Recipes… BOK CHOY

NOTES & TIPS: Cultivated in China since ancient times, bok choy is found in soups and stir-fries, appetizers and main dishes. Bok choy's popularity comes from its light, sweet flavor, crisp texture and nutritional value. Not only is bok choy high in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, fiber, protein, thiamin, folate, calcium, iron and magnesium, its low in calories. Wow -- now that's a superfood!

While classified as a cabbage it bears little resemblance to the round cabbage typically found in the supermarket. Its white stalks resemble celery without the stringiness, while the dark green, crinkly leaves of the most common variety is similar to Romaine lettuce.

Both bok choy and baby bok choy are Chinese vegetables sold in Asian markets, and they are starting to cross over into mainstream grocers' produce sections. The bok choy on the left is full-size, baby bok choy is on the right. But baby bok choy isn't really a baby. It's a different variety called mei qing choi. The big plant is called pac choi, which with a little Westernization becomes bok choy.

When the time comes to start cooking, you'll find that bok choy is extremely adaptable. Boiling, steaming, stir-frying and even deep-frying are all possibilities. With baby bok choy you can leave it whole or roughly chop the entire bunch. With full-sized bok choy you'll want to separate the leaves from the stalks, as the thick stalks have a longer cooking time. Rinse both well and drain, then shred or cut across the leaves, and cut the stalks into small slices along the diagonal or as called for in the recipe. When stir-frying add a tablespoon or two of water to the wok and cover. If desired, adjust the seasonings, adding a bit of salt or sugar during cooking. Whichever cooking method you choose, be sure not to overcook the bok choy - the stalks should be tender and the leaves just wilted.

Cooking Times for Bok Choy
Boiling 3 - 4 minutes for the stalks, 1 - 1 1/2 minutes for leaves.
Steaming about 6 minutes for the stalks, 2 - 3 minutes for leaves
Stir-fry about 5 minutes for stalks, 2 minutes for leaves - the leaves should be just wilted and bright green.
If you don't have a wok just use a large skillet and keep it moving in the pan. The edges of the wok are used to get the ingredients off the heat.

Sherry is often called in recipes with bok choy. If you don't have it on hand, here are some substitutions. 2 tablespoons sherry, substitute the following: 1 to 2 teaspoons vanilla extract or 2 tablespoons orange or pineapple juice. To substitute sherry in a marinade: for 1/2 cup sherry use 1/4 cup vinegar + 1 tablespoon sugar + 1/4 water OR 1 tablespoon vinegar, plus chicken stock or water to make 1/2 cup. Other substitutions at the end.

STIR FRIED BOK CHOY

1 tbl oil
4 baby bok choy heads sliced
Salt to taste
Freshly-ground black pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a skillet over high heat and add the bok choy. Cook, stirring frequently, until the bok choy is tender but crisp and slightly browned, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. 2 servings.

STIR FRIED BOK CHOY IN GARLIC OIL

3 tbl Peanut oil
1 tsp Salt
1 1/2 lb Bok choy, cut into 1-in pieces

4 Garlic cloves, lightly crushed & peeled

HEAT THE WOK over a high flame for 1 minute. Add the oil, and when the oil is very hot (this will take just a few seconds; pass your hand over it to feel the heat, or look for a wisp of smoke), add the salt, garlic and bok choy. A common mistake is to skimp on oil in stir-frying vegetables, which makes them dry out and burn. Use enough oil to coat the vegetables thinly but thoroughly. This may be prepared in advance and served cold.

BABY BOK CHOY STEAMED WITH ORANGE ZEST AND GINGER

2 baby bok choy 6 to-8-inches long
1 tbl orange zest julienne or grated
1/4 tsp ginger infused sesame oil OR minced ginger to taste

Rinse the boy choy well. Cut in half lengthwise Place bok choy in a single layer on a rack in a steamer, cut side up. Sprinkle with the orange zest and put a portion of the ginger-oil on the heart of the vegetable. Cover and cook over for 6 to 8 minutes, or when fork tender. Serve with the zest.

BABY BOK CHOY WITH GARLIC AND SHRIMP

4 oz. bok choy mui/baby bok choi (cleaned and rinsed)
1/8 teaspoon salt or to taste
1 tablespoon oil
1/4 cup peeled baby shrimps
3 cloves garlic (finely chopped)

Heat up a wok with the cooking oil and saute the chopped garlic until light brown or aromatic. Add the baby shrimps and stir-fry until the shrimps are half-cooked. Add in a pinch of salt to the shrimp, and then follow by the baby bok choy. Quickly stir-fry the vegetables, dish out and serve hot.
Cook's Note: Do not overcook your vegetables. They should retain the vitality and crunchiness.

