

## A Taste of Honey

Written by Debbi Covington  
Tuesday, 26 April 2011 12:05

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Honey is honey. It's just that simple. A bottle of pure honey contains a natural sweet substance, produced by honey bees, from nectar of plants or secretions of living parts of plants. Honey is made by bees in one of the world's most efficient facilities, the beehive. The 60,000 or so bees in a beehive may collectively travel as much as 55,000 miles and visit more than two million flowers to gather enough nectar to make just one pound of honey! Honey has been found to have medicinal qualities. Local honey is well known to assist in allergy relief and is a rich source of antioxidants. Eating local honey may help relieve the discomfort of seasonal allergies because bees use pollen from local plants which ends up in the local honey. Honey contains vitamins, minerals and amino acids; acts as an antibacterial and anti-fungal agent; and helps disinfect and speed the healing process in wounds, scrapes and burns. Color and flavor of honey differ depending on the bees' nectar source (the blossoms). In fact, there are more than 300 unique kinds of honey in the United States, originating from such diverse floral sources as clover, eucalyptus and orange blossoms. In general, lighter colored honeys are milder in flavor, while darker honeys are usually more robust in flavor. Honey is the featured ingredient in this week's recipes. Local honey is available for purchase at our many farmers' markets. Enjoy!

### **Honey Figs with Goat Cheese and Pecans**

1 cup finely chopped pecans  
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 log (6 ounces) goat cheese  
12 fresh figs, halved  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup clover honey

Place the chopped pecans in a shallow dish. Season with salt and pepper. Roll the goat cheese log in the pecans evenly to coat. Refrigerate log until firm if necessary, then cut evenly into rounds. Divide the figs evenly between six shallow bowls or dessert plates. Top figs with a round of the pecan-crusted goat cheese. Drizzle 2 tablespoons of honey over each serving. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

### **Sesame Pork Appetizers**

1½ pounds pork tenderloin  
For the marinade:  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry sherry  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
For the pork coating:  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup honey

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½ cup sesame seeds

For the dipping sauce:

1/3 cup soy sauce

1 tablespoon sesame oil

1 tablespoon dry sherry

1 clove garlic, crushed

½ teaspoon ginger, grated

1 green onion, finely chopped

Fresh spinach leaves

Combine ½ cup sherry and 1 tablespoon soy sauce in a glass baking dish. Add the pork.

Marinate 3 to 4 hours, turning several times. Remove the tenderloin. Spread the honey on a platter. Roll the pork in honey, then in sesame seeds. Place tenderloin in a roast pan, roast at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until meat thermometer registers 155 degrees. Let stand for 5 minutes, then slice thinly on the diagonal. In a small bowl, combine soy sauce, sesame oil, sherry, garlic, ginger and green onion for dipping sauce. Place the bowl in the center of a serving platter. Surround the bowl with spinach leaves. Arrange pork slices on top. Serves 6.

### **Dates and Honey Bread**

2½ cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

¾ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon ground allspice

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

¾ cup pitted and chopped dates or raisins

½ cup pecans, chopped

¾ cup buttermilk

¾ cup honey

¼ cup vegetable oil

2 tablespoons molasses

1 egg

In a large mixing bowl, blend flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and spices. Stir in dates and nuts; set aside. Beat together buttermilk, honey, oil, molasses and egg. Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients, stir until just mixed. Spray a 9x5-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Pour in batter. Bake in a preheated 325 degree oven for 55 to 60 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 20 minutes on a wire rack. Remove from pan. Makes 1 loaf.

### **Honey Raspberry Iced Tea**

2 cups freshly brewed (still warm) black tea

2 cups cranberry-raspberry juice

¼ cup honey

In a large pitcher, whisk together all ingredients until thoroughly combined and honey is dissolved. Chill until ready to serve. To serve, pour over ice. Serves 4.

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### **Broiled Fish with Tangy Sweet 'N Sour Sauce**

½ cup water  
½ cup honey  
½ cup lemon juice  
¼ cup dry white wine  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1 teaspoon garlic salt  
½ teaspoon grated lemon peel  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon, thyme or basil  
2 pounds red snapper fillets or cod fillets

Combine water, honey, lemon juice, wine, cornstarch, garlic salt and lemon peel in a small saucepan. Simmer for 2 minutes. Add herbs. Mix well. Remove from heat and keep warm. Place fish on a lightly greased baking sheet. Broil 4 to 6 inches from heat source for 10 to 15 minutes or until fish turns opaque and flakes easily when tested with a fork. Spoon sauce over fish to serve. Serves 8.

### **Chicken Cilantro Special**

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

For the glaze:

1 cup lime juice  
½ cup soy sauce  
½ cup honey  
¼ cup sherry  
¼ cup tomato paste  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1 tablespoon mustard  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce

For the salad:

4 cups mixed greens  
1 cup garbanzo beans  
½ cup chopped red bell pepper  
4 fresh tomatillo  
½ cup fresh cilantro leaves

Red onion, very thinly sliced, to garnish

Marinate chicken for 1 to 2 hours in lime juice. Remove chicken; discard lime juice. In a small bowl, combine soy sauce, honey, sherry, tomato paste, lemon juice, mustard, garlic powder, chili powder and hot sauce to make the glaze. Place chicken breasts on a very hot grill and brush generously with glaze. Turn once or twice, brushing with more glaze. Chicken should be grilled until just done to tender inside but nearly burnt and sticky on the outside. When the chicken is cooled, slice into strips and chill. Assemble salad by combining mixed greens, garbanzo beans, tomatillos and cilantro leaves in a large bowl. Serve chicken slices on salad garnished with thin slices of red onion. Serves 8.

### **Classic Honey-Mustard Dressing**

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1¼ cups mayonnaise

1/3 cup honey

1 tablespoon vinegar

2/3 cup vegetable oil

1 teaspoon dried onion flakes

2 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley

2 tablespoons mustard

In a small bowl, whisk together all ingredients until well blended. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Serves 6.

### **Grapefruit and Black Bean Salad**

Lettuce leaves

2 grapefruits, peeled, seeded and thinly sliced

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained

1 medium cucumber, halved lengthwise and sliced

1 cup cubed papaya

4 ounces Monterey-Jack cheese, grated

½ cup frozen grapefruit concentrate, thawed

¼ cup water

3 tablespoons honey

2 tablespoons fresh cilantro

¼ teaspoon ground cumin

Line 4 salad plates with lettuce. Arrange grapefruit slices on plates. Arrange beans, cucumber and papaya in mounds on the lettuce. Sprinkle with cheese.

Combine thawed grapefruit concentrate, water, honey, cilantro and cumin in a blender for 1 minute. Drizzle dressing over the tops of the salads before serving. Serves 4.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is [www.cateringbydebbicovington.com](http://www.cateringbydebbicovington.com) . She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at [debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com](mailto:debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com).