

Collard Greens (Greens)

Interesting facts: If you have ever been south of the Mason-Dixon line, then most likely you have heard of collard greens. Collard greens have been such a staple of most Southerners of the United States that on June 2011, collard greens became the official vegetable of South Carolina!

Collards are descendants of the wild cabbage just like kale, cauliflower and broccoli. The leaves of these greens look like cabbage only non-headed with larger, medium to dark green leaves, and light prominent veins. They have a flavor like spinach but a bit stronger.

How to select: Organically grown is the always the best choice. Collard greens have been known to have very toxic pesticide residue. Select leaves that are firm with a deep vivid green color. Smaller collard greens are more tender and have a smoky, sweet taste while larger leaves are more robust and slightly bitter in taste.

What to avoid: Avoid wilted, yellowing or slimy leaves as they are signs of rotting and are bitter.

How to clean and store: Submerge the leaves in cool water to loosen any grit and dry thoroughly. Place the collard greens in a plastic bag and remove as much of the air as possible. Refrigerate to keep fresh for about five days.

How to prepare and cook: Sauté

Sauté: In a sauté pan place 1 tablespoons butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil (may use bacon grease or lard) over medium high heat. Chop cleaned collard greens and place in the pan toss and close lid and cook for 8-10 minutes. Stir and serve when greens are tender.

Recipe idea:

Spiced Greens and Sausage: In a skillet over medium heat sauté 2 tablespoon olive oil, 2-3 cups onions, sliced 1-2 green apples, sliced for 5 minutes. Add 5-6 fully cooked turkey sausages cut into bite size pieces. Add 1 teaspoon of fennel seeds crushed 1 teaspoon coriander, ground and 3 cloves garlic, minced and cook 2 more minutes. Wash 2 pounds of collard greens and chop coarsely; Add to skillet with onions and cook 5-10 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon fresh thyme. Plate and drizzle with balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper.