

Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 19 Bok Choy

Enjoy This Nutritious Green and Yellow Vegetable Boiled or Fried

Bok choy has almost no acidity or peculiar taste, and is easy to prepare as it does not require pre-boiling. Although often used in Chinese cuisine, this vegetable can easily be incorporated into Japanese cuisine as well.

By Makiko Hei

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Nutritional Value of Bok Choy

Bok choy is a very nutritious vegetable. It is rich in β -carotene, vitamin C, potassium, iron, and calcium. (Refer to the table below). In particular, it contains twice as much calcium as spinach. Iron is a nutrient that isn't readily absorbed in the body, but when combined with animal protein such as eggs, meat, and fish, it can be efficiently ingested.

In addition, the absorption rate of β -carotene, a fat-soluble vitamin, is enhanced with the addition of oil. It is recommended to stir-fry bok choy in oil or combine it with fatty meats and eggs.

How to Recognize a Good Bunch of Bok Choy

- The leaves are dark green, with shorter stems and densely clustered leaves.
- The leaves should be thick and plump at the base.

How to Preserve Bok Choy

Refrigerated storage: Wrap in lightly wet paper towel and place in a storage bag, or wrap in newspaper. Store upright in the vegetable compartment. Use up within three or four days.

Freezer storage: Cut into bite-size pieces, place in freezer bags, remove air, seal, and freeze. If you want to retain the green color, cut, quickly boil it in salted water*, soak in ice water, squeeze out the water, and freeze. You don't need to thaw frozen bok choy to use it in stir-fries, soups, and other heated dishes. The estimated shelf life is 1 month.

*Boil in 1 liter of boiling water with 2 teaspoons of salt. It is best to blanch the stems for 30 seconds and the leaves for 15 seconds.

Cooking tips

- There may be soil clinging to the base of the stems, so soak bok choy in water for 15 minutes after cutting it and then rinse it off.
- The stems take longer to cook than the leaves, so start cooking the stems first and add the leaves later.

Nutrients found in bok choy and benefits

Nutrient	Effect
β -carotene	Strong antioxidant properties
Vitamin C	Essential for beautiful skin
Potassium	Effective for high blood pressure and swelling
Iron	Prevention of anaemia
Calcium	Builds bones and teeth

Stir-fried *Udon* Noodles with Bok Choy and Pork

The Savory Aroma of Soy Sauce Whets the Appetite

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Excluding time for soaking bok choy in water

[Ingredients] 2 servings

Frozen *udon* noodles for 2 servings

※It can be substituted with Chinese noodles.

200 g bok choy

80 g *shimeji* mushroom

150 g thinly sliced pork belly

2 pinches salt

Pepper to taste

1/2 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon sesame oil

4 g bonito shavings

Sweet pickled ginger or red pickled ginger to taste



[How to cook]

1. Cut off 2 mm from the base of the bok choy and cut the stalks in half lengthwise, then chop the stems into 6 to 8 equal pieces crosswise and the leaves into 3 to 4 cm pieces. Soak in water for 15 minutes, then rinse and drain in a colander. Cut off the base of the *shimeji* mushrooms and break them into pieces.
2. Cut pork into 4 cm pieces. Boil water in a frying pan, add the sliced pork, and turn off the heat immediately, then put it in a colander when the color changes.
3. Thaw frozen *udon* noodles (90% thawed is OK).
4. Put sesame oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat, add the boiled pork, bok choy stems, and *shimeji* mushrooms, and sauté. After about 2 minutes, when browned, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Move the ingredients to the edge of the pan and add the *udon* noodles to loosen and combine with the ingredients. Add soy sauce and bok choy leaves, mix, spread and brown them, and when the soy sauce smells burnt, toss all together. Taste and adjust with salt or soy sauce (not included in the above ingredient list) if necessary.
5. Place in a bowl, sprinkle with bonito shavings, and garnish with sweet pickled ginger.



Tips

- By boiling the pork in hot water, the finished product is tenderized, and both fat content and calorie content are reduced.
- If the dish is too bland, you can add vinegar for a hint of sourness or curry powder for a dash of spice to make it more satisfying.
- If the *udon* sticks to the pan while frying, add a little sesame oil.

Soy Milk Soup with Bok Choy and Egg

Soy Milk Based, No Need for Dashi Broth

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Excluding time for soaking bok choy in water

[Ingredients] 2 servings

1 stalk bok choy (100-120g)

2 eggs

400ml soy milk

2 teaspoons light soy sauce

※Dark soy sauce can be substituted. It is less salty than light soy sauce, so adjust the taste by adding salt.

1 teaspoon sesame oil



[How to cook]

1. Cut bok choy into stems and leaves, then cut each into 2 to 3cm pieces. Soak the bok choy in water for 15 minutes, rinse well, and drain in a colander. Beat the eggs.
2. Place soy milk in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the bok choy stems and cook, stirring the bottom of the pan with a spatula. When it comes to a boil, add light soy sauce, pour in the egg mixture, and add the bok choy leaves. Reduce heat to low and cook for 30 seconds, then turn off heat, cover and steam for 5 minutes. Taste and season with light soy sauce (not included in the above ingredient list) if necessary.
3. Serve in bowls and drizzle each with 1/2 teaspoon of sesame oil.



Tips

- Soy milk is a good plant protein, healthy, and rich in flavor, so you don't need dashi broth. It also makes a delicious soup with minimal seasoning.
- When heating soy milk, it tends to stick to the bottom of the pan, so use a nonstick pan or stir with a rubber spatula as it heats.

Profile

Makiko Hei

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto "Let's make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes."

HP: <https://vege3.jp/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/makichanshokudo/>

