



SM

GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE

BOK CHOY

RECIPES



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History

Archaeologists found Chinese cabbage seeds dating back 6,000 years in the Yellow River Valley of China. Bok choy also has been traced to the Yangtze River delta, one of the world's oldest agricultural regions.

Brassica Rapa, subsp. chinensis, aka...

Bok choy is called Chinese cabbage, pak-choi, or pak choy. In the UK, South Africa, and in the Caribbean, the term pak choi is used. Other words for bok choy include Chinese chard, Chinese mustard, celery mustard, and spoon cabbage. In Australia, buk choy is white bok choy and pak choy is green bok choy.

Around the World

As a staple of Asian cuisine, bok choy was adapted by cooks in Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. A Swede named Osbeck brought bok choy seeds to Europe during the 18th century, and in the same period, Jesuit missionaries brought similar strains of the vegetable to German scientists working in Russia. Its history in the US is linked to Chinese immigration to California in the 1800s; by 1870, Chinese immigrants made up 15-50% of the farm labor force, and brought many Chinese vegetable crops with them. Bok choy is part of Caribbean cuisine, a result of the Chinese diaspora of the 19th century.

Words for Bok Choy

The word originates from the Cantonese phrase 白菜, which translates to "white vegetable."

Latin: Brassica Rapa, subsp. Chinensis

Arabic: دجاجم الجا بن رككلا

Cantonese: 白菜

French: Pak-Choi

Haitian Creole: Bok Choy

Hindi: बोक चॉय

Italian: Bok Choy

German: Pak Choi

Japanese: チンゲンサイ

Mandarin: 奶白菜

Persian: یوج کوب

Spanish: Bok Choy

Swahili: Bok Choy

Ukrainian: бок-чой

Art & Literature

"On display at the National Palace Museum in Taiwan, held behind a glass case, sits a national treasure: The fist-sized piece of carved greenstone, 翠玉白菜 the jadeite bok choy. It is an exquisite display of Qing Dynasty artistry (1644-1911) and Taoist philosophy.

Looking closely at the green and white stone, a katydid and locust emerge from the intricate folds like a magic eye.... This combination of 'plant and insect' in Chinese art can be seen in the landscape and nature paintings of previous dynasties.

Botany

Bok choy originally was classified as Brassica chinensis by Carl Linnaeus (the Swedish botanist who formalized the naming of organisms with two parts - genus and species). It now is considered a subspecies of Brassica rapa. Bok choy is a cruciferous leafy vegetable belonging to the mustard family, along with cabbage, kale, cauliflower, mustard, turnips and broccoli. The plant is white-stemmed, with smooth or ruffled dark green leaves and firm white stalks that radiate from a bulbous central stem.

Season's Best

Bok choy is a cool-weather crop, so it's in season in New Jersey from April to June, and again in September and October. Look for bunches that are firm and blemish-free, with green leaves showing no wilt. Occasionally, bok choy and other Chinese cabbages will have black flecks on the ribs, known as "pepper spot." This is a harmless cosmetic condition that doesn't impact taste or texture.



In the Garden

Bok choy prefers partial shade to full sunlight. Like most cabbages, bok choy is a cool season crop. Plant directly in the garden bed, after the last frost (~April 29 to May 10), or in late summer. Sow seeds about ½ inch deep and 3 inches apart, in rows 18 inches apart. Bok choy likes an inch of water per week or more. Once plants are 4 inches tall, thin to a spacing of 6–9 inches apart, adding culled plants to salads or stir-fries.

Companion/guild plantings: Beets, carrots, cilantro, dill, garlic, lettuce, nasturtiums, spinach, and radishes.

Math & Money

Responding to increasing demand for diverse, locally grown produce, NJ farmers have increased plantings of bok choy, a relatively low-maintenance, fast-growing crop. New Jersey ranks among the top 10 bok-choy producing states. Most is grown in the Central and Southern regions, especially around Burlington and Monmouth counties. Garden State farms supply in-state markets, along with major metropolitan areas along the East Coast, including New York and Philadelphia.

Ingredient Pairings

Its flavor is described as being between spinach and water chestnuts, but slightly sweeter, with a mildly peppery undertone. The green leaves have a stronger flavor than the white bulb.

In the Kitchen

Bok choy typically is prepared by stir-frying, roasting, or braising, but also can be eaten raw. Wash the vegetable thoroughly to eliminate any dirt or sand, as well as pesticide residues. Cook and serve baby bok choy whole; with larger bulbs, cut crosswise into ribbons. Bok choy cooks in 2 to 3 minutes by steaming, stir-frying, or simmering in a flavored broth. Slice raw bok choy thinly to add to salads.

Fuel for Learning & Powerful Play

Bok choy is an excellent source of vitamins K, A and C, and also is rich in folate, vitamin B6, and calcium.

Climate Impact

The greatest emissions are caused by the conversion of land, the continued use of that land rather than reforestation, and by processes on the farm. When possible, choose foods in season, and from smaller farms.

