

BOK CHOI/PAK CHOI



BOK CHOI/PAK CHOI is a member of the cabbage family. This delicate green has several names and “bok choi” or “pak choi” may be used interchangeably. It is an Eastern vegetable traditionally used in Chinese and Korean dishes, thus it is sometimes called “Chinese Chard”. Bok choi/pak choi is available in the Northeast during the cool spring, early summer and autumn months.

STORAGE

- ◆ This delicate green should be **eaten as soon as possible**, but will keep up to one week if washed and wrapped in a damp paper or cloth towel and stored in a refrigerator drawer.
- ◆ The towel should be changed every other day.
- ◆ Bok choi/pak choi can also be loosely packed in a Tupperware container and kept in the refrigerator.
- ◆ For **longer term storage**, you can freeze fresh bok choi/pak choi greens by steam blanching them for 3 minutes, cooling quickly and packing in a hard plastic container, or freezer safe zip-lock bags leaving space in the top.
- ◆ The white portion of large-sized bok choi/pak choi **does not** freeze well. Its water rich cells break down and become mushy.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Wash bok choi/pak choi well before using. Rinse before and after cutting it.
- ◆ Both the white stem and green leaf are edible but you should cut the root off at the base of the leaves.
- ◆ Bok choi/pak choi is wonderful **raw or cooked**.
- ◆ When cooking the whole vegetable, the white stems take longer. So add the stems to your recipe first and cook until they start to look clear. Add the green leaf parts and cook until they have wilted.
- ◆ **Stir-frying and steaming** are two common ways to prepare this leafy vegetable. Bok choi/pak choi is great stir-fried with garlic and onion or with carrots, broccoli and other greens.

Try tossing steamed bok choi/pak choi with your favorite dressing!

Nutritional Information

The dark green leaves of this vegetable are rich in many vitamins and minerals such as vitamins A, C and folate. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. A healthy diet with enough folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with certain birth defects of the brain or spinal chord.

Bok Choi/ Pak Choi Recipes

Stir Fry

- 1-2 Tablespoons oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger root
- 1-2 bunches bok choy/pak choy, leaves and stems cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1-2 Tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- Rice (as much as you want!)



In a medium saute pan, heat oil. Add the onions and ginger. When onion is soft, add bok choy stems and stir-fry until they start to look clear. Add the leaves and stir-fry briefly (1 minute). Add soy sauce and honey stir until greens are coated. Cook until 1 or 2 minutes more. Serve immediately over rice.

Reprinted with permission from Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern from [FoodBook for a Sustainable Harvest](#), by Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern, copyright 1994 by Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern.

Steamed Greens with Sesame-Ginger Sauce

- 1 1/2 pounds greens (bok/pak choy, tat soi, mizuna, spinach), washed, drained, cut into small pieces
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 Tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed, or chopped
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1/2 small, hot pepper, finely minced
- 1/4 cup roasted sesame seeds
- Salt and pepper to taste



In large bowl combine cold water and ice, set aside. In large saute pan, steam greens in water until they wilt. Using tongs or slotted spoon immediately remove greens and plunge into cold water to stop the cooking process. Drain well. In a large bowl, combine soy sauce, oil, ginger, honey, garlic, vinegar, and hot pepper. Add greens and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste and refrigerate until well chilled, at least one hour. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve.

Reprinted with permission from Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern, from [FoodBook for a Sustainable Harvest](#), by Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern, copyright 1994 by Elizabeth Henderson and David Stern.

Bok Choi and Vermicelli in Broth (Serves 4)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 8 ounces dried rice vermicelli | 5 green onions, thinly sliced |
| 4 large fresh or dried shiitake mushrooms | 2 thin slices of peeled fresh ginger |
| 1 tablespoon sesame oil | Salt |
| 4 large cloves garlic, peeled and minced | 1 chicken breast, thinly sliced |
| 8 cups unsalted chicken or vegetable stock | 2 heads small bok choy, thinly sliced |
| | 1/2 cup fresh parsley leaves |



Soak the noodles and shiitakes (if dried) in two separate bowls of hot water until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain shiitakes, trim and discard stems, and julienne the caps. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add garlic and saute until golden. Remove from heat and set aside. Place the shiitakes, stock, crushed green onions, and ginger into same pot garlic was cooked in. Season with salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer. Bring a pot of water to a boil over high heat. Drain the vermicelli, add to the boiling water and cook for 5 seconds; remove with a sieve and divide between 4 large soup bowls. Add the chicken to the boiling water, cook for 10 seconds, remove with sieve, and divide between the bowls. Add the bok choy to the pot; blanch until just tender, 1-2 minutes. Remove with sieve, arrange on chicken and ladle about 2 cups of broth into each bowl. Garnish with sliced scallions, parsley and the garlic.

Recipe adapted from Capay Organic at <http://www.farmfresh2you.com/recipes>.