

WORDS THAT DESCRIBE **BOK CHOY**

FLAVOR • COLOR • TEXTURE

minerally

mild

firm

grassy

fleshy

crunchy

delicate

bitter

tender

spicy

juicy

nutty

sweet



Looking Back

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.



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What's in a Name?

Brassica Rapa, subsp. chinensis, aka...

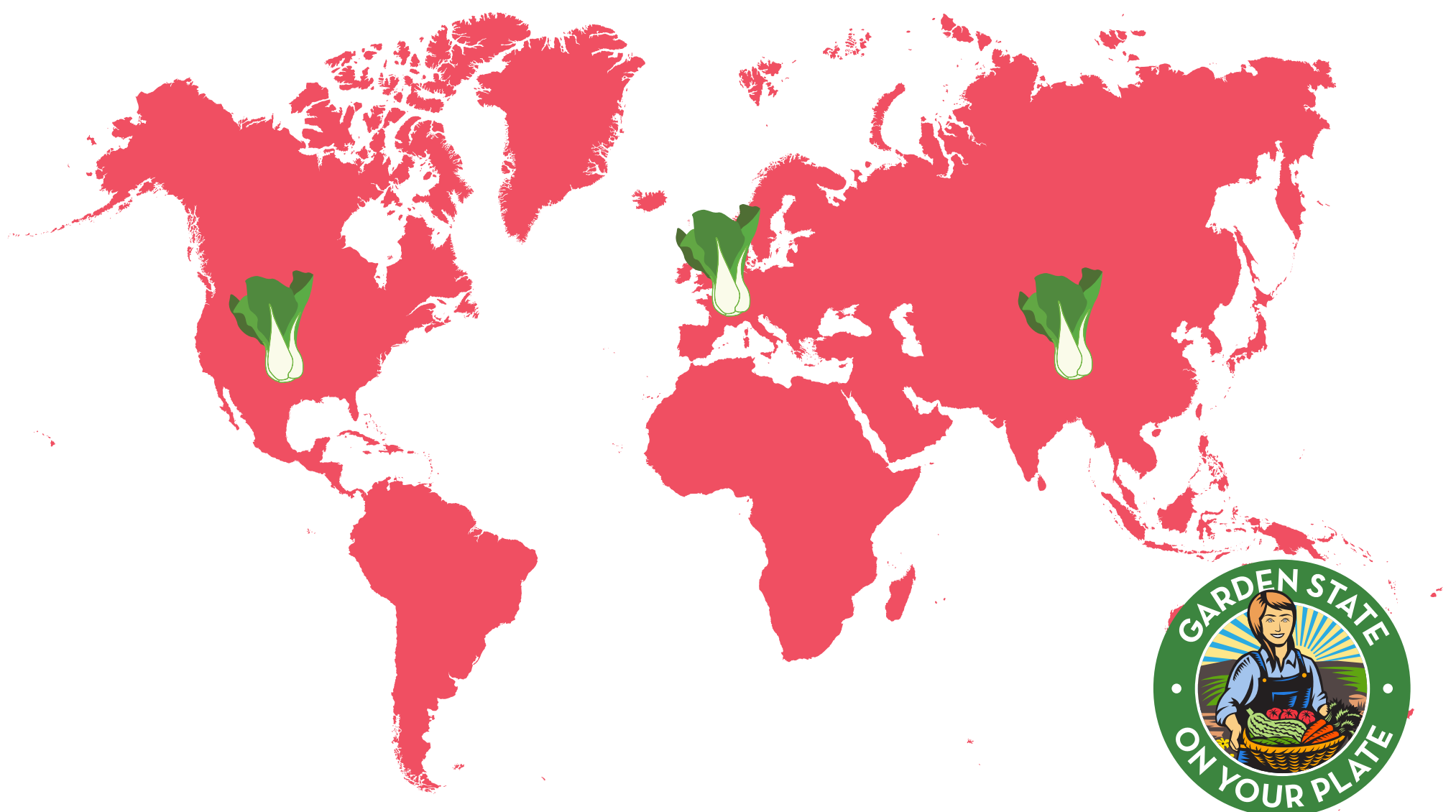
Bok choy is called Chinese cabbage, pak-choi, or pak choy. In the UK, South Africa, and in the Caribbean, the term pak choi is used. Other words for bok choy include Chinese chard, Chinese mustard, celery mustard, and spoon cabbage. In Australia, buk choy is white bok choy and pak choy is green bok choy.



