



Japanese Ginger Banana Rice Pudding with Fried Sweet Bananas

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 10 / Cook Time 12 / Serves 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

caramelize: to cook sugar or a food with natural sugar until it turns a brown caramel color.

chop: to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

grate: to reduce food, like a carrot, to very small shreds or pieces of the same size by rubbing it on a tool with an outside surface that has holes with cutting edges (a grater).

simmer: to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

slice: to cut into thin pieces using a sawing motion with your knife.

whisk: to beat or stir ingredients vigorously with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

Equipment

- Nonstick skillet
- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Small mixing bowl
- Metal spoon
- Zester (or grater with small zesting plate/side)
- Wooden spoon
- Plate

Ingredients

Japanese Ginger Banana Rice Pudding with Fried Sweet Bananas

- 3 bananas, divided
- 1/4 C granulated sugar + more for sprinkling bananas (to caramelize them)
- 1 C instant white rice, uncooked
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger root for 2 tsp grated ginger
- 2 C milk + up to 1/4 C more as needed **(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 2 C dairy-free/nut-free milk)**
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/4 C granulated sugar + more for sprinkling
- 1 1/2 T butter **(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1 1/2 T dairy-free/nut-free butter)**
- 3/4 tsp pure vanilla extract **(for GLUTEN ALLERGY use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor—check label)**

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: For 2 C milk, substitute 2 C dairy-free/nut-free milk. For 1 1/2 T butter, substitute 1 1/2 T dairy-free/nut-free butter.

Gluten/Wheat: Use certified gluten-free pure vanilla extract, not imitation vanilla flavor.

Instructions

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slice + chop + sprinkle

Have your kids slice **1 banana** and chop it into rough chunks—don’t mash! Sprinkle the banana bits with some **sugar**.

fry + caramelize

Adults fry the banana bits in your skillet over medium heat until the sugar has melted and caramelizes. Turn off the heat under the skillet and carefully transfer the bananas to a plate to let them cool.

peel + chop

Have kids peel and chop **2 bananas** into chunks that are small, but not mashed. The pudding is good with

chunks of bananas that you can taste and see! Scrape these chopped bananas into a small mixing bowl.

peel + grate

Use a metal spoon to scrape off the peel of a **1 inch piece of ginger root**. Then, carefully grate the ginger using your zester.

whisk + measure

Kids can whisk together **2 cups milk** and **1/4 cup sugar**. Next, measure and add **1 cup uncooked instant white rice**, the **milk and sugar mixture**, the **2 chopped bananas**, **2 teaspoons grated ginger**, and **1 pinch of salt** to your skillet.

boil + stir

Turn the heat under your skillet to medium. Bring the rice mixture to a boil and keep stirring for about 6 to 8 minutes uncovered. Stir until pudding is thick and creamy. During the last minute of cooking, add **1 1/2 tablespoons butter** and **3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract** and stir to melt the butter. You may need to add a touch more milk, up to 1/4 cup, if your rice gets too dry.

cool slightly + serve

Let the rice pudding cool slightly, then divide the pudding into bowls and top with the fried sweet bananas. "Oishī" (Oh-ee-shee) or "Yummy" in Japanese!

Featured Ingredient: Ginger!

Hi! I'm Ginger!

"My name is Ginger, and I'm happy to make your acquaintance! You may have tasted me in lots of sweet foods and drinks, like gingerbread, ginger snap cookies, pumpkin pie, and ginger ale. But, I also add my unique flavor to savory dishes, like stir-fries and potstickers! If you use my fresh rhizome or root in a recipe, delicately peel my beige, papery skin (the back of a metal spoon works great!) and grate my juicy flesh into the food! I also come in a dried and ground form and as crystallized ginger. As a bonus, I might even make your tummy ache feel better!"

History

Ginger is a native plant of India and China and is a common cooking spice used throughout the world. Ginger is one of the oldest plants used for medicine.

Which spices do you think are most commonly found on kitchen tables around the world? If you said salt and pepper, you'd be right! It truly depends on where you are in the world. In the ninth century, Europeans placed powdered ginger on the table alongside salt and pepper.

A long, long time ago, ginger was used to preserve food and keep it from getting rotten.

Greeks used to eat ginger wrapped in bread to treat digestive problems. After a while, they added ginger

to bread dough to create the first recipe for gingerbread!

Ginger grows in many tropical countries, including the Caribbean islands. However, ginger from Jamaica is considered by many to be the best! Do you know where your ginger originated?

Ginger is also grown in Florida, Hawaii, and along the eastern coast of Texas.

Anatomy & Etymology

Related to cardamom and turmeric, the ginger plant is part of the Zingiberaceae or Ginger family. We use the "rhizome" part of the plant, which are underground stems. Sometimes we can eat the rhizome part of a plant, and sometimes we can't! For example, bamboo plants are rooted underground by rhizomes, but the rhizome is not the part of the plant we eat—instead, we eat the bamboo shoots that come up out of the ground. But we do eat the rhizomes of plants such as ginger, turmeric, and arrowroot!

Rhizomes are also the storage compartment of the plant. What do rhizomes store? Starches, proteins, and other nutrients—that's why we eat this part of the plant (because it's nutritious!).

Ginger Root is characterized by its aroma: it smells strong, sweet, and woodsy. Its skin is not something we eat—we peel the skin to reveal ginger's coarse, stringy, aromatic flesh.

The ginger plant looks like a reed and has been used in the kitchen and as medicine for the past 5,000 years. A ginger plant can reach three to four feet tall.

The word "ginger" comes from late Old English "gingifer," from medieval Latin "gingiber," from Greek "zingiberis," and from Pali, a Middle Indo-Aryan language "siṅgivera."

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Fresh ginger is available year-round, where you can find it in the grocery store produce section.

When selecting fresh ginger, choose robust, firm roots that feel heavy, and have a spicy fragrance and smooth skin.

Ginger root length is a sign of age, and mature rhizomes will be spicier and more fibrous than younger roots.

Ginger should not be cracked or withered—these are signs of aged ginger past its prime.

To store ginger root, wrap it in a paper towel or plastic wrap or put it in a plastic bag before placing it in the refrigerator for two to three weeks. You can also freeze it for up to three months.

According to many chefs and cooks, fresh ginger is best and can be added to sauces, soups, and stews. Dried and powdered ginger has a more spicy, intense flavor and is often used in baked desserts like gingerbread, gingersnaps, and ginger cake.

Ginger can be sliced, minced, grated, or left whole to steep in recipes (minced ginger has the most intense flavor). It can also be dried, pickled, crystallized, candied, or preserved.

Ginger tastes sweet, spicy, and pungent and increases flavor in a range of dishes, from stir-fried beef or tofu to ginger tea.

Nutrition

Ginger continues to be used to treat nausea and to prevent seasickness.

Ginger may also have anti-inflammatory properties and increase digestive function.

Despite its natural properties, any medicinal use of ginger should be discussed with a doctor. Limiting the amount you take will help avoid heartburn. It may also interfere with anticoagulant medicine.