

EAT GREEN • LIVE WELL

vegetarian times

healthy holiday COOKBOOK

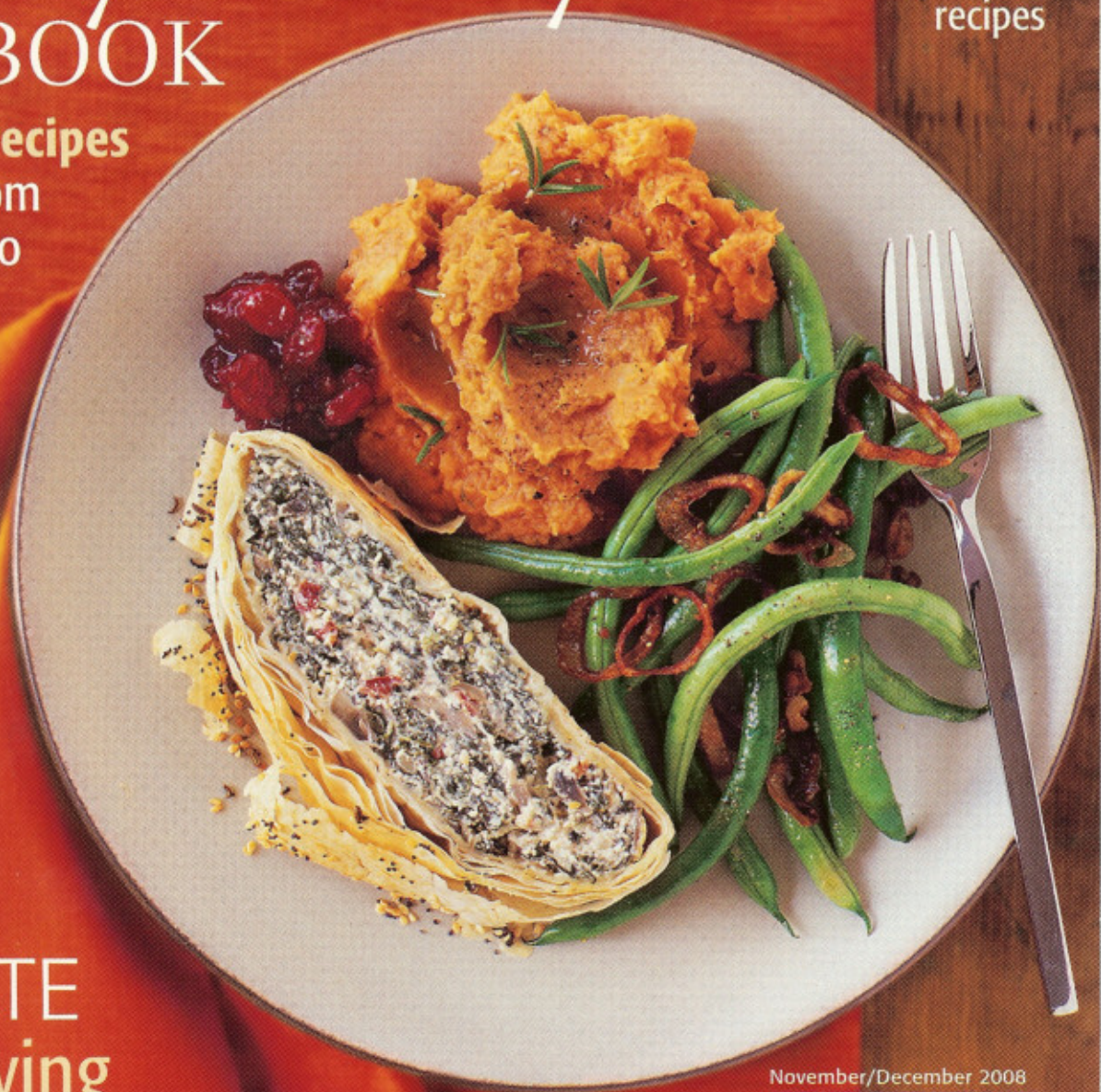
**EAT TO BEAT
COLDS & FLU**
5 healing
recipes

37 delicious recipes
to take you from
Thanksgiving to
New Year's

**Quick
& zesty
weeknight
meals**

**The best
homemade
cookies**

**THE
ULTIMATE
Thanksgiving
Menu, p. 66**



Mushroom, Cheese, and Vegetable Strudel
Double Cranberry Chutney
Green Beans with Walnuts and Shallot Crisps
Garlicky Mashed Sweet Potatoes

November/December 2008



KITCHEN prescriptions

Five of the most powerful cold & flu fighters
can be found right in your pantry

A big bowl of linguine tossed with crushed garlic and olive oil. A soothing ginger-rice dish. Cayenne-spiced vegetable stew. Warm focaccia topped with smoky onion confit. Honey-drizzled pumpkin pancakes. What do all of these dishes have in common? Besides being delicious and nutritious, each is loaded with natural immune-boosting ingredients.