Maps, Migration, & Culture

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.



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The Spoken Word
Google Translates

Words for Bok Choy

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

Latin: brassica rapa, subsp. chinensis

Arabic: يوشيت كو

Cantonese: 白菜

French: pak-choï

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: یوچ کوب

Spanish: bok choy

Swahili: bok choy

Ukrainian: бок-чой



Heart & Soul

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."



A Closer Look

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.



Ripe for the Picking

Season's Best

Bok choy is a cool-weather crop, 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.



Soil & Sun & Water

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.

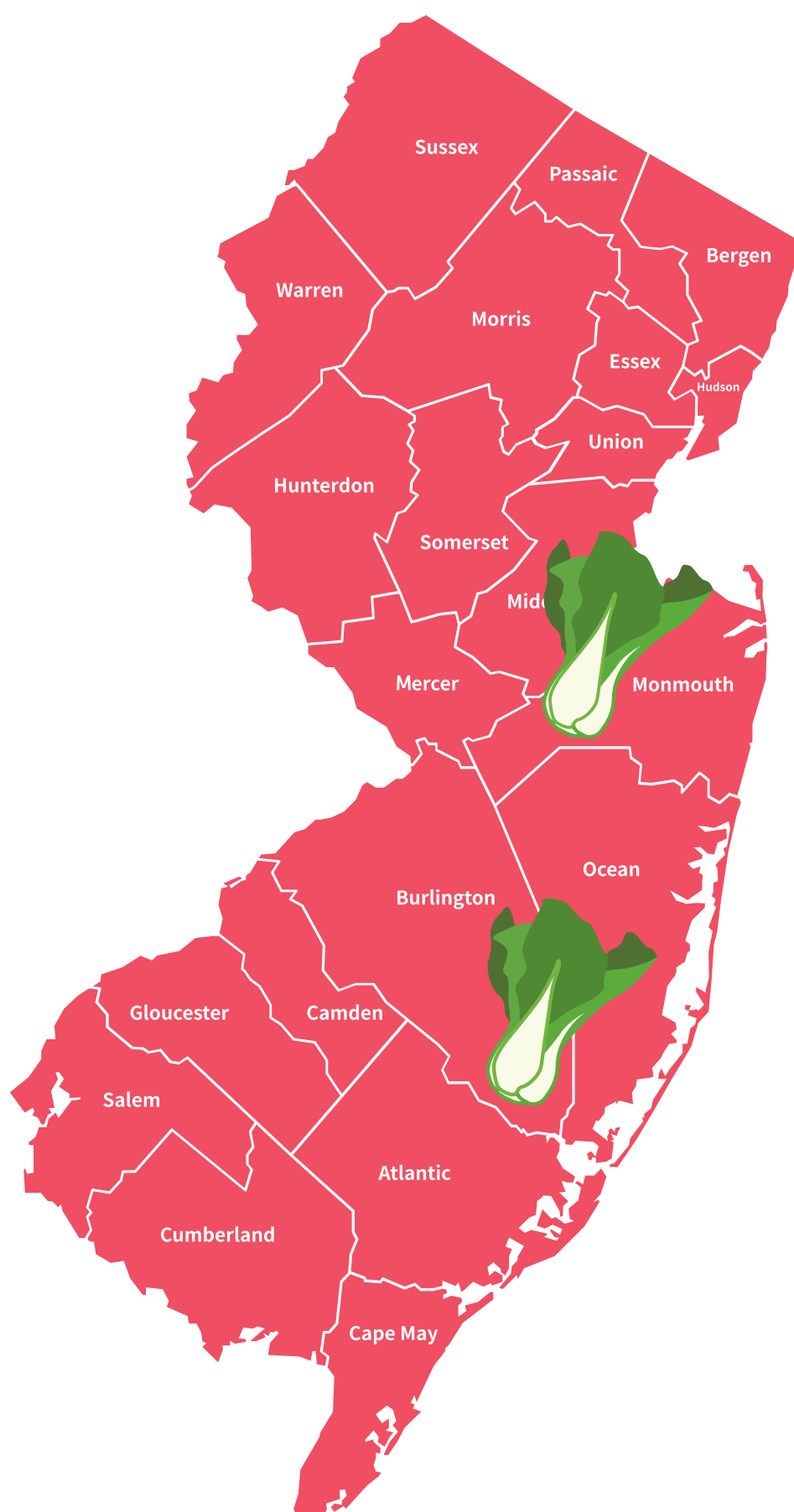
Companion/guild plantings: Beets, carrots, cilantro, dill, garlic, lettuce, nasturtiums, spinach, and radishes.



