

LOVE STARTS IN THE KITCHEN!™

By: Rita Nader Heikenfeld, CCP, CMH

Macy's Culinary Professional, Certified Modern Herbalist, Jungle Jims Staff Educator, Community Press Columnist, Adj. Prof. UC

RITA ON THE WEB!

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ARISTA

My fennel, both the Florence (that's the kind with the big white bulb) and my bronze (which has a long tap root similar to a carrot) are growing well enough to harvest some leaves from them. I'm sharing an unusual, yet really delicious, recipe for pork tenderloin using these herbs.

2 pounds pork tenderloin, or 2 one pound tenderloins

2-3 teaspoons minced garlic

1-1/2 teaspoons ground fennel seeds, or about 1/2 cup fresh fennel leaves, minced

Olive oil

Several parsley sprigs, minced (opt)

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Trim tenderloins and set aside. Preheat oven to 425. Mix garlic and fennel together. Add enough olive oil to make a paste. Stir in parsley. Rub this paste all over tenderloins, and if you have any left, make tiny slits in tenderloin and insert rest of paste in there. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Roast for 20 minutes or until internal temperature reads 160. Don't overcook.

Why this recipe is good for you:

- Pork contains protein and iron
- Fennel seeds are not only great for your digestion, they help curb the appetite and keep you "up".
- Olive oil is a healthy fat
- Sea salt has more flavor than regular salt and contains more minerals

RITA'S HERBES DE PROVENCE

(Good with lamb, grains, tomatoes, pork, beef and in seafood recipes)

Blend together and store in cool, dry place away from light:

1/4 cup dried thyme leaves, not powdered

2 tablespoons dried marjoram or 1 tablespoon oregano

1 tablespoon dried rosemary, minced

1 tablespoon dried savory leaves, not powdered savory

2 teaspoons dried lavender flowers

1 teaspoon fennel seeds

1 dried bay leaf, crumbled

RITA'S HERB OF THE WEEK: FENNEL!

This lovely herb makes a beautiful tall background plant with its feathery leaves similar to dill. Fennel can be a tender perennial in our climate, and reseeds itself readily. There are two kinds (see above) and fennel loves to be planted in a sunny location with good drainage. Once established, it requires minimum attention. It has a delicious, savory licorice type taste and the bulbs are great sautéed, or just layered with garlic, shaved Romano and olive oil as a salad.

MORE RITA!

Check out my books *Gifts without Ribbons*, *Culinary Herbs that Heal Body and Soul*, *The Official Snack Guide for Beleaguered Sports parents and Sports Nutrition for Dummies* (I developed the recipes) and also my yummy bread blends.

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Rita Heikenfeld