

THE FEARLESS OLIVE
BY REEMA ISLAM



Winter indulgence

As the night air grows cooler and the fallen autumn leaves flood the streets and roads, let us welcome the onset of winters with the range of seasonal vegetables in the markets now. From lettuce that looks greener and celery that looks fresh, we will explore two green vegetables that often find a back seat on anyone's menu. So let us start the winters with a healthy menu starting right now! Here's wishing all a pleasant December.

With its alien looks and a fairly humble image, the Kohlrabi or Ol kopi is often neglected as a main ingredient. A descendant of the wild cabbage, Kohlrabi is mentioned in history when Charlemagne first ordered its cultivation in 800 CE. Consumed widely in Germany and Eastern Europe it was introduced in India in the 17th century and the Kashmiris especially have a strong affinity for this turnip lookalike. Known as Moonji in the land of lakes, the Kashmiris also consume the leaves of the kohlrabi vegetable. From the valleys of Kashmir, the Monji shaak is a popular dish eaten on a regular basis in the winters and retains the flavours of this simple vegetable.

Monji haak (ganth gobi)

Ingredients:

1 kg kohlrabi with the top stems (haak is the leafy stem)
1 tsp asaetofeda or hing
1 tbsp whole, red, dry chillies
½ cup water mixed with lemon juice
3 tbsp vegetable oil

Method:

In the oil, crush the hing and add the Kohlrabi or monji and sauté for about 5 minutes. Add the haak or the leaves in the pot and cook it all till the leaves shrivel. Add salt and pinch of baking soda, whole red chillies and again sauté for about 2-3 minutes then add some lemon mixed water and cover the pot and let it simmer for up to 15 minutes.

Serving:

Serve it with rice and meat based dishes to add flavours to your dining table.

Health benefits:

High on vitamin C, Kohlrabi also has phytochemicals that are essential in fighting colon cancer. With a fair amount of vitamin A in its fleshy parts, Kohlrabi offers a healthy inclusion to your winter menu with its mild taste and contribution to improving your teeth, hair and skin from vitamin C and vitamin B-6 and thiamin helps enzymes making your metabolism work faster!

Kohlrabi leaves or tops, like turnip greens, are also very nutritious greens abundant in carotenes, vitamin-A, vitamin K, minerals, and B-complex group of vitamins.

Puy lentils (green masur) and Kohlrabi salad

As winter approaches and the need to stay healthy and hydrated increases, here's a French inspired lentil salad that can take a centre stage at your dinner table.

Ingredients:

250g green masur daal or puy lentils
4 carrots, peeled and diced
1 onion, diced
1 tbsp celery stalk, chopped
250g Kohlrabi, peeled and diced into bite sized squares
½ cup chopped spring onions



1 cup diced tomatoes
1 tbsp mustard
Half cup lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tbsp olive oil
Pinch of thyme and basil
¼ cup diced garlic
½ cup roasted walnuts
250g lettuce, chopped

Method:

Put the puy lentil to boil for 20 minutes then add the carrots, celery, kohlrabi and boil till the vegetables have softened but are not breaking off. Sauté the garlic and onion in the olive oil until they are golden and add these to the lentils and boil together for 10 minutes. Add the thyme and basil towards the end. In a bowl take dijon mustard and lemon juice with chopped tomatoes, lettuce, nuts and spring onions and add the boiled lentils and vegetable and mix it all up. Serve it for dinner and watch your family and friends ignore the main items as they lap up this salad bursting with flavours.

Health benefits:

This winter, add Puy lentils to your regular intake of vitamins and watch your skin glow



and your hair shine, as this vitamin and protein rich lentil lends its taste to any salad giving it that extra flavour!

Fried green Tomatoes:

"Watched the movie? Now taste the title!"

Green Tomatoes are one of the most neglected vegetables to hit our vegetable stands as we often consider them as incomplete tomatoes. Yet, these vitamin rich version of the red tomatoes that decorate our salads and food likewise, have a distinct identity as fried green tomatoes. After the movie Fried Green Tomatoes was released everyone wanted to have them and a dish which had never risen to any form of lime-light suddenly became the face of Southern American cuisine. We explore different ways of making this simple tomato into a more glamorous dish and here is my version of fried green tomatoes.

Ingredients:

5 large green tomatoes
1 cup poppy seeds soaked for up to 2 hours then ground into a thick paste
1 tbsp ground mustard seeds
Salt to taste
Oil for brushing
For the dip:
1 cup yoghurt
1 tbsp molasses or gur
Pepper and salt to taste
1 tsp garlic paste

Method:

Slice the green tomatoes in round discs. Mix the poppy seed paste, salt, mustard seeds and coat both sides with this mixture. Heat the oven at 180° for 10 minutes then in an oven dish brush the base with oil and place the coated green tomatoes in the dish and sprinkle some oil on top and stick them in to the oven. Change sides every 2-3 minutes until they turn golden brown. Mix the ingredients of the dip in a bowl.

Serving:

Serve the green tomatoes hot with the yoghurt dip and sprinkle some coriander leaves on top to give it some added flavour. You can use it inside sandwiches as an addition, served with a side of the relish given below.

Green tomato relish

Ingredients:

10 green tomatoes
3 capsicums, halved and seeds taken out
5 large onions
6 carrots, peeled and diced
1 tsp coriander seeds
1 tbsp mustard seeds
1 cup apple cider vinegar
Salt to taste
1 tsp olive oil

Method:

In a grinder put tomatoes, carrots, capsicums and onions. Spread a large sieve or colander with a thin cotton cloth to drain the ground mixture. Completely drain the water out. In a large, non-aluminum stockpot, combine tomato mixture, salt and vinegar. Sauté the coriander and mustard seeds till they crackle in the pan. Bring to a boil and simmer over low heat for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Serving:

Take it off the fire and add the seeds and mix. Now you can place these in jars and use them as a side dish to meat based menus or simply as a dip.

Health benefits:

Green tomatoes contain an alkaloid called tomatine, which may effectively fight cancer cell while this B-complex vitamin rich vegetable help your body use protein, fat and carbohydrates to produce energy. Its vitamin C also helps your body absorb iron, so it is a great idea to eat green tomatoes with an iron source like meat, poultry, fish and spinach.

For more winter recipes by Reema, see page 8 and 9.