Spice For Life

Lemon Rosemary Cake

While research shows that a diet low in transfats and high in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help reduce inflammation and pain, certain spices may also be useful in decreasing inflammation and in pain relief. These spices have active components that act as anti-inflammatory agents. Here are three anti-inflammatory spices that can be used daily in your diet.

Turmeric, a shrub related to ginger, used for many years in Asian, African and Indian recipes, has a compound called curcumin that has anti-inflammatory properties. Turmeric is known for its warm, bitter taste and yellow color, and is commonly used in curry powders, mustards and cheeses.

Studies are also showing ginger to be a potential treatment for osteoarthritis. Gingerol, a substance in ginger, is also known as an anti-inflammatory agent. Native to India and China, ginger has been important in Chinese medicine for many centuries. Ginger is also one of the earliest spices known in Western Europe. The rhizomes, or underground roots and stems, of ginger are the most common parts used. Ginger has a pungent, spicy-sweet flavor and is found in many Indian and Chinese recipes, as well as candies, cakes and cookies.

Rosemary has anti-inflammatory properties and contains many antioxidant and phytochemical components. Often used to add fragrance and taste to roasts, meats and fish, this Mediterranean herb has a slightly bitter, astringent flavor which complements both garlic and tomatoes, and is often found in pasta sauces, salad dressings and on pizzas. Many people also use rosemary with a variety of vegetables — again it adds a subtle taste and fragrance when mixed in or added as a garnish.

Along with a healthy diet of fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grain, lean protein, and regular exercise, the addition of ginger, rosemary, and turmeric to your diet may have more benefit than just as a food flavoring, garnish or preservative.

LEMON ROSEMARY CAKE

1 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup plain yogurt, low fat
1 1/3 cups sugar
1 cup egg substitute
2 teaspoons lemon zest, grated (zest of 2 lemons)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350º. Spray a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray and line the bottom with parchment paper. Then, spray again and lightly flour the pan.

Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk together the yogurt, 1 cup of the sugar (reserve the additional 1/3 cup), the egg substitute, lemon zest, vanilla and rosemary.

Slowly whisk the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. Fold the vegetable oil into the batter, until it is fully incorporated.

Pour the batter into the loaf pan, and bake for 50 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Simmer 1/3 cup lemon juice and the remaining 1/3 cup sugar in a small pan until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is clear.

When the cake is done, cool for 10 minutes. Remove from pan and place cake on a rack over a sheet pan. While the cake is still warm, pour the lemon/ sugar mixture over the cake. Let it soak in.

Nutritional Information per serving (1/8 of cake): 259 calories; 85 calories from fat; (9.5g total fat; 0.1g saturated fat; 2.7g monounsaturated fat; 6.7g polyunsaturated fat); 35 mg cholesterol; 245 mg sodium; 121 mg potassium.

BY JASON GAGNON, SOUS CHEF EISENHOWER MEDICAL CENTER

Healthy Living is a publication of Eisenhower Medical Center · © Copyright 2014 All Rights Reserved · www.emc.org