

ENDIVE, ESCAROLE, and RADICCHIO



ENDIVE, ESCAROLE and RADICCHIO

are members of the Chicorium family, which includes the blue flowering wild chicory plant often spotted along roadsides during summer months. Chicory was cultivated in Egypt 5000 years ago and is mentioned in the oldest complete herbal guide written by the Greek physician Dioscorides. Modern cultivated chicory varieties like endive, escarole and radicchio are prevalent in European, especially Italian, cuisine and are commonly eaten in salads or cooked as greens. Chicory root is also edible and can be used as a substitute for coffee. In the Northeast these vegetables are available in the summer months.

STORAGE

- ◆ Store chicories for **up to one week** unwashed and loosely packed in a plastic container in the refrigerator drawer.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Wash and dry the leaves of chicories before serving. If they seem especially sandy they can be soaked in cool water with a bit of salt added to draw dirt away from the leaves.
- ◆ Chicories have a **nutty and slightly bitter flavor** that adds depth to mixed green **salads**. Combine torn or chopped endive, escarole, or radicchio leaves with other, milder lettuces in salads or use as garnishes on **sandwiches**.
- ◆ Crunchy Belgian endive leaves can be served as part of a **vegetable platter**. They are strong enough to be dipped just like carrot sticks!
- ◆ For an elegant appetizer, spread soft herbed cheese like boursin on Belgian endive leaves and arrange on a platter. For extra special occasions, place a dollop of crème fraiche (or sour cream) topped with caviar and minced chives on Belgian endive leaves.
- ◆ **Endive, escarole and radicchio can also be cooked. Try grilling, sautéing, braising, or steaming.**

Nutritional Information

Like other leafy greens, chicories are high in fiber and vitamins A, K and folate. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin K is involved in blood clotting. 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.

Endive, Escarole and Radicchio Recipes

Warm Herbed Bean and Endive Salad (Serves 4)

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh or crushed dry rosemary
- 2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini or Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 bunch curly endive or escarole leaves, washed and dried
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup grated Romano cheese



In a large skillet, heat oil, garlic and rosemary for 5 minutes over low heat until garlic is fragrant. If garlic begins to color, turn off heat. Add beans, vinegar and pepper. Cook over low heat for 5 minutes, until beans are warm. Tear greens into bite-sized pieces; arrange on 4 plates. Spoon beans over greens. Garnish with red onions and cheese. Serve with warm whole-wheat bread as a main course.

Recipe adapted from Chicago Sun Times, <http://www.suntimes.com/output/recipe/beaend.html>.

Pasta with Escarole and Sun Dried Tomatoes (Serves 6-8)

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 green onions, sliced (white and green parts)
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped
- 1 head escarole, washed and torn into bite-size pieces
- 8 slices sun-dried tomatoes, rehydrated in hot water to cover, reserve liquid
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pound of pasta, your choice, cooked
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese



Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium heat and add the oil. Sauté onions and garlic until onions are soft. Add the escarole. Allow to steam in its own moisture until it has wilted, stir often cooking about 10 minutes. Slice the tomatoes into julienne strips. Add to the skillet with the reserved liquid. Toss. Cook another 3 minutes. Add the pasta and toss. Then add the cheese and toss again. Serve immediately.

Recipe adapted from Jack Scannella's recipe found on <http://www.50plusfriends.com/cookbook/>

Sauteed Fennel, Radicchio and Pine Nuts (serves 2)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- 1 large garlic clove -- sliced
- 1/2 fennel bulb trimmed and cut lengthwise into 1/4 inch slices
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 head radicchio -- cut in 1" pieces



Heat oil over moderate heat in a skillet. Saute pine nuts, stirring, until golden. With a slotted spoon transfer pine nuts to paper towels to drain. In same skillet cook garlic over moderate heat, stirring until golden and with slotted spoon. Add fennel to skillet and cook, stirring until golden, about 2 minutes. Add lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste and cook until fennel is crisp-tender. Stir in radicchio and saute mixture over moderately high heat, tossing with two wooden spoons, just until radicchio is wilted and tender. Add pine nuts and season with salt and pepper.

Recipe adapted from <http://www.recipesource.com>