

CABBAGE



CABBAGE is the oldest and most widely grown of the Brassica family. It can be found from the arctic to the sub-tropics. Other members of this family include kale, broccoli, and turnips. Cabbage, a cool-season crop, is harvested in the spring and fall in the Northeast. February 17th is world cabbage day, giving us much to celebrate!



STORAGE

- ◆ Store cabbage in a refrigerator drawer.
- ◆ **Head cabbage** lasts 2-3 weeks or longer, just remove the molded or wilted leaves.
- ◆ **Savoy cabbage** and other cabbages with loose heads last about 1 week.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Cabbages differ in color (green and red) and shape (pointed, flat, round and open crinkly heads). **They can all be prepared similarly.**
- ◆ To prepare, wash outside of cabbage and peel away damaged leaves.
- ◆ Cabbage can be eaten **raw** and when shredded, it makes a colorful addition to salad. To shred cabbage, remove the outer tough leaves and cut the cabbage into quarters. Remove the core and lay the quarters, cut-side-down on a cutting board, then cut into fine strips. Or you can use a food processor.
- ◆ For a salad or stir fry, cut out the hard whitish core of cabbage before shredding or chopping the leaves. If quartering or cooking the whole cabbage, leave core intact.
- ◆ Cabbage can be cooked in a variety of ways—**boiled, steamed, braised, baked, sautéed, pickled, or stuffed.** A basic way to cook is to shred and fry in a pan with butter and salt. Cook cabbage for a few minutes, until it wilts. Overcooking can cause a sulfur smell.
- ◆ **To stuff the leaves,** immerse the entire head in boiling water for a few minutes. Leaves will easily pull away from the base. Fill leaves and bake.
- ◆ Cabbage can also be fermented into **sauerkraut.** Pickling in salt water kills harmful bacteria and allows good bacteria to grow.

Nutritional Information

Cabbage is an excellent source of Vitamins K and C. Vitamin K is involved in blood clotting. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Since cooking destroys much of the active Vitamin C it is most nutritious when eaten raw or cooked lightly.

Cabbage Recipes

Red or Green Coleslaw

8 cups shredded cabbage (red or green or a combination of both!)
2 carrots, coarsely grated
1 teaspoon salt
2 scallions, finely sliced
2 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 Tablespoons finely chopped dill
1 teaspoon caraway or fennel seeds, lightly toasted (or celery seed, untoasted)
1 Tablespoon olive oil
Optional add-ins: apples, nuts, raisins, peppers, sunflower seeds, water chestnuts, diced onion, etc..
Salt and pepper to taste



In medium mixing bowl, combine cabbage, grated carrots and salt. Add the scallions, vinegar, dill, seeds and whatever additional ingredients you want. Toss well. Add oil and toss again. Chill 20 minutes and adjust seasonings. This is a 'light' version of the more common coleslaw recipes which call for mayonnaise or sour cream based dressing.

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Cabbage Soup

1 1/2 Tablespoons butter
1 large onion, minced
1 head cabbage (about 3/4 pound), shredded
4 cups soup stock, meat or vegetable based
Salt and pepper to taste
Dill, fresh or dried
Sour cream
Parsley or scallions, chopped for garnish



In a large pot, melt the butter over medium heat and add the minced onion. Sauté the onion until golden. Add the cabbage to the onion and butter. In a separate pot, bring the soup stock to a boil. Add the stock to the cabbage and onion and season with salt, pepper and a large pinch of dill. Simmer the soup for 10 minutes. Serve with a spoonful of sour cream in each bowl and sprinkle with chopped parsley or scallions.

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Sauerkraut

5 lbs. cabbage
3 to 4 Tablespoons Kosher or pickling salt (use 3 if you plan on refrigerating and not canning, use 4 for canning (Do not use table salt)
1 large crock, glass or enamel container
heavy duty food-grade plastic bags or 2 gallon freezer bags
wooden spoon (do not use aluminum utensils)



Clean and scald the container with boiling water. Remove the outer leaves of the cabbage. Wash and shred the cabbage into pieces that are the thickness of a quarter. Mix the shreds with the salt using a wooden spoon until the salt is dissolved. When the cabbage juices start to come out, pack the shreds evenly into your container. Press firmly. Fill until the cabbage is 5 inches from the top making sure that the juice completely covers the cabbage. If there is not enough liquid to cover the cabbage you will need to prepare a brine by adding 1 1/2 Tbs. Kosher salt into 1 quart boiling water. Let it cool to room temperature before adding. Add brine until cabbage is covered. Fill a plastic bag with water, double bag it to prevent leaks and place it over the cabbage. Make sure that there is no air exposed to the cabbage. Put in a place that will not exceed 75 degrees to prevent spoilage. Cooler temperatures will take longer to ferment. Once fermented (3-5 weeks) can be eaten immediately or canned. Refrigerate after opening.

Recipe adapted from Lena Sanchez, <http://chetday.com/sauerkrautrecipe.htm>, copyright 2003 by Chet Day.