Here we examine five top cold- and flu-fighting foods that medical research suggests can be as effective as over-the-counter cold and cough remedies. And to help you get what you need, we've created five easy recipes that contain therapeutic amounts of the active ingredients.

Cold

SUPER FOOD
active
ingredients

Natural compounds in these flavorful foods

are proving at least as effective as drugstore remedies.

GARLIC A study led by the director of the Garlic Centre in East Sussex, England, found that subjects who took a daily supplement containing garlic's active ingredient, allicin, were significantly less likely to catch a cold. Of the 146 participants, those in the supplement group who did catch a cold during the study tended to recover more quickly. "Allicin has antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal effects and may also work by attacking the cold-causing microbes in the back of the throat," says David Kiefer, MD, a clinical assistant professor of medicine at the University of Arizona's Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine in Tucson.

Kiefer says eating one or two fresh cloves a day can have the same therapeutic effect. For optimal results, enjoy garlic raw: "Excessive heat destroys allicin," he adds. But don't worry—there's no need to chomp on whole cloves: allicin becomes active only when garlic is minced, chopped, or crushed, so sprinkling minced bits on pasta, pizza, bruschetta, or stirring it into soup will do the trick. In fact, letting freshly chopped garlic sit for 10 minutes before eating it helps unleash its immune-boosting benefits.

ONION Flavonols, chemicals that give onions their pigment or color, have been shown to inhibit three common influenza strains, according to a recent Chinese study. Sulfur compounds—the source of onions' aroma—have anti-inflammatory properties that relieve aches brought on by flu and the congestion associated with colds, says Melody Hart, ND, PhD, a practitioner with Chicagohealers.com. Yet the principal congestion fighter in onions is quercetin, a flavonoid that works with vitamin C to stabilize mast cells, which prompt the release of snuffle-causing histamines when germs invade.

To breathe easier all winter, try eating about half an onion a day—and for the biggest protective punch, make it a red onion,

suggests Jared Schulman, MD, consulting physician with Mamaherb (mamaherb.com). Red onions contain significantly more pigment flavonols than yellow varieties.

HONEY Call it Mother Nature's superior sweetener, an immunity-boosting powerhouse that also fights viruses and bacteria. Indeed, the golden elixir "has exceptional antioxidant qualities, and more research is showing it to be effective," says Schulman, adding that its ability to thwart disease may be especially helpful to smokers, who "are more likely to suffer from upper respiratory infections."

In a Penn State University College of Medicine study, researchers found honey to be more effective than dextromethorphan (a cough suppressant) at reducing the frequency and severity of nighttime coughing in children. "The sweetness may activate endorphins that codeine would hit," says medical anthropologist Teresa Graedon, cohost of the radio program and syndicated newspaper column "The People's Pharmacy" (peoplespharmacy.com). Honey also soothes the throat on contact, according to the Penn State researchers.

To enhance immunity, enjoy 1 to 2 tablespoons a day and add it to tea, recommends Schulman: "The polyphenols in tea prevent the flu virus from binding to the host."

Caution: Honey should not be given to children under 12 months old because it can be a source of botulinum toxin.

GINGER For relief from the aches caused by colds and flu, reach for ginger. Gingerols and shogaols, the phenols that give ginger its spicy

SUPPLEMENT STRATEGIES For extra immune support, consider these natural options

Zinc Taken as a lozenge, this immunity-amping mineral can cut a cold's duration. Studies suggest it helps by disarming nose and throat viruses. For best effect, use lozenges at the first sign of a cold.
Dosage: 8 mg a day for women; 11 mg for men.

Echinacea In one study, people taking *Echinacea purpurea* recovered from a cold three days faster than those taking a placebo. In other research, *E. purpurea* also brought relief from symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, and fatigue.

Dosage Take as directed on product label. Treatment should start at the first signs of a cold and continue for up to two weeks.

Probiotics "Friendly bacteria" that colonize the digestive tract, probiotics may help prevent colds. In a Finnish study, children who drank milk fortified with *Lactobacillus GG* suffered fewer and less severe respiratory infections than those in the placebo group. And a 2005 study of factory workers showed that daily supplementation with *Lactobacillus reuteri* resulted in fewer sick days due to colds.

Dosage Aim for 3 billion to 5 billion live organisms daily.

Medicinal mushrooms

Medicinal formulas containing reishi and/or maitake, as well as active hexose correlated compound (AHCC), might enhance overall immune function and help prevent colds and flu from taking hold.

Dosage Throughout cold season, take daily as directed on product label.

"bite," are anti-inflammatories that can reduce pain without the stomach irritation often linked to ibuprofen. When flu strikes, the spice may bring down a high temperature: "Ginger helps the body sweat, breaking a fever and eliminating toxins," says Hart.

To harness these effects, cook with grated fresh ginger and candied ginger or brew ginger tea: Steep 2 tablespoons fresh grated ginger in a mug of boiling water 5 minutes. Strain, and sip.

