



Harvest of the Month | Family Newsletter

Cabbage



Cabbage is a hardy vegetable that grows in various shades of green as well as red (purple). The shape of the cabbage head varies from round to flattened or pointed. Most varieties have smooth leaves, but Savoy cabbage has crinkly textured leaves. Usually, the leaves at the center of the head are eaten rather than the outer leaves. If purchased at a store, these outer leaves have usually been removed. Raw cabbage has a naturally peppery flavor.



Did you know?



Many vegetables evolved from the original wild cabbage including broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, and kohlrabi.



There are at least 100 types of cabbage grown throughout the world. The most common types grown in the United States are Green, Red, and Savoy. The most common types of Chinese cabbage are Bok Choy and Napa cabbage.



Cabbage is composed of 90% water.



The inner leaves of cabbage are often lighter in color than the outer leaves because they are protected from sunlight by the surrounding leaves.



Kimchee and sauerkraut are fermented products made from cabbage.

Selection

Look for cabbage heads that are heavy for their size with even coloring and with fairly thick, pliable leaves. Pre-cut cabbage may have already lost some of its nutrient content.

Storage

Store green cabbage in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Savoy cabbage only keeps for about four days. Do not wash cabbage before storing as the moisture may cause deterioration.

Nutrition

Cabbage is an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin K, and phytochemicals. Vitamin C is important in the body's healing process and may play a role in guarding against heart disease and cancer. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron. Vitamin K is important in the blood clotting process and therefore helps us avoid bleeding too much from cuts and scrapes. Phytochemicals are substances that are believed to guard against certain dis-

Handling

Remove the outer layer of leaves. Cut the cabbage head in quarters. Rinse under cold running water. Do not wash cabbage until you are ready to use it. Avoid slicing or shredding cabbage in advance as this will cause it to lose some of its vitamin C content. If you must prepare it an hour or more in advance before cooking, place it in a plastic bag, seal tightly, and refrigerate.

When handling and preparing red cabbage, use stainless steel knives and cookware to prevent color changes.



eases such as cancer. Red and savoy cabbage are good sources of vitamin A, which helps maintain good vision and fight infection.

Harvest Season

According to the PA Preferred Seasonal Calendar, cabbage is in season in Pennsylvania from June through December.

Preparation



Boil: Cut cabbage into quarters or large wedges. Add about ½ inch of water into a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Add cabbage and continue boiling uncovered, until the pieces are tender, about 8 to 11 minutes.



Steam: Quarter and core cabbage. Cut into wedges. Place one inch of water in a pot and insert a steamer basket. Put in the cabbage wedges with one cut side down. Steam for 6 minutes, flip over and steam for another 6–8 minutes or until crisp–tender.



Bake: Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut cabbage into 1–inch thick rounds and place on baking sheet. Brush lightly with oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast until cabbage is tender and edges are golden, about 40–45 minutes.



Note: While cabbage is cooking it can sometimes give off an odor that some consider unpleasant. This odor is the result of the breakdown of substances in cabbage into sulfur compounds. The reaction is stronger in aluminum pans and when the cabbage is cooked too long. This can be avoided by a briefer cooking time and the use of stainless–steel pots and pans.



Other ways to enjoy cabbage include:

- Cut up cabbage and drizzle with lemon juice or salad dressing.
- Add cabbage to soups, stews, and stir fries.
- Add cabbage to salads, sandwiches, and tacos.
- Add cooked cabbage to mashed potatoes.



Recipe | Cabbage Stir Fry

Makes 6 servings.

Ingredients	Measure	Directions
Vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wash green peppers and cabbage before chopping. 2. Heat oil in a large skillet. 3. Add onions, peppers, cabbage, and garlic to skillet and cook over medium heat until vegetables are tender. 4. Add soy sauce and stir until sauce boils. 5. Refrigerate leftovers.
Onion	1 cup (chopped)	
Green Peppers	2 medium (chopped)	
Cabbage	1 small head (chopped)	
Cloves garlic	2 (chopped, or ½ teaspoon of garlic powder)	
Soy sauce, low sodium	2 Tblsp	

Source: Colorado State University and University of California at Davis. **Eating Smart Being Active Recipes.**



Check out the PA Harvest of the Month website (www.paharvestofthemonth.org) for sources, additional resources, and recipes.

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