

## Rhubarb Recipes for Spring

Did you know that rhubarb has been used for thousands of years as a medicinal herb? The Chinese used it as a purgative among other things. The ancient Greeks imported it to Europe as a highly valued medicinal plant. The two main varieties of medicinal rhubarb are *Rheum palmatum* and *Rheum officinale*. In the nineteenth century an edible form, *Rheum rhabarbarum* was developed. The stem is edible while the leaves are poisonous. It is a perennial that prefers well drained, rich soil and full sun. Today many New England farms have a patch of rhubarb in their back yard.

Here are three favorite rhubarb recipes that our members enjoy.

### Rhubarb Upside-Down Cake

*This is a family favorite at Rie's house.*

½ cup plus 1TB. butter at room temperature  
½ pound of fresh rhubarb cut into ½ inch pieces (about 2 cups)  
¾ cup sugar (divided in to ½ cup and ¼ cup portions)  
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. salt  
¾ cup milk  
1 large egg  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
3 T strawberry jelly, melted  
Sweetened whipped cream, optional

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Over bottom and side of 9 inch glass or ceramic pie plate evenly spread 1 Tb. of butter.
2. Toss rhubarb with ¼ cup of the sugar and spread over bottom of pie plate.
3. In large bowl combine flour, remaining sugar, baking powder, and salt.
4. Mix together milk, butter, the egg, and vanilla and add to the flour mixture.
5. With fork, stir, scrapping the bowl occasionally, until soft dough forms.
6. Spread dough evenly over the rhubarb.
7. Bake 40 minutes or until cake tester or toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean.
8. Cool cake in pan 5 minutes. With small spatula loosen edges of cake. Invert on to platter. Brush with melted strawberry jelly. Serve with whipped cream.

Note: Use glass or ceramic pie plate as metal will react with acid in rhubarb.

### Rhubarb Cobbler

*Members love Doris B's Rhubarb Cobbler!*

**Rhubarb Filling:**

5 cups rhubarb, cut into ½" pieces (can substitute strawberries for some of the rhubarb)  
1 ¼ cup sugar  
3 ½ tbsp. cornstarch  
1 cup water  
1 tbsp. lemon juice

Combine the above ingredients in a 2½ quart saucepan. Cook, stirring occasionally until the mixture boils. Remove from heat and let it cool while making the crust.

**Crust:**

1 ½ cups flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
2 tbsp. sugar  
1 stick butter or margarine  
½ cup milk

Sift the flour and baking powder together; add the sugar and stir well. Cut in butter or margarine until the flour mixture is fine. Add the milk and stir until you have a soft dough. Turn onto floured board or surface and knead 30 seconds. Roll out to a 9 x 13 rectangle.

Pour rhubarb filling into lightly greased 9 x 13 casserole dish. Place crust on top, cut several slits. Sprinkle a mixture of 2 tbsp. sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon on top of the crust. Cook at 450° for 20-25 minutes, until crust is golden brown.

\*An alternative to rolling out the crust is to drop spoonfuls of the dough onto the rhubarb mixture.

**Rhubarb Pudding**  
(Serves 6)

*Shirley W. states this is the best rhubarb pudding she has ever tasted.*

½ cup sugar  
2 Tbs. butter  
1 cup whole milk  
1 cup flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
½ tsp. salt  
1 quart rhubarb cut in ½ inch pieces  
2 tsp. butter  
1 cup sugar  
¼ cup water  
1Tb. Brown sugar

1 tsp. white sugar  
2 shakes cinnamon

Set oven at 350 degrees.

Cream the half cup sugar and two tablespoons of butter. Add cup of milk.

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Blend this with the creamed mixture.

Over moderate heat cook together the quart of rhubarb mixed with the 2 teaspoons butter, one cup of sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water for about 7 minutes.

Put rhubarb sauce into casserole dish. Pour batter over the rhubarb sauce.

Sprinkle the batter with the tablespoon of brown sugar.

Mix the teaspoon of white sugar with the cinnamon and sprinkle it over the batter.

Bake at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes.

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**Reference:**

Brown, Deni. *The Herb Society of America New Encyclopedia of Herbs & Their Uses*. New York: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 2001.