

About Bok Choy

The scientific name for bok choy (or bok choy), is *brassica rapa var. chinensis*, which tells us it is classified as a cabbage. The Latin name *brassica* derives from the Celtic *bresic*, *rapa* is from the Latin for "turnip," and *chinensis* means "Chinese." Often called "Chinese cabbage," bok choy bears little resemblance to the round European cabbages with which we're most familiar, or even with napa cabbage, which is another popular Chinese cabbage variety. Bok choy has white stalks that resemble celery without the stringiness, while the dark green, crinkly leaves of the most common variety is similar to romaine lettuce. The Chinese commonly refer to bok choy as pak choy or "white vegetable." Another common name is white cabbage.

Bok choy is used in soups and stir-fries, appetizers and main dishes, either raw or cooked. Its popularity comes from its light, sweet flavor, crisp texture and nutritional value. Not only is bok choy high in vitamin A, vitamin C and calcium, but it is also very low in calories.

Storage

Wrap bok choy in a damp towel or place in a plastic bag in the hydrator drawer of the refrigerator. Store for up to one week. Leaves will lose integrity and wilt if allowed to dry out.

Preparation Tips

Use bok choy like any other cabbage, but do a taste test first to decide how you want to use it, as it's flavor is somewhat different from traditional cabbage. Use it raw in slaws or salads, cooked in stir-fries, or in casseroles, stews, or soups. Do not discard the stems! Simply wash thoroughly and slice or chop.

For stir-fry, separate leaves from the thick white stems and chop both into 2-inch-wide diagonal chunks. The stem pieces should be added to the stir-fry several minutes before the leaves, as they need a longer cooking time.

Steam bok choy like other leafy greens, starting with the stems cooking first. Toss with a favorite marinade or salad dressing.

Sources: *chinesefood.about.com*, "Whole Foods Companion," Dianne Onstad 2004, and "From Asparagus to Zucchini, A Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce," Madison Area CSA Coalition 2003.

Simple Bok Choy & Garlic

2 tablespoons butter
4 teaspoons minced garlic
1 medium head bok choy
2 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable stock
Melt butter in heavy large skillet over high heat. Add garlic; sauté 1 minute. Add bok choy and stock; simmer until bok choy is tender, turning occasionally, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6.

Adapted from "Bon Appetit," April 1998.

Bok Choy & Sugar Snap Pea Salad

2 cups sugar snap peas
1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion
2 cups thinly sliced bok choy
3 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons lime juice
1 teaspoon sugar
1 garlic clove
1/2 teaspoon salt
freshly ground black pepper
Combine vegetables. Whisk together oil, lime juice, sugar and garlic. Pour dressing over vegetables, season with salt and pepper and toss well. Let stand 30 minutes before serving. Serves 4.

From Co-Op Farmers Market Recipes, Newark Co-Op Farmers.

Bok Choy with Ginger Vinaigrette

1 pound bok choy
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
2 teaspoons dijon mustard
2 teaspoons reduced sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
1 small glove garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely chopped or grated
Separate bok choy leaves and rinse under cold water to clean. Place in steamer and steam until stalks begin to turn translucent and are soft when pierced. Combine vinegar, mustard, soy, etc. and mix well. After bok choy is steamed you have two options: chop up piece into bit size pieces while still warm and pour the ginger vinaigrette over or plunge steamed bok choy into cold water to crisp it back up. Drain and cool. Then chop and pour ginger vinaigrette over. Makes 4 - 1 cup servings.

From vegweb.com.

Easy Bok Choy & Black Bean Salad

Mix together:
2 cans drained black beans (soak and cook your own! Much healthier and the taste is awesome)
4 diced celery stalks
2 bunches of chopped green onions
2 small chopped heads of baby bok choy (or equivalent)
Dress with a mixture of:
3 to 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/2 cup olive oil
2 to 3 tablespoons whole-seed mustard
salt and pepper to taste
Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.
Serves 4. *From fooddownunder.com.*

Steamed Bok Choy & Water Chestnut

1 1/2 pounds bok choy, cut into bite-size pieces
2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
2 garlic cloves
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1/2 orange, unpeeled, cut into wedges
1 4-ounce can sliced water chestnuts, drained
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoon tamari or soy sauce
salt and pepper, to taste
In a medium pan over high heat, bring the broth, garlic, onion and orange wedges to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the bok choy and simmer for 5 minutes, or until tender. Add the water chestnuts, cilantro, and tamari or soy sauce. Simmer for 1 minute. Remove and discard the orange wedges. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 6. *From "Simply Organic," Jesse Zif*

Bok Choy with Cashews

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup chopped green onions, including green tops
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 pound bok choy, rinsed,
1/2 teaspoon dark sesame oil
salt, to taste
1/2 cup chopped, roasted, salted cashews*
Heat olive in large sauté pan over medium high heat. Add onions, garlic, and bok choy. Sprinkle with sesame oil and salt. Cover and let the bok choy cook down for about 3 minutes. Remove cover. Put heat to low. Stir and let cook for a minute or two longer. Gently mix in cashews. Serves 4.