By The Numbers

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.



Bok Choy &...

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.

FLAVORINGS THAT GO WELL WITH BOK CHOY

almonds • butter • carrots • cashews • celery • chicken
chile peppers • cilantro • coconut milk • coriander • fennel
fish • garlic • ginger • hot sauce • lemon • mirin • mushrooms
noodles • peanuts • rice • rosemary • salmon • scallions
sesame oil • shallots • snow peas • soy sauce • tamari
tarragon • tofu • rice vinegar • water chestnuts • zucchini



In the Kitchen

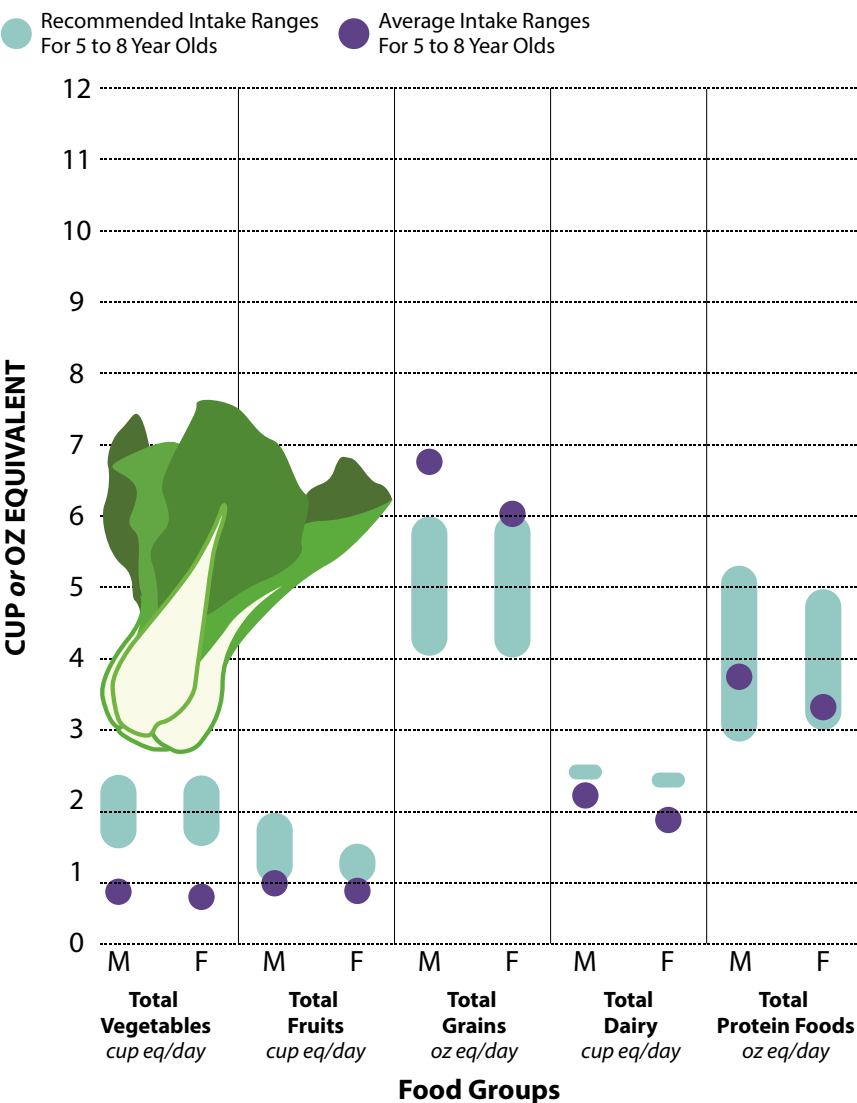
Bok choy typically is prepared by stir-frying, roasting, or braising, but also can be eaten raw. Wash the vegetable thoroughly to eliminate any dirt or sand, as well as pesticide residues. Cook and serve baby bok choy whole; with larger bulbs, cut crosswise into ribbons. Bok choy cooks in 2 to 3 minutes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



