

The Humble *brassica*

Cabbage is one of today's most underrated vegetables. This humble *brassica* was a mainstay of diets all over the world for thousands of years. In our modern times, when we have an abundance of other fruits and vegetables at our disposal, this cruciferous vegetable tends to fall by the wayside. Nevertheless, do not underestimate the cabbage, my friends. It is nutritious, lasts forever in the fridge, is one of the most frugal ways to make a meal, and can be incredibly delicious.

Cabbage is rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, fiber, and even some anti-carcinogenic properties which may reduce some cancers, especially those in the colorectal group. And at only 22 calories per cup, you can pretty much eat all you want!

The most common form of cabbage in the U.S. comes in compact heads of waxy, tightly wrapped leaves ranging in color from almost white to green to red, and is available year-round. When shopping for cabbage, choose a head that is heavy for its size with crisp, firmly packed leaves. Store wrapped in plastic in the refrigerator.

Cooked cabbage is often criticized for a pungent, unpleasant odor. This occurs when cabbage is overcooked and hydrogen sulfide gas is produced – so don't overcook!

Cabbage works well with: apples, bacon, beets, butter, caraway seeds, carrots, celery seeds, chervil, chives, cream, garlic, ham, horseradish, leeks, lemon, lime, mustard, nutmeg, olive oil, onions, parsley, pepper, potatoes, sausages, spinach and vinegar.

There are a myriad of ways to serve this culinary delight; pickled, steamed, stewed, sautéed, braised, boiled, stir fried, raw, and even fermented (think sauerkraut).

Freezer Coleslaw

2 pounds cabbage (about one medium head), shredded

1 small red pepper, minced

2 stalks celery, minced

1 small carrot, shredded

Mix all together in a large bowl with 1 tsp salt. Let stand one hour.

Meanwhile, prepare the brine.

Brine:

1 cup white vinegar

2 cups white sugar

1/2 cup water

1 tsp mustard seed

1 tsp celery seed

Bring all of the brine ingredients to a boil; cool to lukewarm. Pour over the slaw and mix well. Put in small plastic containers and freeze. Thaw before serving.



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