

Did You Know?



Galangal, *Alpinia* spp.

- Galangal is a member of the Zingiberaceae or ginger family and is native to Southeast Asia. *Alpinia galanga* is referred to as greater galangal while *Alpinia officinarum* is referred to as lesser galangal.
- Historically, galangal has both culinary and medicinal uses.
- Galangal is a staple in Thai cooking and is sometimes called Thai or Siamese ginger. It is also used widely in cooking in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. It is popular in curries and soups and on meats and fish.
- The most commonly used part is the rhizome, which resembles ginger root. However, the flavor of galangal does not resemble ginger.
- The flavor of galangal has been described as sharp, peppery, citrusy and earthy or woody.
- The skin of the rhizome should be removed, then it is typically grated or minced before adding to dishes. Slices can also be added and then removed prior to serving since it is fibrous and tough. Or, thin slices can be pounded into a paste or dried and powdered.
- Galangal has a history of use in folk medicine and has recently been studied for its beneficial effects on mental alertness. It has also been used to treat inflammation, intestinal gas, muscle spasms, and fever.
- *Alpinia galangal* grows in USDA zones 11 to 12, in full sun to part shade. It has a yellowish-white bloom and prefers moist, fertile, organically rich, well-drained soils. It is a perennial herb in tropical climates.