BRAISED BABY BOK CHOY

1 Tbsp. canola oil
1 Tbsp. sesame oil
1 tsp. grated fresh ginger
3/4 pound to 1 pound bok choy or baby bok choy, washed and trimmed
1/4 cup vegetable broth
2 Tbsp. minced garlic
1 Tbsp. oyster sauce
1 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
1 Tbsp. brown sugar

Heat the canola oil and sesame oil in a large skillet or wok over medium heat. Add grated ginger and cook 1 to 2 minutes, until ginger perfumes the oil. Add bok choy (if you are using regular bok choy, you can cut it into chunks if you like) to the skillet. Stir fry until the bok choy becomes bright green, about 2 minutes. Remove bok choy to a serving plate. Add broth, garlic, oyster sauce, soy sauce and brown sugar to the pan. Cook another 2 minutes or so to allow flavors to meld. Pour over bok choy. Serve immediately. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

BEEF WITH GINGER AND BOK CHOY

¾ lbs Rump Steak (or kebob or fajita or sliced roast)
2 tbl Soy Sauce
3 tsp Cornstarch (divided use)

1 tbl Dry Sherry
1 tsp freshly grated Ginger
1 Garlic Clove, crushed
6 oz. Water
6 oz Bok Choy or Cos Lettuce
2 tbl Vegetable Oil
1 med Onion, thickly sliced
1 tbl fresh Ginger, finely shredded

Cut beef into thin slices about 2 inches long. In a large mixing bowl, blend together 1 tablespoon of the soy sauce, 1 teaspoon of the cornstarch, the sherry, grated ginger and garlic. Add the beef, mix well, cover and allow to stand for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the water, remaining cornstarch and remaining soy sauce in a small bowl and set aside. Separate the bok choy or lettuce into leaves, wash well under cold running water and dry on kitchen paper then cut the leaves crosswise into 1 inch strips, removing the midribs (leave the midribs on baby bok choy). Heat 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil in a large frying pan or wok until very hot then add the beef and stir-fry 1 minute. Remove the meat from the pan and set aside. Heat the remaining vegetable oil in the pan, add the onion and shredded ginger and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the bok choy and stir-fry for a further 1 minute then add the beef and soy sauce mixture mixing well. Cook over a high heat, stirring constantly, until the sauce thickens. Serve immediately.

TERIYAKI STIR-FRIED BOK CHOY AND CHICKEN

If you have the time, cut 1 whole chicken breast, skinned and boned, into bite-size pieces. Marinate, refrigerated, overnight in a zip-top plastic bag with enough Teriyaki sauce (about ¼ cup) to cover all surfaces (see note).

When you're ready to cook the dish, cut off and discard the root end of 1 or 2 heads of bok choy. Rinse well. Slice the stalks and leaves crosswise. If you're using the marinated chicken, remove the chicken and pat with a towel. Reserve marinade. If you didn't marinate, cut the chicken now.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high to high heat. Add about 3 tablespoons canola oil. Quickly stir-fry the chicken. Add the reserved marinade, or about ¼ cup Teriyaki to the pan. As soon as it's hot, push the chicken to the side and add the bok choy. Stir-fry until everything is cooked through and most of the liquid has evaporated. Drizzle with sesame oil, if desired. Serve over the rice. Makes 2 to 3 servings.

Note: You can substitute the sauce of your choice. Pork works well, too.

BOK CHOY, CARROTS AND GREEN BEANS

1 tsp peanut oil
2 sm shallots minced
2 med carrots sliced diagonally
1 cup cut-up green beans
1 cup chopped bok choy
1/3 cup low-fat low-sodium chicken broth
1 tbl lite soy sauce

Heat the oil in a wok or skillet over high heat. Add the shallots and saute for 3 minutes. Add the carrots and stir fry for 3 minutes. Add the green beans and stir fry for 2 minutes. Add the bok choy and stir fry for 2 minutes. Add the broth and simmer for 2 minutes. Add the soy sauce and serve. This recipe yields 6 ½ cup servings.

BOK CHOY RELISH

2 tbl plain nonfat yogurt

1/2 tsp prepared mustard
1/8 tsp pepper
1 cup bok choy finely chopped
2 tbl green onion sliced
1 tbl pimiento chopped

In a small bowl, combine yogurt, mustard, and pepper. Stir in chopped bok choy, green onion, and pimento. Serve immediately or cover and chill up to 8 hours. Makes about 4 servings.

