



Brilliant Black Pepper Glaze

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 5 / **Cook Time** / **Serves** 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

snip: to use scissors to cut something with quick, sharp strokes.

squeeze: to firmly press or twist a food with fingers, hands, or a device to remove its liquid, like shredded potatoes, frozen and thawed spinach, or tofu.

Equipment

- ☐ Ziplock bag
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Kid or kitchen scissors

Ingredients

Brilliant Black Pepper Glaze

- ☐ 1 C powdered sugar
- ☐ 1 pinch ground black pepper
- ☐ 1 to 2 T root beer (we like Zevia or Virgil's Diet stevia-sweetened root beer)

Food Allergen Substitutions

Brilliant Black Pepper Glaze

Instructions

Brilliant Black Pepper Glaze

measure + smoosh

Have kids measure **1 cup of powdered sugar**, **1 pinch of black pepper**, and **1 to 2 tablespoons of root beer** into a ziplock bag and smoosh all around until a glaze forms.

snip + squeeze

Snip the corner of the bag to squeeze out the glaze and make fun designs on top of cupcakes, like our **Zany Zucchini Root Beer Cupcakes**! If you don't have a bag, mix in a small bowl and drizzle with a spoon.

Featured Ingredient: Black Pepper!

Hi! I'm Black Pepper!

"I started out as a fresh peppercorn, the fruit of a black pepper plant. Peppercorns are used as seasoning or spice in cooking. If peppercorns are dried, they may be put into a grinder and become ground black pepper. One of our favorite culinary partners is salt!"

History & Etymology

Black pepper is native to South Asia and Southeast Asia, especially the Malabar Coast of India. It has been used in Indian cuisine for at least 4000 years. It was also used medicinally in ancient cultures.

Black peppercorns were found in the nostrils of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II (1279–1213 BCE). During India's Chera dynasty (300 BCE to 400 CE), black pepper was exported from the ancient port of Muziris and traded with Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Roman Empire, and Yemen. At one time, peppercorns were called "black gold."

Black pepper is one of the most popular spices around the world. Vietnam produces the most black pepper worldwide, followed by Brazil, Indonesia, and India.

The word "pepper" is from the Middle English "peper," from the Old English "pipor," from the Latin "piper," from the Greek "peperi," and from Sanskrit "pippalī."

Anatomy

The black pepper plant (*Piper nigrum*) is from the Piperaceae or pepper family of flowering plants. Its fruit, the peppercorn, is considered a stone fruit or drupe with a single seed inside.

The plant is a perennial woody vine that grows up to 13 feet high. The vine may be supported by a nearby tree, post, or trellis. The mature fruit is red and about 1/4 inch in diameter.

Piperine, an alkaloid or organic compound found in the black pepper plant's drupe and seed, is responsible for the pungent flavor of black pepper.

Peppercorns can be black, green, red, pink, and white. Black pepper comes from the green, unripe drupe,

which is cleaned and dried. When it is dry, the outer layer of the drupe becomes wrinkled and black, becoming a black peppercorn.

Green pepper also comes from the green, unripe drupe but is treated in a way that keeps its green color. Red peppercorns are ripe drupes preserved in brine and vinegar. Like green peppercorns, they can be treated to keep their red color.

White peppercorns are the seeds inside the fruit when the thin skin and flesh are removed. The ripe red fruit is soaked until the flesh dissolves, leaving the seed, which is then dried.

Pink peppercorns are not from the *Piper nigrum* species. They are the fruit of the Peruvian pepper tree or the Brazilian pepper tree, which are from the Anacardiaceae or cashew family. Because of this, they can cause an allergic reaction similar to other tree nut allergies.

How to Store and Use

Black pepper should be stored in an airtight container to preserve its taste and smell. Evaporation and light can affect its flavor, so food experts recommend using a pepper mill to grind whole dried peppercorns at the time of use.

The fresh fruit is sometimes used in cooking without being dried. Fresh peppercorns are found in Thai cuisine and French cuisine, as in the French classic "steak au poivre" ("pepper steak").

Ground white pepper is used in Chinese, Portuguese, and Thai dishes. It is often added to mashed potatoes instead of black pepper to blend in better with the white potatoes (no little black specks!).

Ground black pepper is used as a general seasoning with salt in many foods, including cooked eggs, meats, and vegetables. It is added to marinades, rubs, salads, sauces, soups, spice blends, and stews.

Freshly ground black pepper is essential to the Italian pasta dish "cacio e pepe" ("cheese and pepper").

Peppercorn sauce is a cream sauce that combines any variety of whole peppercorns with heavy cream.

Other typical ingredients include butter, garlic, salt, shallots, wine, brandy, and other seasonings. It may be served with beef, lamb, chicken, or fish dishes.

Nutrition

Piperine, the alkaloid that gives black pepper its flavor, is also an antioxidant.

One tablespoon of ground black pepper has 13 percent of the daily value (DV) of vitamin K and moderate amounts of iron (10 percent DV) and manganese (18 percent DV).

Vitamin K is beneficial for building bone and blood clotting, helping wounds to heal. Manganese also aids bone health and wound healing and helps with carbohydrate metabolism.