

Kohlrabi

Kohlrabi is a crispy, sweet tasting, delicate flavored member of the Brassica family of vegetables, grown for its swollen, turnip-shaped portion of the stem which rests on the ground. It's a distinctive looking vegetable, with a ball-like shape, pale green and purple-tinged, marked by points where the leaf-stems attached. The flesh of the bulb is juicy and crisp with a beguiling sweetness similar to that of an apple, with a hint of piquancy associated with radishes and baby turnips.

Wash kohlrabi just before using. Tender, young kohlrabi is **delicious eaten raw**. The crisp flesh can be served raw in salads, as a relish, or as a crunchy accompaniment to dips. Peel the outer skin with a paring knife. Slice, dice, or grate, and add to salads. Use on raw vegetable platters or serve with a creamy dip. **Substitute in recipes calling for radishes**. Grated kohlrabi can be added to slaw, but lightly salt it first and let stand for several minutes. Squeeze to remove any excess water before adding dressing. Kohlrabi can also be steamed or boiled. For this preparation don't peel until after they are cooked. **Steam or boil** until bulbs are tender, peel skin, and season with butter, salt, and pepper, a cheese sauce, or just enjoy plain.

Small kohlrabi bulbs which are young and tender generally do not require peeling. Medium to larger sizes should be peeled to remove the protective outer skin. The bulb can be sliced, cut into quarters, cubes or julienne strips and **steamed until crisp-tender**. Or **sauté kohlrabi in butter or olive oil, or boil and mash like potatoes**. The whole peeled kohlrabi can be added to braised dishes and stews. The kohlrabi has **delicious leaves** that are tender and excellent in salads or stir-fried. They can be enjoyed as a cooked green. Wash the leaves and remove the ribs. Blanch in boiling water until just wilted, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and squeeze excess water from leaves. Chop leaves, then sauté in a little olive oil or butter. Season with salt and pepper. Add a splash of vinegar or squeeze of fresh lemon juice.

Nutrition Information:

With only 36 calories, one cup of raw kohlrabi has nearly 5 grams of fiber and is an excellent source of Vitamin C (140% RDA) and a good source of Potassium. Kohlrabi contains important phytochemicals such as indoles, sulforaphane and isothiocyanates. Indoles are believed to be potentially significant anti-cancer compounds and are found in other cruciferous vegetables, including broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. These plant compounds are not destroyed in cooking, and the bioactivity of indoles may actually be increased by cooking.

History:

Kohlrabi came to the United States from Europe. It's name literally means cabbage-turnip. Kohlrabi can be planted for both spring and fall harvest. It comes in white, actually green, and purple varieties.

Storage:

Store kohlrabi with leaves on to maintain freshness. However, they can be stored sans leaves if you are short on space. Either way, store kohlrabi in your refrigerator crisper. Since they are so bulky, it is usually easier to simply use them right away.

Preparation:

For recipes, trim off root and top, peel until fibrous layer is removed. You also can use leaves. Larger leaves may need to be boiled for a couple of minutes to remove any bitterness. Kohlrabi can be eaten fresh in sliced, julienned, and grated form, in vegetable platters, salads, and slaws. Alternatively, the roots and greens can be cooked for stews, soups, and gratins.

Recipes courtesy of Prairieland CSA in Watseka, Illinois**Kohlrabi Gratin**

Anna Barnes

4-6 kohlrabi with leaves
1 T butter or olive oil
1 clove garlic or 1/2 garlic scape thinly sliced
2 - 3 T sliced green or bulb onion
3 - 4 c stock
3 - 4 T flour
salt and pepper to taste
2 ounces sharp cheddar or other strong cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Remove greens from kohlrabi and set aside. Cut off roots and tops of kohlrabi and trim off fibrous outer layer. Slice into 1/4" slices or cube into 1/2" pieces. Wash greens. Remove stems using a knife to make v-cuts in the leaves. Stack several leaves together, roll like a cigar, and thinly slice into strips 1/8" to 1/4" wide. Repeat.

In a large pan heat 4 qts. water to a boil. Add leaves. Test for tenderness and bitterness. Cook until leaves are on the verge of losing their bright green color. Remove and drain. In a large saute pan, heat butter or oil. Saute garlic and onion for 2 min. Remove, set aside. Add 3 c stock to pan, bring to a low boil. Add kohlrabi bulb pieces. Cook until tender crisp. Remove from pan. Remove 1 c stock and into it stir flour. Add back to stock in saute pan. Salt and pepper to taste. Stir to prevent lumps. Add onion, kohlrabi, and kohlrabi leaves. Coat with sauce. Add 1/2 to 1 c more stock if mixture is too dry. Adjust seasoning if necessary. Transfer to a greased 2-3 quart dish. Top with grated cheese. Bake until cheese is brown, approx. 15 to 20 min.

Kohlrabi Stew

Tamra Stallings, PCSA volunteer at large, aka occasional programmer

1 T oil (olive is best)
1 large onion, slivered, or 1 c green onion sliced
2 large or 3 medium kohlrabi, peeled and cubed
3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch chunks
2 medium potato, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch chunks
1 c tomatoes, peeled and chopped (canned is fine)
4 c broth
1 bay leaf
1/2 t dried oregano
1 t salt

freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 T dijon mustard
1/2 T molasses

Saute onions in oil for several minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Serves 4.

Variation: Tamra Stallings suggests removing the broth, thickening it to a gravy with a little flour, and adding chunks of fried tofu. For fall or winter, use the stew as a filling for a pot pie.

Kohlrabi with Parmesan

2 large or 3 medium kohlrabi, stalks and leaves removed
2 T unsalted butter or olive oil, or combination
1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper to taste
1 T minced parsley

Peel kohlrabi to remove fibrous outer layer. Shred with grater or foodprocessor. Heat a medium skillet to medium heat. Add butter and/or oil. When fat is hot, add kohlrabi. Cook, stirring frequently, until vegetable is tender, about 8 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Stir. Toss with cheese. Cook until cheese melts, about 1 minute. Garnish with parsley. Serve hot. Serves 4.