BOK CHOY SALAD

1 lb Bok choy, or any dark leafy vegetable, cut into 3-inch lengths
2 tbl Rice vinegar
1 tbl Low-sodium soy sauce
1 tbl Hoi sin sauce *
1 Clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp Sesame oil
1/2 tsp Canola oil
1/4 tsp Dry mustard

Steam bok choy. Place in a large bowl and let cool. Combine remaining ingredients. Pour dressing over bok choy and toss to coat well. Serve at room temperature. Makes 4 servings. *Hoisin sauce is a Chinese soybean sauce used as a condiment or for flavoring. See chart at the end for substitution.

BOY CHOY WITH CILANTRO SOY SAUCE

1 cup Tomato juice
2 Cloves garlic, finely chopped (about 1 teaspoon)
1 tsp Finely chopped gingerroot
4 cup Chopped bok choy (about 1/3 medium head)
1 cup Chopped mushrooms (about 4 ounces)
1/2 cup Chopped yellow bell pepper (about 1 small)
1/4 cup Chopped green onions (2 to 3 medium)
2 tbl Chopped fresh cilantro leaves
2 tbl Lime juice
1 tsp Reduced-sodium soy sauce

Mix 1/2 cup of the tomato juice, the garlic and gingerroot in 10-inch skillet. Cook over medium heat 2 minutes. Stir in remaining tomato juice, the bok choy, mushrooms, bell pepper and onions. Cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until bok choy leaves are wilted. Stir in remaining ingredients. 6 servings

BOK CHOY WITH GINGER VINAIGRETTE

1 1/2 lb Bok Choy, fresh as possible
1/3 cup Salad Oil
2 tbl White Wine Vinegar
2 tsp Dijon Mustard
2 tsp Soy Sauce
1 Clove Garlic, minced
1 tbl Fresh Ginger Root, finely chopped
1/2 tsp Sugar

Cut any bok choy that are thicker than 3 inches in half lengthwise; leave smaller ones whole. Arrange as many boy choy on a steaming rack as will fit without crowding. Steam until stocks begin to turn translucent and are soft when pierced (4 to 5 minutes). Lift out and plunge into cold water; when cool, drain well and place in a shallow dish. Repeat with remaining bok choy. Stir together oil, vinegar, mustard, soy, garlic, ginger, and sugar. Pour over bok choy. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

CHICKEN BOK CHOY STIR FRY

1 1/4 cup Long-grain rice
3/4 cup Chicken broth
1 1/2 tbl Cornstarch
3 tbl Lemon juice
2 tbl Soy sauce
1 tbl Honey
1 tsp Ground ginger
1 lb Chicken breasts without skin
2 tsp Peanut oil -- or salad oil
1 1/4 cup Red bell pepper -- 1 inch Squares
1 lb Bok choy -- chopped (2")

Place rice and 2 1/2 cups water in a 2-3 qt pan; bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until liquid is absorbed, abt 20 min. Meanwhile, stir broth, cornstarch, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons soy sauce, honey, and ginger until smooth; set aside. Cut chicken crosswise into 1/2 inch wide strips. Place wok or stir fry pan over high heat. When hot, add oil, then chicken. Stir often until chicken is no longer pink in center, 2-3 min. Lift out and cover to keep warm. To wok, add bell pepper, bok choy, and 2 tablespoons water. Cover tightly and cook until bell pepper is barely tender-crisp to bite, 1 1/2-2 min; lift out and set aside. Stir broth mix, then pour into wok and stir bubbling, abt 1 min. Gently mix in chicken and veggies. Spoon rice into center of a platter and arrange chicken mix alongside, placing bok choy around rim of platter. Add add'l soy sauce to taste.

GINGER BEEF WITH BOK CHOY

3/4 lb Boneless tender beef steak (sirloin, Rib eye or top loin)
3 tbl Lite soy sauce, divided
1 tbl Cornstarch
1 tbl Dry sherry
1 tsp Minced fresh ginger root
1 x Clove garlic, minced
3/4 cup Water
2 tsp Cornstarch
1/2 lb Bok choy cabbage or romaine lettuce
2 tbl Oil, divided
1 med onion, cut into 1/2" strips
1 tbl Slivered fresh ginger root

