

DID YOU KNOW...

- In temperate climates (like Maine), rhubarb is one of the first food plants to be ready for harvest, usually in mid to late spring (April/ May)?

- Rhubarb first came to the US in the 1820s, entering the country in Massachusetts and Maine and moving westward with the European American settlers.

Source: Wikipedia

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

(value per 100g/3.5 oz. of raw rhubarb):

Energy: 21 cal / Carbs: 4.54g / Sugars: 1.1g / Dietary Fiber: 1.8g / Fat: 0.2 g / Protein: 0.9g / Water: 93.61g / Folate (Vit B9): 7 µg (2%) / Vit C: 8 mg (13%) / Vit E: 0.27 mg (2%) / Vit K: 29.3 µg (28%) / Calcium: 86 mg (9%) / Iron: 0.22 mg (2%) / Potassium: 288 mg (6%) / Sodium: 4 mg (0%) / Zinc: 0.1 mg (1%).

Source: [USDA Nutrient database](#)

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Local Food Case Study:

RHUBARB

PRODUCT SOURCING/DISTANCE TRAVELED/GROWER BENEFITS

The 2009 growing season was cool and damp in Maine, leading to multiple, abundant rhubarb harvests. Rhubarb tends to be abundant in Maine regardless. With many options for use and it freezes well, it can be an inexpensive, tasty, and nutritious addition to one's local foods repertoire.

In this case, product was sourced from an educational farm operated by one of the project partners. The farm is located 9 miles from the Portland School Department's Central Kitchen. The farm is the site of a farm-based youth program. Youth were able to harvest and process rhubarb in a relatively short time (2 hours of harvest and 2 hours of processing in a certified kitchen), and the project partner donated the product (reflecting the relatively low value of rhubarb), though wholesale pricing is reflected below.

Because rhubarb does not command premium pricing, an institutional buyer willing to take large quantities (even an entire harvest) can benefit growers.

COST ANALYSIS/COST RECOVERY/SALES

- Rhubarb is little used in school meals.
- Very early crop and a way to extend local foods use in schools

Rhubarb: \$ 25/40#
Labor: \$ 140
Total: \$ 165
Servings: 2,400
Cost/serving: \$ 0.069

USDA FOOD BUYING GUIDE

Frozen Rhubarb, 9.95 pounds = 100 ¼ cup servings fruit and juice
Prime Vendor sells Fresh Rhubarb, 20 pounds
20 pounds / 9.95 * 100 = 201 servings
Current price is \$ 35.60/201 = \$ 0.005 per serving commercial product
Same labor would be required to prep and dice it.

PROCESSING/LABOR/EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

- Process clean, slice, freeze – 6 hrs to process

Rhubarb can be diced and frozen as we did or you could cook it down into a sauce and freeze for further use. We did not experience any fluid loss upon defrosting.

Rhubarb was only used with Strawberry-Rhubarb Breakfast Breads so no additional sugar was needed to add to the rhubarb upon freezing.

* The fruit and vegetable washes will remove and/or kill some of the microorganisms on the surface of the fruits or vegetables. Usually only a one to two log reduction although Tsunami is reported to be better (than Victory). For frozen products, it's not likely that they would increase the shelf-life. For cut fruits (apples) which undergo enzymatic browning, the commercial dips will reduce the rate of browning.

RECIPES/PREPARING/SERVING

- MHL Shortcake & breakfast breads
- Smaller batches for breakfast bread – all in 10# bags and frozen

Used in Breakfast Breads.

Breakfast bread used at all school .

Much appreciation for use of local products however small a percentage.

Menued for October and November with shortcake square.

STUDENT/PARENT FEEDBACK

No adverse feedback. Served at staff breakfast with favorable comments by all.

FMI

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Recipes for Success is a pilot collaboration among the Portland School Department, Cultivating Community, Cumberland County Cooperative Extension, Local Sprouts Cooperative, and the Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association. This project was made possible with funding from NESARE and the Cumberland County Healthy Maine Partnerships: PROP's Communities Promoting Health Coalition, Healthy Casco Bay & Healthy Portland.