# Ready for rhubarb

### Perfect for pies — and much more

**By JEANMARIE BROWNSON** 

The Daily Meal

Simply put: Rhubarb polarizes people. My sister-in-law offered us ALL the rhubarb from her garden. Many friends decline a slice of rhubarb pie no matter how attractive the crust is latticed. That's OK. More for the rest of us!

Rhubarb is super-easy to grow — especially in the Midwest — and it comes back every year with little help from the gardener. On a cool spring day, plant crowns (or divisions from fellow gardeners) in a sunny spot with plenty of room for the plant to spread. Keep the plants moist throughout the

Most rhubarb plants yield harvestable stalks after the second year and will do so for more than eight years. If your plant is older, I recommend starting fresh; old plants yield tough, tasteless stalks.

Always compost or discard the green leaves from the rhubarb stalks – they contain high concentrations of oxalic acid, which can cause serious health problems in humans and pets.

At the farmers market, the brilliant red stalks of fresh rhubarb amid spring's bounty of fresh asparagus, peas and skinny chives ignite ideas. If you can't stand rhubarb's relatively short season, don't worry, it freezes quite well. Dice the stalks, freeze the pieces solid on a baking sheet, then pack into freezer



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Savory rhubarb and summer cherry chutney.

Thicker, tarter, less red

stalks work well in a savory

chutney condiment destined

for grilled pork, poultry and

ginger, brown sugar and red

wine vinegar add sweet and

tart cherries are available at

the same time as rhubarb, so

I stir some into the chutney

for more color and a flavor

pop. Spread the chutney

thinly over toasted bread

for a smoked ham or turkey

sandwich with cheese. Or,

swirl some into plain yogurt

lamb, grilled eggplant slices

or more great grilled dishes.

for a sauce to serve with roast

savory notes. Often, fresh

brown rice bowls. Fresh

### LEMONY bags. Frozen rhubarb complements fresh cranberries RHUBARB when they come into season. COMPOTE I turn piles of the red-

dest, skinniest stalks into a Use this sauce, with the optional lemony rhubarb compote. It's strawberries, to make strawberry beautifully suited for breakshortcakes on biscuits; top with fast pancakes and waffles. lightly seasoned whipped cream. We also ladle the sweet sauce Prep time: 15 minutes over buttermilk biscuits and Cook time: 17 minutes top them with sweetened Total Time: 32 minutes whipped cream and fresh Makes: 5 to 6 cups berries for a shortcake des-Note: Frozen rhubarb can be used; sert. Or you can dollop the likewise, frozen strawberries work pretty red sauce generously here; cooking time may be a few over the following bread pudminutes longer. ding for brunch or dessert.

> 8-10 long stalks fresh rhubarb, 2 pounds total 1 cup sugar 1 tablespoon refrigerated lemongrass puree, optional 2 teaspoons finely grated fresh lemon rind 1/4 teaspoon salt 1 quart strawberries, hulled,

> > halved, sliced, about

3 cups, optional

1. Trim ends off 8-10 rhubarb stalks and discard leaves. Cut rhubarb stalks in half lengthwise. Cut crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces.

You will have about 8 cups. 2. Put rhubarb, 1 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon lemongrass puree, 2

teaspoons lemon rind and 1/4 teaspoon salt into a large saucepan. Heat over medium-high, stirring constantly for 5 minutes.

3. Reduce heat to low. Cook, uncovered, stirring often, until rhubarb softens and mixture thickens, 6 to 10 minutes. If using strawberries, stir in 1 quart and simmer 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

4. Serve warm. Or, divide among small covered containers and refrigerate up to several days or freeze for several months.

### STRAWBERRY RHUBARB **BREAD PUDDING**

I like to use honey, whole wheat or sprouted 7-grain bread here. Look for strawberry rhubarb preserves at the local farmer's market or order from American Spoon at www.spoon.com. Unsweetened coconut milk adds a delicious flavor to the pudding; you can skip it and replace it with more milk, a nondairy milk or heavy cream. Prep time: 20 minutes Refrigerate: 2 hours or overnight Bake 40 minutes Total time: 3 hours Makes 6 servings

1 loaf (16 ounces) honey, whole wheat or sprouted 7-grain bread **Butter** 

2/3 to 1 cup strawberry rhubarb preserves or reduced-sugar strawberry fruit spread or preserves 6 large eggs

2 cups whole milk (or a combination of skim milk and half-and-half)

1 can (13.5 ounces) unsweetened coconut milk (OR 1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream or oat milk or more dairy milk) 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon salt 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg Confectioners' sugar Lemony rhubarb compote,



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Lemony rhubarb compote.

warmed slightly for serving, see recipe Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, optional

1. If bread is unsliced, slice it into 1-inch thick slices. Cut bread slices into 2-inch pieces. You should have 10-12 cups.

2. Heavily butter a 13-by-9-inch baking dish. Put the bread pieces in the pan in an even layer. Use a small spoon to evenly distribute dollops of strawberry rhubarb preserves over the bread pieces, using 2/3-1 cup of preserves.

3. Whisk 6 eggs in a large bowl until smooth. Whisk in 2 cups whole milk, 1 can unsweetened coconut milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla, 1/4 teaspoon each salt and nutmeg. Gently pour the egg mixture over the bread, making sure to moisten

4. Heat oven to 375 degrees Farenheit. Remove the plastic wrap and let the dish stand at room temperature while the oven heats. Bake until puffed and golden, 40-45 minutes.

5. Remove from the oven and dust heavily with confectioners'

6. Use a spatula to serve squares of the pudding on warmed plates. Top with a generous spoonful of the Lemony Rhubarb Compote. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream if desired.

*SAVORY* RHUBARB AND SUMMER **CHERRY** CHUTNEY

Serve this sweet, tart sauce spooned over grilled pork chops, chicken breasts or turkey tenders. Use as a spread on a ham or smoked turkey and Havarti sandwich, or stir it into cooked brown rice with chunks of roasted butternut and sliced green onions. Prep time: 5 minutes Cook time: 30 minutes Total time: 35 minutes

Makes: About 5 cups 8-10 long stalks fresh rhubarb, 2 pounds total 1/2 medium-size white

1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar 1/2 small orange, finely chopped (1/2 cup) 1/2 lemon, seeded, finely

onion, finely chopped

chopped (1/4 cup) 1/4 cup red wine vinegar 2 cloves garlic, minced or crushed 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce 1/2 teaspoon salt 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander,

1/4 teaspoon ground ginger 1 cup halved pitted sour cherries (fresh or frozen) or dried cherries

1. Trim ends off 8-10 rhubarb stalks and discard leaves. Cut rhubarb in half lengthwise. Cut crosswise into 1/2-inch pieces. You will have about 8 cups.

2. Mix all ingredients, except cherries, in a large non-aluminum Dutch oven. Cover and heat to a simmer. Reduce heat to low. Cook covered, stirring often, until the onion is tender, about 15 minutes.

3. Stir in 1 cup cherries. Simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Uncover. Cook and stir until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, 5-10

4. Serve warm, at room temperature or divide among small covered containers and refrigerate up to several days or freeze for

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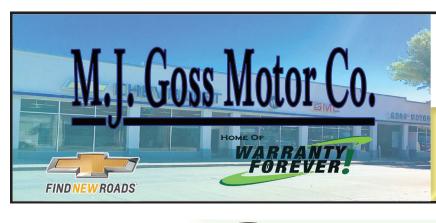
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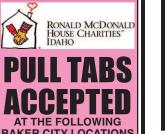
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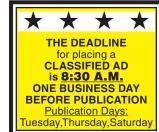
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