Selecting, Storing, and Serving Ohio Cabbage

Cabbage was originally found growing wild on the seashore of Southern Europe, England, and Denmark. Some varieties of cabbage were known as far back as the early days of Greece. Other vegetables that have developed from the early strains of cabbage include Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, and kohlrabi.

Late-spring cabbage is available from May 25 through July, while July 1 through September 30 is the peak time for early-summer cabbage. Early-fall cabbage is available from October 1 through November 30.

Selection
- Look for well-trimmed heads, heavy for size and solid for the variety.
- Leaves should be crisp, and the stem end should be dry.
- Avoid decayed, burst, or broken heads. Yellowed, wilted leaves indicate age.

Types of cabbage include:

Green Cabbage—most common type; popular varieties include:
- Early—conical (pointed) head, not tightly packed, light green; December through May.
- Domestic—slightly flat head, firm, tightly formed; leaves are crisp but brittle, moderately green; May through Autumn.

Red Cabbage—pointed head, purple red.

Savoy Cabbage—flattened head, loosely formed, yellowish-green crimped leaves, good for coleslaw; October through December.

Chinese (michikli or celery) Cabbage—long tapering head, crinkly leaf ends, solid core.

Contact your local county Extension office for variety recommendations for Ohio.

Storage
- Cabbage stores well at 32 degrees F and 90 percent relative humidity if well-ventilated.
- Cabbage wilts rapidly in dry storage.
- Domestic and early cabbages do not keep well.

Yield
Due to variables including moisture content, size and variety, it is impossible to recommend specific quantities to buy. The following recommendations are approximations.
- One bag or crate weighs 50 pounds.
- 50 pounds yields 16 to 20 quarts.
- 10 pounds shredded cabbage yields 3 to 4 quarts sauerkraut.
- Four servings equal 1 medium head of Chinese or celery cabbage and 1 head (about 1½ pounds) green savoy or red cabbage.
Nutrition

The “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” recommends that adults need 2–2½ cups of a variety of vegetables daily. Cabbage is an excellent way to help meet that nutritional requirement. Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable and is full of antioxidants that help prevent cancer. It is rich in vitamin C, with 1 cup shredded raw green cabbage containing 22 mg of vitamin C or 1/3 of the daily requirement. Cabbage is a fair source of thiamin, riboflavin, fiber, and potassium. It is low in calories with 1 cup shredded raw green cabbage having only 24 calories.

Safe Handling

Clean surfaces, utensils, and hands after touching raw meat and poultry and before you use them on fresh produce. Remove and discard outer leaves and ribs. Wash just before using. To remove dirt, bacteria, and possible pesticide residue, wash cabbage thoroughly in cold water. Drain and rinse several times with cold water. Do not use soap, detergent, or bleach as the cabbage may absorb them. Lift out of the water to prevent redepositing of dirt and residues.

Serving

Follow these tips to retain nutrients:

- Store cabbage properly. Cook quickly in a small amount of water because vitamin C is lost in water. Serve immediately. If not, cool quickly. Use cooking liquid whenever possible.
- Shred just before using to minimize exposure to air.
- Use as a vegetable alone or in soups, stews, or cabbage rolls.
- Use as a salad—coleslaw with cucumbers, tomatoes, or carrots, or in tossed salads (especially red cabbage).
- Stir-fry in a small amount of oil at medium-high heat.
- Sauté—Melt 2 Tablespoons oil in a frying pan. Add several cups of shredded cabbage and pan fry only until wilted (about 10 minutes). Stir often. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
- Boiled—Add cabbage wedges or shredded cabbage to saucepan with approximately one inch boiling water. Heat cabbage to boiling. Cover pan. Cook wedges 10 to 15 minutes; shredded cabbage 3 to 10 minutes or until tender crisp. Add salt or other seasonings. Allspice, caraway seed, cloves, curry, mustard, or tarragon work especially well.

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