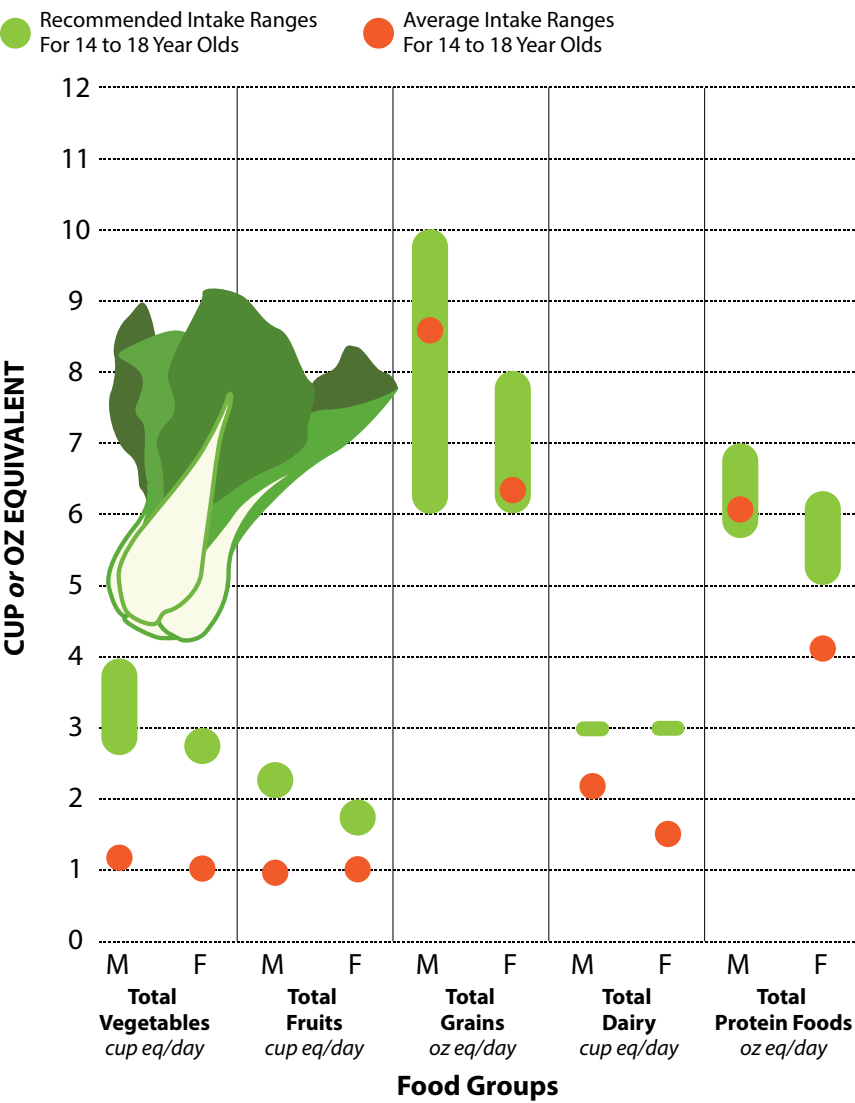
Nutrition for Body & Mind

Fuel for Learning
& Powerful Play

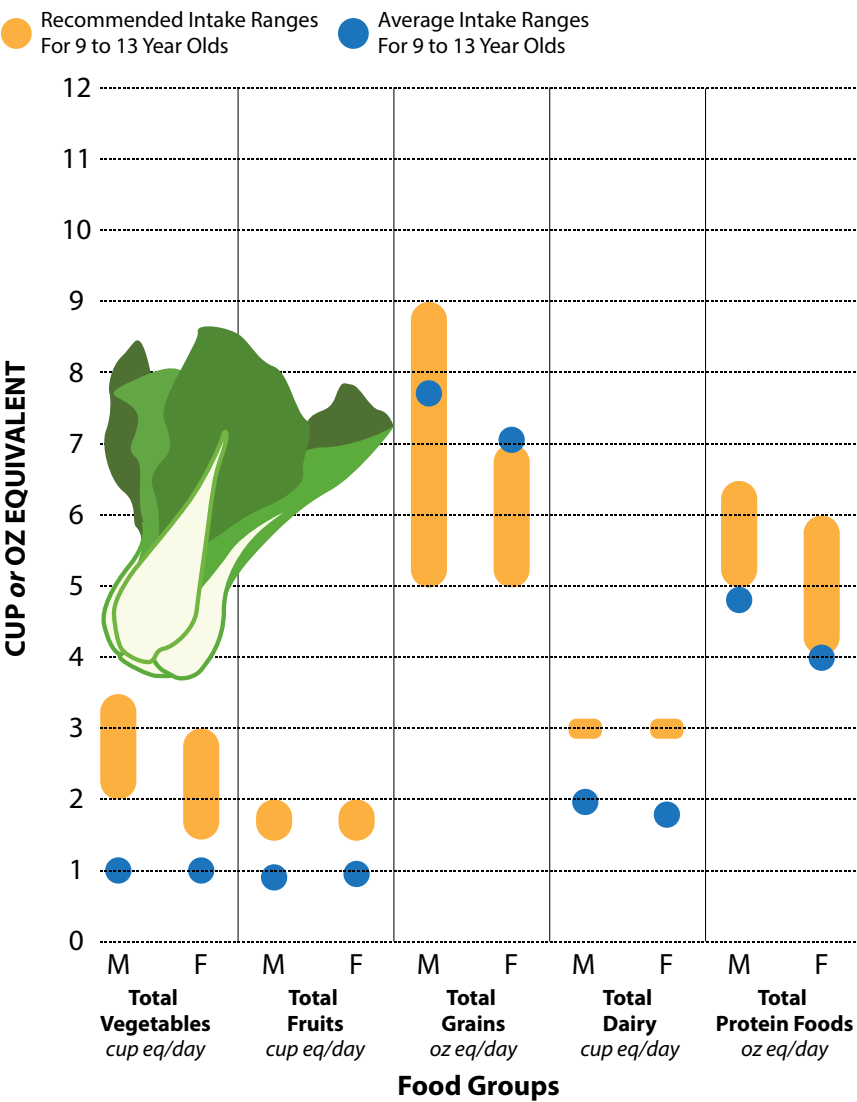
Current Intakes: Ages 5 Through 8



Current Intakes: Ages 14 Through 18



Current Intakes: Ages 9 Through 13



