



Rhubarb

Different varieties of rhubarb are available from January through most of the summer, but the juiciest and most tender stalks are available mostly during the spring months. Fresh rhubarb stalks will be flat and firm. Avoid purchasing stalks that lay limp or curled. When possible choose pulled stalks vs. cut stalks as they will not dry out as quickly. Sweet-tasting rhubarb stalks tend to be more reddish in color.

The best way to keep rhubarb fresh is to wrap it in plastic wrap and store in a refrigerator crisper for up to a week. Raw and cooked rhubarb can be kept frozen as well.

To prepare rhubarb, cut off and discard the leaves. Rhubarb leaves are poisonous when ingested in large amounts. Next, the base of the stalk should be trimmed and the entire stalk rinsed with water. When cooking, use non-aluminum pans because of the high acidity of the rhubarb.

Rhubarb is very versatile and can add unique flavor to many foods. Try putting fresh or cooked rhubarb on top of frozen yogurt or in a yogurt parfait. Cooked rhubarb can also add great flavor on top of poultry or pork, and it is always great in a pies and muffins. Take rhubarb stalk and dip in a cinnamon and sugar mixture. Stew rhubarb slices with pineapple chunks in juice for about 5 minutes. Spread like jam on a piece of toast. Mix cream cheese and peanut butter together, put on a graham cracker and top with rhubarb slices. One 1/2 cup serving of fresh rhubarb has 13 calories, 3 g of carbohydrate and 1 g of fiber.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.