

BOK CHOI

SEASON: Mid-June through September.

GROWING: Bok choy are fast-growers that like cooler weather.

They first appear in early summer as little baby heads you can cook whole, growing into large heads midsummer. Many farms plant another crop late summer for fall harvest until frost.

WHAT TO EXPECT: Dark green, flat leaves flare out from crisp white stems, which grow in a "head." Refreshing, sometimes slightly peppery flavor in stem, earthy greens. AKA pak choy.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS: Very high in vitamins A and C, and even a little calcium.

STORAGE: Keeps a week in the fridge in an unsealed plastic bag.

WHY BUY IT LOCALLY? Fresh bok choy has a sweetness that fades fast - catch it while you can! And like many leafy greens, bok choy gets bruised easily in transit. If you buy locally, you lose less to damage, plus the moisture, vitamins, & sweetness haven't had time to leach out.



Cooking with Bok Choi

PREPARATION:

- * Baby ones (3-4"): Fill a big bowl of pot with cool water, and submerge baby choi. Slosh around gently for a minute or two, making sure water gets down into the stem core to rinse out dirt between stalks.
- * Big ones: Snap as many stems as you need off the head, and wash well in cool water to remove that rich RI soil. Wrap in towel to dry.

BASIC COOKING

- * Raw? If it's young, tender, and fresh, it makes a wonderfully refreshing addition to a dip platter, especially because the bottom of the stem makes a handy scoop. Baby leaves can go into salads.
- * Stir-fried: Cut stalks into $\frac{1}{2}$ " long pieces, and cut greens in strips. Heat 1 T vegetable oil in a skillet, and add stems. Stir constantly for about 5 minutes, until somewhat translucent but still crisp. Add greens, and stir another couple minutes, just until they wilt.
- * Baby ones: Bring a pot of water to the boil, and drop baby choi in whole. Boil about 5 minutes, then drain well. Then quickly stir-fry with seasonings of your choice, just enough to coat with oil and flavors.

SERVING IDEAS

- * Tinker with stir fry. When you add greens, also add: minced garlic or ginger; sesame oil; hot pepper; diced ham; soy beans; peanuts; cashews....

AN ACTUAL RECIPE - Stir Fried bok choi with mushrooms

1 large bok choi, prepped for stir-fry	2 t. soy sauce
10 oz mushrooms (try shiitake or portabella)	$\frac{1}{2}$ t molasses or honey
2 T vegetable oil	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup water or broth
1 T minced garlic and/or ginger	2 t. cornstarch

- * Clean mushrooms, slice thinly. Mix soy sauce, sweetener, water, & corn starch, & set aside. Heat 1 T oil in a big skillet or wok, and cook bok choi as for stir fry (above). Scoop out onto a plate, and add rest of oil to pan. When hot, add mushrooms, garlic, & ginger, & stir constantly until mushrooms soften, from dry to juicy. Dump bok choi back in, give sauce a stir, and quickly stir it into the veggies. It will thicken as it gets hot, glazing the vegetables. You could also add cubed tofu at the end.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday - Every Day is an RI Market Day!