Cut beef across grain into thin slices. Combine 1 Tb. each lite soy sauce, cornstarch and sherry with minced ginger and garlic in medium bowl; stir in beef. Let stand 30 minutes. Meanwhile, combine water, 2 tsp. cornstarch and remaining 2 Tb. lite soy sauce; set aside. Separate and rinse bok choy; pat dry. Cut leaves crosswise into 1" strips, separating stems from leaves. Heat 1 Tb. oil in hot wok or large skillet over high heat. Add beef and stir-fry 1 minute; remove. Heat remaining 1 Tb. oil in same pan. Add onion and slivered ginger; stir-fry 2 minutes. Add bok choy stems; stir-fry 1 minute longer. Add beef and soy sauce mixture; cook and stir until sauce boils and thickens. Serve immediately. Serves: 4

POTATO SOUP WITH LEEKS AND BOK CHOY

3 med -large potatoes cubed
2 tsp Better than bouillon, vegetable, beef or chicken
2 cup chopped leeks
1 1/3 cup chopped bok choy
3/4 cup shredded carrots
1/8 tsp ground coriander
Paprika to taste
Cayenne to taste
Freshly-ground black pepper to taste
Salt to taste
2 cup low fat milk

Boil potato cubes in 2 quarts of water with bouillon cubes until tender but not mushy, about 15 minutes. Reserve 1 to 2 cups of liquid. Meanwhile, saute the leeks in a little water until lightly browned. Add bok choy and carrots and saute for 3 to 4 minutes. Begin sprinkling seasonings a little at a time into the pan with leeks, bok choy and carrots. Reserving 1 1/2 cups potato cubes for texture, puree potatoes with half the milk in a blender or with a hand mixer. Blend or mix only long enough to create a smooth texture without it becoming gluey. Return potato puree to the soup pot and add sauteed vegetables and remaining potato cubes. Add remainder of milk until soup reaches the desired thickness. Add more milk as needed. This recipe yields 4 servings.
Comments: West and East meet in this dish, and it turns out to be a good match. Substitute soy or rice milk for dairy milk if you wish.

SAUTEED BOK CHOY WITH CASHEW SAUCE

1/2 cup Cashews, roasted
1/4 cup White vinegar
1/4 cup Water
1/4 cup Sugar
1/4 cup Soy sauce
1 tbl Ginger, minced
7 dsh Tabasco sauce
2 tbl Basil, finely chopped
2 tbl Mint, finely chopped
1 1/2 lb Bok choy, washed & dried
1/3 cup Peanut oil

In a food processor or blender, combine the cashews, vinegar, water, sugar, soy sauce, ginger, Tabasco, basil and mint, and puree. Separate bok choy leaves from stalks, and cut stalks into 1-inch-long- pieces. In a large saute pan, heat oil over high heat until hot but not smoking. Add bok choy and cook, stirring briskly, for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes, until it is bright green and well seared. Remove from heat, drape with cashew sauce and serve at once. Yield: 4 servings.

SESAME SALMON FILLETS AND BOK CHOY

1 cup sesame seeds
1 tbl grated ginger, root
1 tbl cracked black peppercorns
1/2 tsp salt
1 egg
4 skinless salmon, fillets, (1 1/2 lbs total) Can also use chicken breasts pounded thin or pork chops.
1 tbl vegetable oil
4 cup thinly sliced bok choy

1/2 sweet red pepper, diced
1 tsp rice vinegar
1 tsp soy sauce
1 tsp sesame oil

In shallow dish, combine sesame seeds, grated ginger, peppercorns and salt. In another dish, lightly beat egg. Dip each salmon fillet into egg, letting excess drip off. Gently press into sesame mixture, turning to coat.
In large nonstick skillet, heat vegetable oil over medium-high heat; cook salmon, turning once, for 4 to 8 minutes or until golden. Transfer to plate. Wipe out skillet. Add bok choy, red pepper, vinegar, soy sauce and sesame oil to pan; cook, stirring often, for about 3 minutes or until bok choy is wilted. Arrange salmon over bok choy; cover and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with fork.

SHRIMP WITH BABY BOK CHOY, SOY GINGER VINAIGRETTE

VINAIGRETTE
1/2 cup Canola oil
2 tbl Oyster sauce
2 tbl Soy sauce
2 tbl Sherry vinegar
1 tbl Finely-minced shallot
1 tbl Peeled, minced ginger

SHRIMP AND BOK CHOY
24 med Shrimp
Salt to taste
Freshly-ground black pepper to taste
1 tbl Olive oil
Flour for dusting
2 cup Baby bok choy blanched in
Well-salted boiling water

In a bowl, combine all the vinaigrette ingredients and whisk well to incorporate. It will appear slightly separated. Clean the shrimp and season well with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a saute pan over medium-high heat. Dust shrimp lightly with flour and sear. Do not overcook, they should still be tender in the center.
Warm the bok choy in butter and place in the center of 4 plates. Arrange the shrimp on top and spoon the vinaigrette around the bok choy. This recipe yields 4 servings.

