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THE ACCIDENTAL SCIENTIST
SCIENCE OF COOKING

CANDY BREAD EGGS PICKLES MEAT SEASONING

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Ask the Inquisitive Cooks

"Can I substitute ground ginger for crystallized ginger in a muffin recipe?"

Is it possible to substitute ground ginger for crystallized ginger in a muffin recipe?

—Submitted by Barbara

Dear Barbara,

Yes, your idea is quite possible, but what about using both in your muffin recipe?

Ginger is available in several different forms—fresh, ground, candied in syrup, and crystallized. Though candied ginger in syrup and crystallized ginger are technically condiments, they also work beautifully in many recipes. Ginger has become one of Sue's favorite spices, not just for its flavor and aroma but also because combining different forms of ginger creates some real flavor sensations.

If you line up all these forms of ginger and taste them just on their own, you can't help but notice how each method of preserving highlights different flavor components. Some emphasize its pungency; others its spiciness. Ginger itself also varies according to the origin of the rhizomes (underground stems), the stage at which the rhizomes are harvested, and the conditions under which the ginger is grown. All these factors can affect its pungency, flavor, and aroma. But they also make working with ginger quite intriguing. There's an added benefit, too. Those of us who enjoy working with ginger believe that combining different forms in a recipe allows us to capture the fullness and richness of its flavor components more completely.

Because many recipes don't combine gingers, however, sometimes it's a matter of trial and error as to how much of each to use. The information we have on substitutions varies, from 1 tablespoon of grated fresh ginger for each 1/8 teaspoon of ground ginger to 1 teaspoon of minced fresh ginger for each 1/2 teaspoon of ground ginger. Other authorities suggest a 1-inch piece of fresh ginger is the equivalent to 1 1/4 teaspoons of ground or 1 tablespoon crystallized ginger. Quite a variation!

So have fun experimenting! We'll bet you end up with some excellent muffins. And perhaps those of you who experiment with ginger could add your [suggestions on ginger substitutions](#) to the "Tips and Tricks" discussion group. Or how about posting your favorite dish or baked product that includes more than one kind of ginger in the recipe section? Many of us who enjoy ginger welcome your input.

Cheers!
Anne and Sue

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