Resource Intensity

Bok choy is a fairly thirsty crop, but has a rapid growth cycle (45–60 days), high-density yields, and can be grown in multiple seasons. The greatest emissions are caused by the conversion of land, the continued use of that land rather than reforestation, and by processes on the farm. When possible, choose foods in season, and from smaller farms.

Bok Choy Tasting

Begin with unseasoned raw/roasted bok choy. Then season with a pinch of salt. After observing how seasoning changes the flavor, taste with a drizzle of vinaigrette. If available, compare and contrast different methods of cooking beyond roasting: Steamed, boiled, sauteed, and with relevant flavorings.

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Zone 7, Pomptonian, and Serious Eats

Bok Choy Fried Rice

For Serious Eats, J. Kenji Lopez-Alt writes: "Fried rice is a great way to use leftovers...If cooking rice from raw to make fried rice, rinse off excess starch first. A quick dunk and shake in a bowl of cold water, or a 30-second rinse under a cold tap while agitating the rice, is plenty. Mix-ins should be flavor enhancers, not stars unto themselves."

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 cups chopped bok choy
4 cups cooked brown rice
4 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil, divided
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 large carrot, peeled and cut into small dice
4 scallions, thinly sliced
2 large cloves garlic
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1½ teaspoons toasted sesame oil
Kosher salt and ground white pepper
2 large eggs
Salt and fresh-ground black pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Blanch bok choy in boiling water just until it turns a vivid green. Remove and place in bowl of cold water to stop cooking. Drain and spread on baking sheet to dry. Set aside.
2. If using leftover brown or white rice, transfer to a medium bowl and break rice into individual grains before proceeding.
3. Turn the exhaust fan onto high. Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in a wok or heavy, flat-bottomed saute pan over high heat until smoking. Add half of rice and cook, stirring and tossing, until rice is pale brown and toasted and has a lightly chewy texture, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl. Repeat with another 1 tablespoon oil and remaining rice.
4. Return rice to wok and press it up the sides, leaving a space in the middle. Add 1 tablespoon oil to the space. Add onion, carrot, scallions, and garlic and cook, stirring gently, until lightly softened and fragrant, about 1 minute. Toss with rice to combine.
5. Add soy sauce and sesame oil and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and white pepper.
6. Push rice to side of wok and add remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Break eggs into oil and season with a little salt. Use a spatula to scramble eggs, breaking it up into small bits. Toss egg and rice together.
7. Add bok choy and continue to toss and stir until every grain of rice is separate. Serve immediately.

<https://www.serious eats.com/easy-vegetable-fried-rice-recipe>

Barefeet in the Kitchen

Chicken and Bok Choy Stir-Fry

Mary Younkin, of Barefeet in the Kitchen, writes: "Saucy bites of chicken are tossed with crisp-tender bok choy and a diced jalapeno." Serve over brown rice or roasted sweet potato.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs or breasts diced into ½-inch pieces
1 tablespoon cornstarch
6 cups thinly sliced bok choy, about 1 head
1-2 jalapenos seeded and minced, about 2-4 tablespoons
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh ginger finely minced or sliced into very thin matchsticks
2 large garlic cloves minced
For the sauce
¼ cup soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
2 teaspoons brown sugar

Preparation

1. In a small bowl, combine the soy sauce, vinegar and brown sugar. Set aside. In a medium bowl, combine the chicken with the garlic, ginger, and cornstarch. Stir or toss to coat.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the oil and add the chicken mixture. Toss to coat and spread the pieces across the bottom of the skillet. Sear the pieces and turn as needed. Cook, stirring occasionally until lightly browned and barely cooked through, about 6-7 minutes.
3. Add the bok choy and jalapeno and continue cooking, tossing with tongs or stirring constantly for about a minute, just until the bok choy is wilted. Add the soy sauce mixture and toss well to coat.
4. Cook for about 2 minutes, just until the sauce thickens.

<https://barefeetinthekitchen.com/chicken-and-bok-choy-stir-fry>

Pomptonian and Zone 7

Roasted Baby Bok Choy with Garlic Soy Sauce

In this adaptation from Dash of Jazz, Jazzmine recommends garnishing with either sesame seeds, or sliced almonds. For maximum flavor, toast before sprinkling atop the bok choy.

Serves 6

Ingredients

6 heads baby bok choy, trimmed and halved lengthwise

2½ ounces olive oil

1½ ounces soy sauce

6 cloves garlic, finely minced

1½ teaspoons ground ginger

Crushed red pepper flakes, if desired

Toasted sesame seeds, or toasted sliced almonds, if desired

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Place prepared bok choy in large bowl. In small bowl, whisk together olive oil, soy sauce, garlic, ginger, and crushed red pepper flakes, if using. Pour over bok choy, gently tossing to evenly distribute sauce.
3. Lay halved bok choy segments on parchment-lined baking sheet, leaving at least one inch of space between each for proper roasting.
4. Roast for 20 minutes or until tender-crisp. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds or toasted sliced almonds, if desired.