SPICY SHRIMP WITH PINEAPPLE AND BOK CHOY

3 tbl soy sauce
2 tbl unseasoned rice vinegar
1 tbl honey
1 tbl cornstarch
2 tsp oriental sesame oil
4 tsp vegetable oil
1 lb uncooked large shrimp peeled, deveined
4 lrg garlic cloves finely chopped
1 1/2 tbl finely-chopped peeled fresh ginger
1/4 tsp dried crushed red pepper
1 lrg red bell pepper sliced
6 baby bok choy trimmed, and cut crosswise into 1/2"-wide strips
1 1/2 cup fresh peeled pineapple in 3/4" cubes
6 green onions thinly sliced

Blend first 5 ingredients in small bowl. Heat wok or large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat 1 minute. Add 2 teaspoons vegetable oil; tilt to coat. Add shrimp, garlic, ginger, and crushed pepper. Stir-fry 2 minutes; transfer mixture to bowl. Add 2 teaspoons vegetable oil to same wok or skillet. Add bell pepper; stir-fry 2 minutes. Add bok choy and stir until wilted, about 1 minute. Add pineapple, onions, and shrimp mixture. Stir-fry until shrimp are just opaque in center, about 2 minutes. Stir soy mixture and add; cook until juices thicken, about 1 minute. This recipe yields 4 servings.
Comments: Serve with white rice to soak up the juices. A bottle of Gewurztraminer would pair nicely with the spiciness of the shrimp.

STEAMED BOK CHOY WITH THAI SAUCE

4 baby bok choy - (abt 1 lb)
1/4 cup light soy sauce
1/3 cup chicken broth
2 tbl rice vinegar
1 tbl oyster sauce
1 tsp sugar
1/4 tsp sesame oil
1 x garlic clove minced
2 tbl slivered ginger root
Nonstick cooking spray
Red Thai chilies for garnish
1 sprg cilantro for garnish

Place the bok choy in the top of a steamer basket over simmering water. Cover and steam the bok choy until tender, about 10 minutes. Measure the soy sauce, chicken broth, rice vinegar, oyster sauce, sugar and sesame oil into a measuring cup. Set aside. Cook the garlic and ginger in a small skillet sprayed with nonstick cooking spray over medium heat just until tender, about 1 minute. Stir in the soy mixture. Bring to a simmer and cook 1 minute. Pour the ginger sauce on a platter, then arrange the steamed bok choy on the platter. Garnish with the red chilies and a few sprigs of cilantro. You can serve this with fish or chicken or eat it by itself as a light entree. This recipe yields 2 servings.

Recipes… BOK CHOY

Ingredient	Substitute
Agar-agar (An Asian gelatin substitute that doesn't require refrigeration)	Gelatin
Bamboo Shoots	White cabbage
Bok choy	celery or Swiss chard
Chili Sauce	1 cup tomato sauce, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 2 tbsp. vinegar, 1/4 tsp. cinnamon, dash of ground cloves and allspice**
Chinese five-spice powder	Equal amounts cinnamon, star anise, cloves, fennel, and Szechuan Peppercorn. If Szechuan peppercorns aren't available, use freshly ground black peppercorns
Cilantro or Coriander (Chinese parsley)	Parsley (for decoration only, not taste) Can add dash lemon juice
Coconut Milk	Whole milk in equal amounts, if possible with coconut extract. For coconut cream, substitute half and half or whipping cream (with coconut extract if possible).
Galangal (used in Thai Cooking)	Fresh ginger
Fresh Ginger	Candied ginger
Garlic Cloves	1/8 tsp. garlic powder
Hoisin Sauce	Equal amounts ketchup and molasses Also, sweet bean sauce
Hot Red Chili	Crushed red pepper
Lemon Grass (Used in Thai Cooking)	Zest of a lemon
Lotus Root flour	Cornstarch (Cornflour)
Mushrooms (Straw, Clouds Ear)	Fresh mushrooms (the taste will be different)
Oyster Sauce	Soy sauce
Rice Wine Vinegar (also called Rice Vinegar)	Dry sherry, white wine vinegar, malt vinegar
Sesame Oil	1 Tbs. Sesame seeds fried in 1/2 cup vegetable oil
Soy Sauce	Japanese tamari or Worchester sauce.
Water Chestnut	Jicama (commonly found in the Southern United States)