

SWISS CHARD

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Tidbit

Swiss chard can be eaten raw if it is harvested young when the leaves are small. It is best to cook the Swiss chard if the leaves are large and more mature. Swiss chard pairs well with bacon, garlic, lemon, onions, mushrooms, pasta, potatoes, red pepper flakes, thyme, and vinegar.

Harvest of the Month provides resources for the cafeteria, classroom, and community to promote the use of local, seasonal foods.

Storage Tip

- Store in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag for 5-10 days.
- To freeze: Blanch for 2-3 minutes or until the leaves are soft, then place in a labeled and dated freezer-grade bag or container.

Cooking Tips

- Separate stems and ribs from the leaves either by hand or carefully with a knife.
- Stems and ribs can be chopped into bite size pieces, and leaves can be stacked on top of each other and sliced crosswise into thick ribbons, roughly chopped, or torn by hand.
- Boil or steam Swiss chard for two-three minutes. Swiss chard can also be braised, sautéed, or stir-fried.
- Swiss chard makes a great substitute for spinach.

Kid-friendly eating tips

- Add raw, thinly-sliced Swiss chard to a pasta dish.
- Use Swiss chard as the base for a salad; you can mix it in with lettuce leaves.
- Make pesto by blending Swiss chard like you would basil! Add it to pasta or use it as a sandwich spread.
- Use Swiss chard as a pizza topping! Ribs and stems can be sliced into 1 inch pieces, and the leaves can be torn or roughly chopped and then steamed or blanched separately. Distribute the Swiss chard with the other toppings before cooking the pizza.

Recipes

Swiss Chard with Raisins and Almonds

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Yield: 4 Servings

Ingredients:

- ½ large onion, sliced lengthwise ¼ inch thick (1 cup)
- 2 ½ teaspoons olive oil, divided
- ¼ teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika
- 2 pounds Swiss chard, center ribs discarded (or saved for another dish) and leaves coarsely chopped
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped almonds with skins

Directions:

1. Cook onion with ¼ teaspoon salt in 2 tablespoons oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat, stirring, until softened.
2. Sprinkle with paprika and cook, stirring, 1 minute.
3. Add chard in batches, stirring frequently, until wilted.
4. Add raisins and water.
5. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally until chard is tender, about 7 minutes.
6. Season with salt.
7. Cook almonds in remaining ½ tablespoon oil in a small heavy skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until golden, 3-5 minutes.
8. Sprinkle almonds over chard and serve.

(Source: *Gourmet*)

Penne with Swiss Chard and Garlic

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Yield: 2 Servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pound Swiss chard, stems cut from the leaves and stems and leaves chopped separately
- 1/8 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes or to taste
- 2 large garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup drained canned tomatoes, chopped
- ½ pound penne or other tubular pasta
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, plus addition as an accompaniment

Directions:

1. Rinse and drain the Swiss chard stems and leaves separately.
2. In a large heavy skillet cook the red pepper flakes and garlic in the oil over moderate heat, stirring, until garlic is pale golden.
3. Add the stems and ¼ cup of the water. Cover and cook the mixture for 5 minutes or until the stems are just tender.
4. Add the leaves with the remaining ¼ cup water and salt and pepper to taste and cook the mixture, covered, for 5 minutes.
5. Stir in the tomatoes and cook the mixture, covered, for 3 minutes, or until the leaves are tender.
6. While the chard is cooking, in a kettle of salted boiling water, boil the penne until it is al dente and drain in a colander.
7. In a large bowl toss the penne with the chard mixture and ¼ cup of the Parmesan and serve with additional Parmesan.

(Source: *Gourmet*)

