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Cabbage or Turnip?

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Cabbage or Turnip?

I had to puzzle over this vegetable for a while, having never grown it before. Admittedly, I don’t remember preparing it before either. Even the name remained elusive: was it called bilko cabbage or Napa cabbage? Were they the same thing? And why would they have these names if the veggie in question originated in China? Finally, I asked the question (and a few of our newsletter readers might relate), “what would I do with this giant, ridiculous thing if I got it in my CSA basket?”

So it was time to do some research. The name “bilko” is simply a variety of the Napa cabbage. The name “Napa” itself is totally inaccurate too. An ancient Chinese vegetable named after a small valley in California? Surely not. After looking it up, plenty of other names made much more sense to me. It’s name throughout much of China is da baica, which means appropriately, if not a little blandly, “big white vegetable.” In Korea, where it is the traditional cabbage used in the globally popular dish called kimchee, it is known as “baechu.”

But I think the generic name “Chinese cabbage” will suffice for me. This barrel-shaped vegetable, looking somewhat like a savoyed (crinkly in plant-speak) iceberg lettuce, descends from the same wild mustard species as turnips did. It is closer related to them than the cabbages that originated in Europe. Evidence of this plant has been found in clay pots dating back to 4000 BCE in the Shensi province of China. Now, I’m pretty sure you don’t have to wait that long to ferment a good pot of kimchee, but patience is a virtue I suppose. Just like it’s European counterpart used to make sauerkraut, Chinese cabbage is a natural for pickling in not only kimchee, but in Japanese tsukemono pickles as well. It shares an affinity for pork and vinegar too, but unlike regular cabbage, it’s leaves are thin and extra crispy. When you add in its mild, bright flavor, it’s easy to appreciate raw as a substitute for lettuce during the summer when the more typical green can be bitter.

What I’m really itching to try is cabbage wraps. If you steam the leaves just until flexible, it can be made into a neat little container for a filling of rice, shrimp or beans. And it’s fun to eat too! So even if you find that big, honking head of leaves daunting, remember that it’s just a vegetable, and a mild one at that. So have fun, try something new, or just treat it like our old friend the cabbage. You can’t go wrong with that.

Andrew Croft

Roasted Cabbage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total time: 40 mins</th>
<th>Serves: 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep time: 10 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook time: 30 mins</td>
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Ingredients
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 6 cups napa cabbage, roughly shredded
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Directions
1. Heat the oil in a skillet on low; add the garlic cloves and cook very gently for 15 minutes. Discard the garlic and toss the cabbage with the oil, salt and pepper.

2. Preheat your oven to 450°.
3. Place the cabbage on a baking sheet and bake for about 15 minutes or until the tops of the cabbage pieces are browned.
4. Serve hot.

recipe from foodnetwork.com
you can find more cabbage recipes at marthastewart and foodnetwork.com
On the Farm News

Earlier this season we featured our five on-farm interns on the Student Organic Farm blog. We wanted you to have the opportunity to get to know us a little more. In case you haven’t had the chance to visit our blog, we wanted to bring these introductions to the newsletter. To view the blog please go to http://ususof.blogspot.com/

Meet Eric

Eric Manrique
Position: On-Farm Intern

Hi my name is Eric and I am completing my second semester here at USU. I have always been a hard worker, as a non-traditional student I have been through many hard working experiences before making it this far. I know as a part of the team I will be challenged with hard work and this excites me. I am ecstatic for the chance to be apart of the farm this summer, continue along and expand the wonderful knowledge of this semester, work with and learn from the other students, and to put in effect how they “make it work.”

Life and community are very important to me and this farm I feel incorporates both perfectly and in their entirety. I have been apart of small communities in the past. Once I lived in a small town in rural Mexico where everyone knew everyone, worked hard together, and shared in the delights. I can see value in this and I hope we can feel that we have this here. We all want and will work for the sharing of the same things. I look forward to meeting you all and to share this beautiful life and indulge in the essentials of what really make it work.

What you might see in your next box

mustard greens
chard
beans
kale
dill

Eric Manrique on a horse in Mexico

We love the wildflower row; especially the poppies