

## Galangal, *Alpinia* spp.

### Tips:

- Find galangal fresh or frozen in Asian markets and some supermarkets.
- Peel galangal prior to chopping, slicing, grating, or pounding and adding to other ingredients. It may be used unpeeled when infusing the flavor into a soup.
- Fresh galangal can be stored in the refrigerator for about a week, loosely wrapped in plastic.
- Freeze thinly sliced galangal in a single layer in a zippered bag, with the air pressed out, for up to six weeks. It may be used without thawing.
- Rehydrate dried galangal by soaking in warm water for 20-30 minutes.
- The flavor and aroma of powdered galangal is much less intense than that of fresh galangal.
- The flavor of galangal has been described as sharp, peppery, citrusy and earthy or woody

## Chicken Coconut Soup (Thome Kha Gai)

2 stalks fresh lemongrass  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
2 tablespoons fish sauce (nam pla)  
2 scallions (white and green parts), trimmed and very thinly sliced crosswise  
6 fresh or frozen wild lime leaves (also known as kaffir lime leaves), torn or cut into quarters  
10 to 12 thin slices galangal, fresh, frozen, or dried (or 10 to 12 thin slices fresh unpeeled ginger)  
8 to 10 fresh hot red and green Thai chiles, stemmed and lightly pressed with the side of a knife (or 3 or 4 serranoes, thinly sliced) for garnish (optional)

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh cilantro  
1 boneless chicken breast half (about 6 ounces), cut into bite-sized chunks or sliced across the grain into strips  
¼ pound white mushrooms, cleaned, stems trimmed, and thinly sliced to yield 1 cup  
14-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk (shake the can before opening it)  
14-ounce can low-salt chicken broth or 1-3/4 cups water

Trim away and discard the root end and the top 3 inches of each stalk of lemon grass, along with any brittle leaves. Pound each stalk lightly with the spine of a cleaver or an unopened can. Cut each stalk crosswise into 2-inch lengths and set aside.

In a large serving bowl, combine the lime juice, fish sauce, scallions, and half of the wild lime leaves. Set the bowl by the stove, along with small dishes containing the galangal, lemongrass, and remaining lime leaves; the chiles (if using), the chopped cilantro; and the sliced chicken and mushrooms.



In a medium saucepan, combine the coconut milk and broth. Bring to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Stir in the galangal, lemongrass, and lime leaves. Add the chicken and mushrooms. Return to a gentle boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 10 minutes to infuse the flavors and cook the chicken.

Remove the pan from the heat, pour the hot soup over the seasonings in the serving bowl, and stir well. Sprinkle with the chopped cilantro and serve hot. Pass around the chiles for those who want them.

Nancie McDermott  
Fine Cooking Issue 67

**Do you have a recipe using galangal to share?  
Please send it to [Educator@herbsociety.org](mailto:Educator@herbsociety.org)**