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



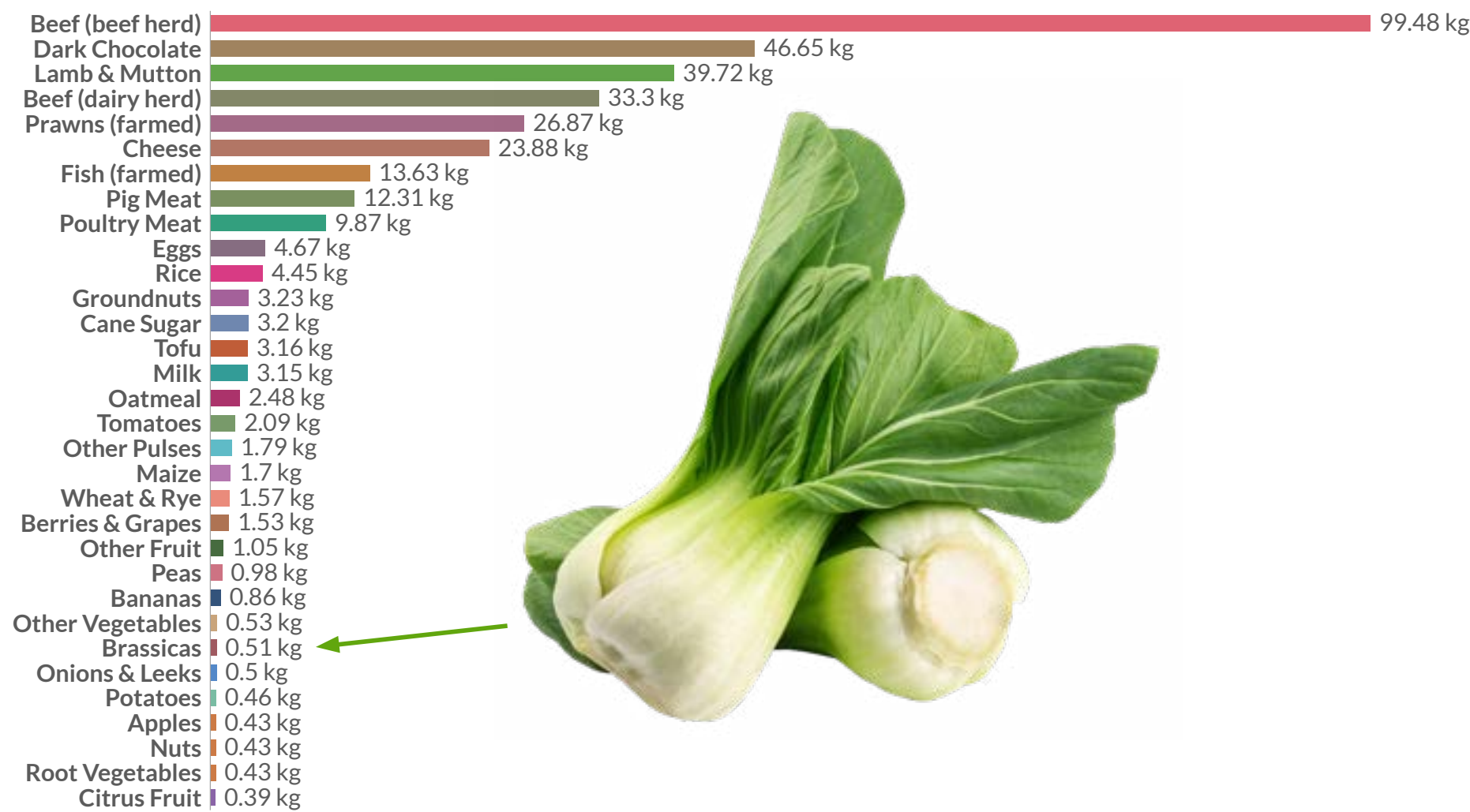
CLIMATE IMPACT OF BOK CHOY

ONLY THOSE GROWN LOCALLY AND SEASONALLY

Greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of food product

Our World
in Data

Greenhouse gas emissions¹ are measured in kilograms of carbon dioxide-equivalents². This means non-CO₂ gases are weighted by the amount of warming they cause over a 100-year timescale.



Data source: Poore and Nemecek (2018)

OurWorldinData.org/environmental-impacts-of-food | CC BY

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.

