



ALASKA CENTER FOR ACUPUNCTURE

Rhubarb with Lemon, Ginger and Agave Nectar

2-3 cups chopped rhubarb – small chunks are better
juice from one large lemon
2 tsp. grated fresh ginger
organic agave nectar (organic maple syrup or raw honey both work too)

Put the rhubarb in a pot with a small amount of water. Bring it to a boil then bring it back down to a simmer. Add lemon juice and ginger, then cover the pot. Simmer for at least ½ hour to 45 minutes. At this point the rhubarb will be very tart. Add small amounts of agave nectar until desired balance of tartness and sweetness is reached. Simmer for another 15 minutes to half an hour. Add liquid if needed to keep it from sticking to the bottom of the pan. This makes a great stand alone dessert treat on its own, or you can use it as a topping on yogurt or ice cream.

Organic agave nectar is available in the natural food section at Fred Meyer and Carrs. Agave nectar (also called agave syrup) is a sweetener produced in Mexico from several species of agave including *Agave tequilana* (also called Blue Agave or Tequila Agave)

Agave nectar has a low glycemic index, which means it won't cause your blood sugar level to sky rocket like other sweeteners. Organic agave is best so you don't have to worry about unhealthy chemicals or pesticides. Agave is sweeter than sugar, so you need less. Another advantage of using agave is it has a neutral taste. Maple syrup and honey both impart distinctive flavors – so when you want to add sweetness without changing flavor, agave is an excellent choice.

In Chinese Medicine, rhubarb is recognized for its ability to stimulate the liver to produce bile salts, helps increase digestive juices and also helps the intestines regulate the absorption of fats. However, it is considered to be energetically cooling to the digestive system. So, while it is useful for treating constipation, it can cause loose stools in some individuals whose digestive systems are inherently weak from cold. Adding ginger to the rhubarb helps to balance its effects, as ginger is warming to the spleen and stomach.