



An equal opportunity/access/affirmative action/
Pro-disabled and veteran employer
Funder in part by the USDA

Contact: Denise Sullivan
Nutrition & Health Education Specialist
MU Extension-Jackson County
816-482-5850
sullivand@missouri.edu

Date April 9, 2021

Plants on Your Plate

Cabbage

This month's feature vegetable is another member of the Cruciferae family that was even made famous having a doll named after it. I'm referring to cabbage, which is a 'cousin' to other cruciferous vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and kale. This family of vegetables gets its name from the Latin word meaning 'cross' because the flowers are cross shaped.

Cabbage is one of the oldest vegetables known, dating back over 4000 years where it grew wild as a leafy green on the shores of southern Europe, England, and Denmark. The more familiar headed cabbage appeared in England in the 14th century. Worldwide, China is the top producer of cabbage, accounting for 47% of the total production. In the United States, about 75% of the cabbage grown comes from five states: California, Wisconsin, New York, Florida, and Texas. Russia consumes the most cabbage in the world, where they consume more than seven times the vegetable that the average North American.

Cabbage can vary in color from green to white to red or purple. The most common form of green and red cabbages are those with tight heads and smooth leaves. Even red or purple cabbages will get lighter in color towards the center of the head, as the inner leaves are protected from the sunlight. These firm-headed varieties are mostly used for cabbage slaw. The sturdy leaves are also the perfect selection for stuffed cabbage rolls. Savoy cabbage has a looser head and tender, curly leaves, often thought to be a 'fancier' style that blends well with lettuce in a

salad. Savoy has a milder flavor than standard green or purple cabbage. Napa cabbage, also called Chinese cabbage is more oblong shaped with thick stems and frilly leaves and has a slightly sweeter flavor than standard cabbage. Napa is also a good choice for mixing with lettuce or used in filling for dumplings. Bok Choy cabbage has crisp white stems with a tender green leaf that is often used in stir-fry or lightly steamed vegetable combinations. When selecting cabbages, look heads that feel heavy for their size, with leaves that are crisp and stem ends that are dry.

Cabbage is a rich source of vitamin C, which aids in the body's absorption of iron and in protecting and healing of skin injuries. The antioxidant power of Vitamin C can also reduce your risk of heart disease, along with potassium that helps to regulate blood pressure. The plant sterols in cabbage also reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol by blocking absorption of cholesterol in the digestive tract. Cabbage also provides fiber and probiotics, which is beneficial for digestion and gut health. Phytonutrients such as sulforaphane aid in reducing inflammation in the body. The deep colors of purple cabbage contain more than eight times the antioxidants of green cabbage. When selecting red or purple cabbage, keep in mind the color changes that can occur during preparation, particularly with acidic solutions, such as the vinegar in salad dressing, which may turn your salad pink over time.

Cabbage can be eaten cooked as a main or side dish, eaten raw in salads or fermented as sauerkraut or kim chi. As with many vegetables, a change of preparation method may also change the preferences of like or dislike. Personally, I like each of those methods, so selecting a favorite recipe was a challenge this time. Cabbage rolls are a favorite at our house but can be tedious to prepare. This 'unstuffed' version is a simpler, yet equally tasty version!

Unstuffed Cabbage Casserole

(makes 8 servings)

1 pound ground turkey
½ pound ground Italian sausage
1 medium onion, chopped
1 teaspoon minced garlic
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 small head cabbage, chopped
1 16 ounce can petite diced tomatoes

2 cups low sodium tomato-vegetable juice
1 cup water
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon brown sugar
½ cup instant brown rice

1. Brown meat in skillet, drain off any fat. Transfer meat to large stock pot.
2. Add onion and garlic to skillet and sauté until softened. Add to meat in pot.
3. Add remaining ingredients to pot EXCEPT rice.
4. Bring to boil and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Add rice and cook for 10 minutes or until rice is done.

Nutrition information: Calories: 251, Total Fat: 11g, Saturated Fat: 2.5g, Sodium: 432mg, Carbohydrates: 23g, Fiber: 4g, Protein: 18.5g

Recipe personal files, analyzed by verywellfit.com



****Denise Sullivan is a Nutrition and Health Education Specialist for MU Extension in the Urban West Region, serving Jackson and Platte Counties. For research-based nutrition and food safety information and programs, visit <https://extension.missouri.edu/counties/urban-west-region>**

MU Extension is a partnership of the University of Missouri campuses, Lincoln University, the people of Missouri through county extension councils, and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Visit our website at: <https://extension.missouri.edu/>

##