tray and place in the freezer. Once frozen, slide the rhubarb into heavy-duty plastic freezer bags. Seal tightly and put back into the freezer. Packed this way rhubarb will keep for up to six months.

Rhubarb cooked in reactive metal pots (aluminium, iron, and copper) will turn an unappetising brown colour. Always use a non-reactive pan for cooking this high acid plant. Use anodised aluminium, stainless steel, Teflon coated aluminium or enamel-coated cast iron cookware.



## Rhubarb and Ginger cake

Preparation and cooking time: total 50-60 minutes

serves

4

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lb/600g fresh rhubarb
- 4oz/100g butter
- 3oz/75g sugar plus extra for sprinkling
- 2 eggs
- 4oz/100g flour
- 1teaspoon/5ml ground ginger

### For the topping:

- 3oz/75g butter
- 4oz/100g flour
- 2oz/50g sugar
- icing sugar to finish

### Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/360°F/Gas mark 4. Prepare the rhubarb by trimming off the leafy tops and the pale pink root slivers at the base of each stalk. Rinse and chop into 1in/2cm chunks.
- Cream the butter and sugar together and when light and fluffy add the eggs one at a time, beating well. Fold in the flour and the ground ginger. Spoon the mixture into a greased and lined 8in tin. Cover with the prepared rhubarb and sprinkle with sugar.
- Make the topping by rubbing the butter into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs and stirring in the sugar. Spoon over the rhubarb. Bake for 1/2 hour until firm and springy to the touch. Allow to cool and dust with icing sugar before serving.