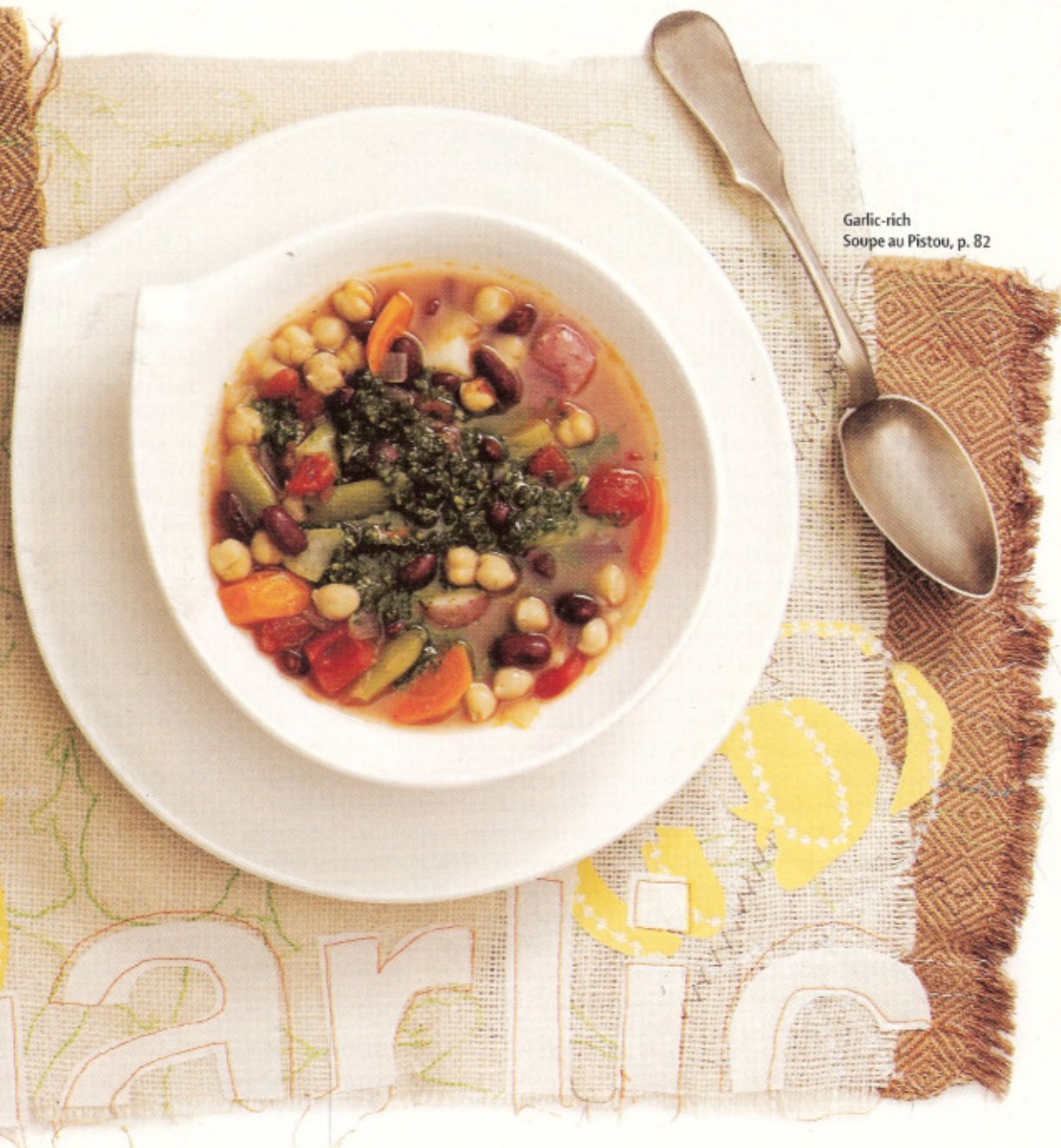
Caution: Ginger should not be ingested by children under 2.

CAYENNE Capsaicin, the substance that gives cayenne pepper its heat, can be used to rub out joint pain when added to salves. An ingredient in topical gels and creams such as Sportsmed,

capsaicin works by lowering levels of substance P, a chemical that transmits pain signals to the brain.

But that's not all: as a sore throat treatment, capsaicin's antiseptic properties put it a cut above lozenges, which can dry sore tissues and increase irritation. The fiery spice is also an excellent expectorant: a small taste instantly causes the mouth, throat, and nasal passages to release watery fluids that thin mucus, helping to break up congestion and flush out irritants—a good thing, says Kiefer, since "Getting mucus flowing helps avoid clogged sinuses and bronchial passages, which is a setup for more serious bacterial infections."

Caution: Cayenne should not be given to children under 2, and nursing mothers should avoid the spice.



Garlic-rich
Soupe au Pistou, p. 82