<https://www.dashofjazz.com/roasted-baby-bok-choy/>

Sara Dickerman and Marissa Lippert
Stir-Fried Bok Choy With Garlic

This adaptation of a 2013 Bon Appetit recipe takes less than 10 minutes to make. The quartered stalks are steamed, turning them silky. If desired, sub in scallions and half a red onion, grated fresh ginger, and miso or oyster sauce.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 pound baby bok choy, rinsed and quartered lengthwise with cores intact
- 1 tablespoon reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons water

Preparation

1. Heat oil in a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Add garlic and shallot, chopped, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
3. Add baby bok choy, rinsed and quartered lengthwise with core intact, soy sauce, and water; cover immediately.
4. Cook bok choy 1 minute. Uncover and toss, then return cover and cook until bok choy is tender at the core, about 3 minutes longer.

<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/garlicky-bok-choy>



Chef Marcus Samuelsson, Merkato 55

North African Sautéed Collards and Bok Choy

Beth Moncel of Budget Byte\$ writes: "Lace whole wheat pasta and kale with garlic, Parmesan, and a little butter, they take on a whole new personality. Add a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes if desired."

4 servings

Ingredients

6 slices bacon
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
4 garlic cloves, halved
½ cup coconut milk
¼ cup soy sauce
1 tablespoon grainy mustard
4 cups thinly sliced collard greens
4 cups very thinly sliced bok choy

Preparation

1. Cook the bacon in a large skillet until crisp, or on a sheet pan at 425 degrees F for about 10 minutes, or until crisp.
2. Drain on paper towels, then crumble into small pieces.
3. Combine the oil and butter in a small saucepan, add the garlic and bring to a simmer over low heat.
4. Reduce the heat and cook for 10 minutes, or until the garlic is golden brown, taking care not to let it burn.
5. Remove the garlic with a slotted spoon and set aside; reserve the oil.
6. In another small saucepan, bring the coconut milk and soy sauce to a boil.
7. Remove from the heat, and stir in the mustard and bacon.
8. Heat 2 tablespoons of the reserved garlic oil in a large skillet over high heat.
9. Add the collard greens and bok choy; cook, stirring frequently, until the greens start to wilt.
10. Stir in the coconut-milk mixture, and cook until the greens are tender and the sauce has thickened.
11. Add reserved garlic.

<http://nymag.com/listings/recipe/sauteed-collard-greens/>



All Recipes

Grilled Bok Choy

A quick and easy side for backyard cookouts.

4 Servings

Ingredients

- 1 two-pound head of bok choy
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ⅓ teaspoon garlic powder
- ⅓ teaspoon paprika
- ⅓ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Preparation

1. Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat, and lightly oil the grate.
2. In a bowl, mix butter, garlic powder, paprika, and 1/8 teaspoon of black pepper.
3. Slice the bottom off the head of bok choy, and remove and clean the stalks.
4. Sprinkle seasoned salt and 1 teaspoon of black pepper over both sides of the stalks.
5. Lay the bok choy stalks on the preheated grill.
6. Brush with seasoned butter mixture, cover the grill, and cook until the bok choy stalks show grill marks and the leaves are crisp at the edges, 3 to 4 minutes.
7. Turn the bok choy, brush with butter mixture, cover, and grill the other sides.
8. Brush with any remaining butter mixture, and remove to a platter to serve.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/214642/grilled-bok-choy/>



Anusha Praveen, Tomato Blues

Bok Choy Kootu

A vegan main dish with a South Indian fl air. Serve over hot rice, or with roti.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 bok choy, chopped finely
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- ½ cup moong dal
- 3 tablespoons neutral oil
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 2 sprigs curry leaves
- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 2 teaspoons urad dal

For the Spice Paste:

- 4 tablespoons grated coconut (unsweetened)
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 7-8 green chilies

Preparation

1. Dry roast moong dal in a pan on medium fl ame until aromatic.
2. Once done, combine bok choy, turmeric powder, salt and moong dal with 1 cup of water and simmer until dal turns creamy.
3. Remove from heat and mash the mixture.
4. Place grated coconut, cumin seeds and green chilies in a blender and blend to a smooth paste using two tablespoons water.
5. In the same pan used for roasting the dal, heat the oil.
6. Add mustard seeds to the hot oil; cook over medium heat until they begin to pop., Add curry leaves and urad dal.
7. Once dal turns golden brown, add the onions and saute till translucent.
8. Stir in tomatoes. Cook until they become saucy.
9. Add the dal mixture and the ground paste and mix well.
10. Let this simmer on medium heat for about fi ve minutes.
11. Garnish with curry leaves; serve hot.

<https://www.tomatoblues.com/bok-choy-kootu-recipe/>

