



Bok Choy 101: Everything You Need to Know About the Asian Green

By Mary Margaret Chappell
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Full-Size



A mild-flavored, quick-cooking member of the [cabbage](#) family, bok choy (aka pak choi or Chinese cabbage) is delicious in stir-fries, steamed, grilled, or added to noodle soups. Read on for our bok choy primer, which includes an overview of some common varieties, plus tips for storing and preparing the lovable leafy green. Once you've stocked up on your bok choy of choice, be sure to check out our roundup of our [favorite bok choy recipes](#)!

Full-size bok choy features large, long heads with firm white stems and dark, curly leaves. Use it in soups, stir-fries, and grain dishes.

Baby

Stalky Veggie or Leafy Green?

Is bok choy a sweet, stalky vegetable or a leafy green? It's both, though the juicy, curvaceous stems are what make bok choy instantly recognizable and unique among Asian greens. The dark green leaves have their merits, as well: They're tender enough to enjoy raw in salads yet sturdy enough to stand up to the high heat of stir-fries and quick-simmered soups and stews.

Bok Choy Varieties

Bok choy ranges in size from 3 to 6 inches in length for baby and dwarf varieties to 15 inches for fully mature heads. Whatever variety you buy, choose heads that look firm and fresh from root to tip, with no torn or yellowing leaves and no cuts or brown spots on the stems.

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With whole heads ranging from 3 to 6 inches long, baby bok choy can refer to small varieties as well as heads that have been picked while still young. Great for steaming or grilling whole, they can also be sliced and added to stir-fries and stews.

Shanghai



Shanghai bok choy is a popular all-purpose varietal with jade green stems and smooth round leaves. Shanghai bok

choy is sold in different sizes, from tiny baby heads to full-leaved bulbous stalks.

Tatsoi



Sometimes called “rosette bok choy,” Tatsoi is not technically bok choy but a close cousin that can be used interchangeably in recipes. Tatsoi has dark, round leaves and a pronounced peppery flavor.

Seasonality

Bok choy is at its sweetest, tenderest best during the cooler months of the year, when it's also a popular item at farmers markets, but it's available year-round.

How to Store and Prep It

Refrigerate whole heads of bok choy in the crisper drawer for up to a week. Cleaned and dried bok choy also freezes well—no [blanching](#) needed. To clean, submerge whole or halved heads in a large bowl of water, and swish it around several times to remove any grit lodged between the stems and leaves. Dry well by shaking off excess water or spinning in a salad spinner.

Recipes

Ready to get cooking? Check out our roundup of [Tasty Vegan Bok Choy Recipes We Know You'll Enjoy](#), which features simple side dishes, savory stir-fries, slurpable noodle soups, and more.