

SIMPLY GOOD FOOD

Cabbage

Most Americans are familiar with the green, solid-cored storage cabbage found at the supermarket, but that is only one choice. Cabbage has been much maligned for its strong flavor and odor, but it is the overcooking, not the cabbage, that is the villain. The easiest way to slice or chop firm-headed cabbage is to quarter the trimmed and washed head, then, using the core as a holder, cut diagonally across the leaves.

Marketing: The cabbage should feel firm and heavy. Regardless of the type of cabbage the leaves should appear fresh, brightly colored, and blemish-free with no signs of wilt or worm damage.

Storage and Preserving: Unwashed, firm, compact cabbage keeps up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator; loose-leaf, up to a week. Long-term storage requires high humidity and 32 degree temperature. Sliced cabbage stored in a perforated plastic bag will keep 5-6 days, refrigerated. Cooked cabbage, covered, will keep 1-3 days in the refrigerator.

Nutritional Information: The cabbage has a significant source of Vitamin A and has moderate amount of Calcium and Potassium.

- Yields:**
- A firm-headed 2-pound cabbage, trimmed = 1 ½ pounds sliced leaves = approximately 9-10 cups sliced = 5-6 cups cooked.
 - A 3-pound cabbage = approximately 14-16 cups sliced or shredded
 - A well-trimmed Chinese cabbage = approximately 6-7 cups sliced leaves.
 - These amounts vary, depending on type of cabbage. Smaller-cored, loose-head cabbages, such as Savoy, have a slightly higher yield.

- Hints:**
- Overcooking ruins cabbage. It causes a mushy texture and a strong taste.
 - Red cabbage has a coarser texture than green cabbage. It must be marinated longer to tenderize when eaten raw, and requires a slightly longer braising time when cooked.
 - To retain the bright red color of red cabbage, combine with acids such as wine, apple juice, or vinegar.
 - Use a stainless steel knife to cut red cabbage; the cabbage pigment turns blue when you use a carbon steel knife.
 - Shred or slice Chinese cabbage and use like any other cabbage, but remember that it has a delicate tartness which makes an excellent addition to stir-fries.

Steamed Green Cabbage

Cut cabbage into wedges, slice it, or separate the leaves. Bring ¾ - 1 inch of water to a boil in a steamer. Steam cabbage in a steamer basket. Wedges will cook in 6-9 minutes (depending on thickness and size), sliced cabbage will cook in 5-6 minutes, and whole leaves will cook in 3-4 minutes.

Finishing Touches for Cooked Green Cabbage

- With Butter: Simply serve with sweet butter, salt, and pepper to taste.
- With Seasonings: Omit butter, and sprinkle with salt and pepper, celery salt, dill, crushed caraway, or any other seasonings you prefer.

- Baked in a Creme or Cheese Sauce: Slice cooked cabbage and squeeze out as much moisture as possible. (Sauté with some butter until moisture evaporates if you wish.) Combine with a cream or cheese sauce and bake in a 350 degree oven until heated through, approximately 20 minutes. Top with buttered bread crumbs and run under the broiler.

Braised Cabbage

Here are two favorite ways to prepare cabbage.

Butter-Braised Cabbage

4-6 tablespoons butter
2-3 teaspoons curry powder (optional)
8 cups finely sliced cabbage
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Heat 4 tablespoons of the butter with curry powder (if desired) in a large sauté pan. Add the sliced cabbage and stir to coat with butter. Cover, lower heat, and cook gently for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the cabbage is tender. Season with salt and pepper. Add additional butter if desired. (Makes 4-5 cups).

Broth-Braised Cabbage

8 cups finely sliced green cabbage
½ cup chicken or beef broth
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons butter (optional)

Put all ingredients in a covered saucepan, bring to a boil, and cook for 5-6 minutes or until just tender, stirring or tossing occasionally. Or, cook covered in a preheated 350 degree oven for 20 minutes or longer, until tender. The timing depends on the cabbage variety and the size of the slices. (Makes 4-5 cups)

Coleslaw

¾-1 cups mayonnaise
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons sugar
Salt and freshly ground pepper
8 cups finely sliced green cabbage
1 cup grated carrots
1 cup chopped red onions

Combine the mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, and sugar. Season with salt and pepper. Toss the cabbage with the carrots and onions, then mix thoroughly with the dressing. Taste again, reseasoning if necessary, and marinate, refrigerated, for at least 1 hour. Longer marinating tenderizes further. (Makes 8 cups)

Source: *The Victory Garden Cookbook, Joy of Cooking.*

Supporting State Extension Goal: Health, Safety and Well Being

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- Add caraway seeds.
- Add chopped red or green peppers or celery.
- Use both red and green cabbage and marinate longer to tenderize the red cabbage.
- Replace mayonnaise with sour cream; or sour cream and mayonnaise; or thin with yogurt.
- Omit the mayonnaise and use only ½ cup vinegar.

Cabbage Soup

2 ½-3 lbs green cabbage
3 stalks celery
1 large sweet onion
2 leeks
1 lb carrots
3 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon oil
Herb bouquet:
4 parsley sprigs
3 crushed cloves garlic
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon thyme
8 crushed peppercorns
2 quarts water, chicken broth, or a combination of broth
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 cups fresh shell beans or cooked dried beans
French or rye bread

Wash and slice the cabbage into ½-inch shreds. Clean the celery and cut into ¼-inch slices. Peel and slice the onion. Wash the leeks thoroughly and slice the whites, placing some of the green leaves in the herb bouquet.

Peel and diagonally slice the carrots into ¼-inch pieces. Melt the butter and oil in a 4-6 quart saucepan. Stew the celery, onions, leeks, and carrots in the pan for 5 minutes. Add the cabbage and cook 10 minutes longer. Put in the herb bouquet, water or broth, and 1 tablespoon salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat slightly and boil gently for 15 minutes. Stir in the beans and cook 15 minutes longer or until the vegetables are tender. Remove the herb bouquet, season to taste, and serve with toasted rounds of French bread or rye bread. (Makes 3 ½ quarts)

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