

Just ginger

Our heritage food contributor, Karen Dudley of Woodstock's The Kitchen, evokes rich and fragrant memories of her father's childhood in Genadendal.

Karen in the mid '80s with dad Bernard, brother Gavin and mom Ruth in Genadendal.

For *Kinderfees* in early August, the children of the small town of Genadendal in the Overberg would gather fynbos from the surrounding mountains to adorn the Moravian Church with flowers. In the stark whitewashed church, its congregation divided into men and women with a partition, the fragrance of the flowers filled the space with joyous celebration, the famous brass bands brash with shining song. After the service, the children would all get a treat: *wiele* (spiced ginger biscuits) and tea. The powdered fine ginger, ever present in the *soetkoekies* and Christmas biscuits we always hoped to get from my dad's stepmom (Ma Dudley), is almost the same colour as the dust I remember so well from my visits to Genadendal as a child. This dust would cling to everything (there were no tarred roads till much later), just as the fragrance of the biscuits lingered for a while when the tin was opened.

My thoughts of Genadendal are always tinged with pathos. A town with a strong Moravian history, a place of education, rich farming history and unique architecture, it has pride of place in my father's heart. His childhood memories are rich and fragrant: setting jellies in the cool water channel below the house, a garden with fruit and *paglande* (freehold land) with ginormous vegetables – even I, as a very young child, remember the wonder of my grandfather's dark Victorian study filled with books and strange bottles of formaldehyde-preserved specimens.

My grandfather, Herbert, was the principal of the school and the shopkeeper. Life in the Dudley household was a mix of Latin declensions and herding cows. It was a working childhood and full of hardship. In the background, the town of Genadendal was battling the ravages of a country in the throes of

apartheid. A farming people, unable to trade locally, sought work in the cities, leaving the old people and children behind with poverty and alcoholism, many of the houses falling into disrepair and the *paglande* going to seed.

My father, Bernard, would ride his bicycle from Genadendal to Cape Town. He would, finally, leave the cows, study in town, fix my mom's scooter, woo her on long drives in his (very sleek, music-playing!) white Valiant, and introduce her to *mosbolletjies*, real ginger beer and his Genadendal. He would show us all how to twist open an apple with his bare hands, make a catapult, shoot pellets through a little reed pipe and all kinds of other things you only learn from growing up in the country.

I like to think that as he cycled on his old bike into Cape Town, he took with him his tenacity, his fierce work ethic, large amounts of curiosity and ingenuity as well as the dusty fragrance of ginger from the house on Berg Street.

These days, ginger – fresh and fine – permeates my own flavour story. I thought I was terribly grown up when I actually enjoyed the flavour of Stoney ginger beer for the first time. And then I discovered my father's treasured glazed ginger chocolates: serious, meaty and spicy! And what was that flavour I was detecting in the crisp cool watermelon *konfyf*? Ah! Ginger! My mother's '70s-style Hong Kong chicken, forever a milestone on my flavour journey, was also fragrant with fresh ginger.

Another of my favourite things? Good gingerbread. And the syrup of preserved ginger drizzled over vanilla ice cream. I use ginger in my aromatic lamb, in comfort noodles and in many of my favourite salads. And, of course, in these spiced pork chops with beetroot, ginger and mango relish...

Karen
email@karendudley.co.za

Spiced pork chops with beetroot, ginger and mango relish

Serves 6

• 6 pork loin chops

MARINADE

• 30ml sunflower oil

• 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

• 2 cloves garlic, crushed

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 10ml extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

• 15ml Indonesian soy sauce

• juice and grated zest of 1 orange

• juice and grated zest of ½ lime (25ml lime juice)

• 3ml fennel seeds

• salt and freshly ground black pepper

• 1 fat ripe mango

• 2–3 spring onions, finely sliced

• a big handful of fresh mint, shredded

• 3 medium beetroots

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 10ml extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

• 15ml Indonesian soy sauce

• juice and grated zest of 1 orange

• juice and grated zest of ½ lime (25ml lime juice)

• 3ml fennel seeds

• salt and freshly ground black pepper

• 1 fat ripe mango

• 2–3 spring onions, finely sliced

• a big handful of fresh mint, shredded

• 3 medium beetroots

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 10ml extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

• 15ml Indonesian soy sauce

• juice and grated zest of 1 orange

• juice and grated zest of ½ lime (25ml lime juice)

• 3ml fennel seeds

• salt and freshly ground black pepper

• 1 fat ripe mango

• 2–3 spring onions, finely sliced

• a big handful of fresh mint, shredded

• 3 medium beetroots

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 10ml extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

• 15ml Indonesian soy sauce

• juice and grated zest of 1 orange

• juice and grated zest of ½ lime (25ml lime juice)

• 3ml fennel seeds

• salt and freshly ground black pepper

• 1 fat ripe mango

• 2–3 spring onions, finely sliced

• a big handful of fresh mint, shredded

• 3 medium beetroots

• 2cm knob fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

• 10ml extra virgin olive oil or sesame oil

• 15ml Indonesian soy sauce

• juice and grated zest of 1 orange

• juice and grated zest of ½ lime (25ml lime juice)

• 3ml fennel seeds

• salt and freshly ground black pepper

• 1 fat ripe mango

• 2–3 spring onions, finely sliced

• a big handful of fresh mint, shredded

2 Cook the beetroot in a deepish pan with plenty of water on a gentle boil for about 30–35 minutes; they must be tender but not too soft. Drain them and when they're cool enough to handle, slip off their skins and cut them into 1cm blocks.

3 Whisk the ginger, oil, Indonesian soy sauce, juice and zest, fennel seeds and seasoning together and pour over the beetroot. Peel and cut the mango into 1cm chunks and stir it gently into the beetroot salad along with the spring onions and shredded mint – or, alternatively, use the latter two to garnish the entire dish.

4 Heat the frying pan until it's really hot. Remove the chops from the marinade, making sure to scrape the marinade off the chops and back into the bowl. Season the chops with salt and white pepper. Cook them over a high temperature for about 3 minutes or until you get a good colour, then turn them and do the same on the other side. Now reduce the heat to low and continue frying until they're cooked through; this takes at least 8 minutes and there should be no pink juices when you pierce them. Serve the pork chops with the beetroot, ginger and mango relish. ↑