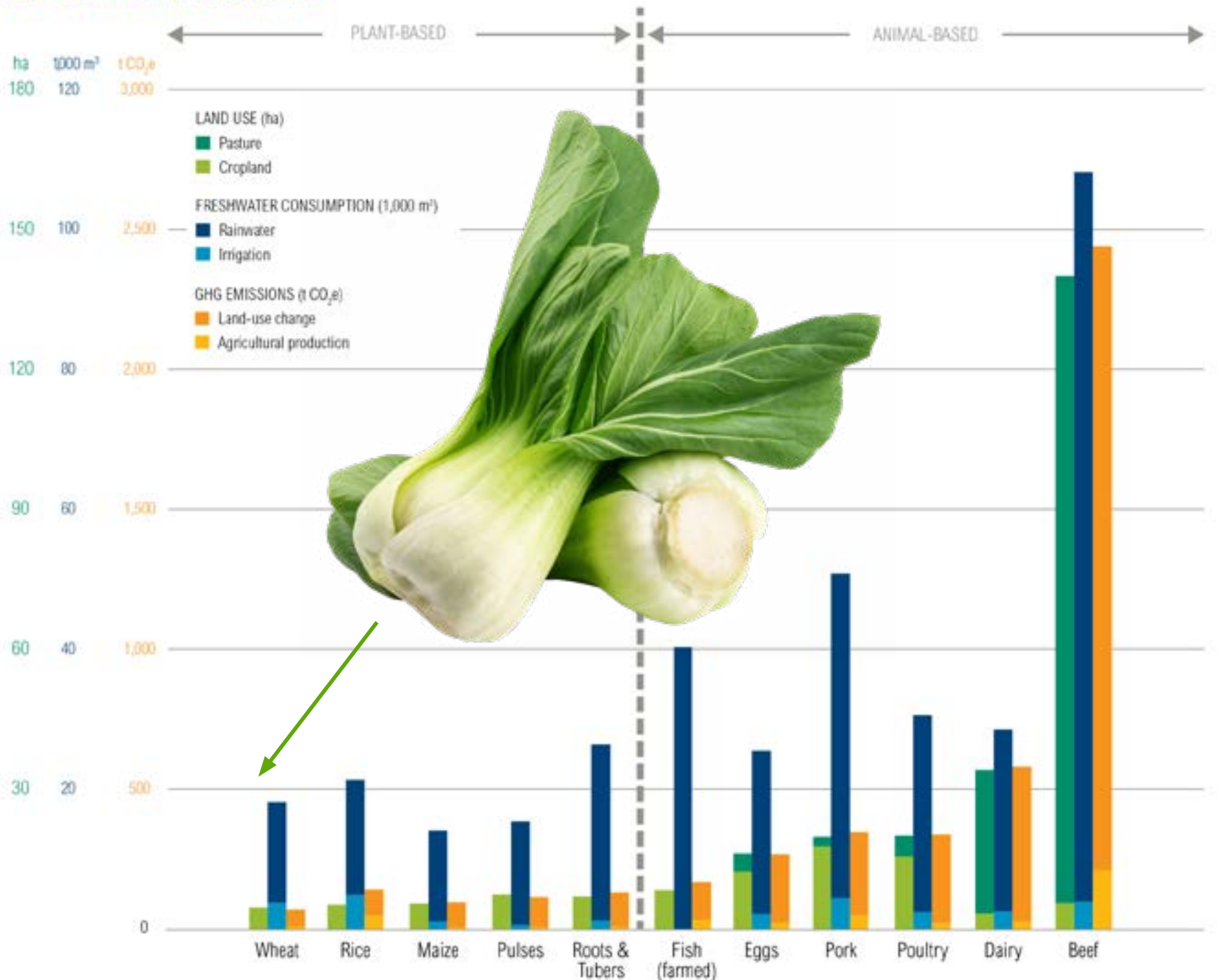


RESOURCE INTENSITY OF **BOK CHOY**

ONLY THOSE GROWN LOCALLY AND SEASONALLY

Animal-Based Foods Are More Resource-Intensive than Plant-Based Foods

PER TON PROTEIN CONSUMED



wri.org/shiftingdiets

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

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.



Garden State on Your Plate

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.

This seasoning mix can be used to bathe vegetables before roasting, as a seasoning for braising or simmering, and for dressing salads of fresh greens.

Use a $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ ratio, acid to oil.

Sesame - Soy Vinaigrette

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup rice wine vinegar

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup olive oil

Dash of sesame oil

1 garlic clove, crushed

Soy sauce, and/or salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper

Place ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid.

Shake to combine.

Store in refrigerator.



Credits

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bok_choy

Garden State on Your Plate is a K12 program that uses local produce, school cafeterias, campus lands, and student demographics to illustrate and amplify curriculum. The program, designed to elevate the everyday quality of school foods and to increase participation in the National School Lunch Program, was created in 2010 by the Princeton School Gardens Cooperative in partnership with Princeton Public Schools, and with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



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