

CABBAGE

Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable and its red or green forms are a good antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent as well as being rich in glucosinolates which are thought to be a good aid to cancer prevention. It is also a good source of vitamins K, C and B6 as well as many other vitamins and minerals.

Sturdy, abundant and inexpensive, cabbage is a long-standing dietary staple throughout the world and so is widely cultivated both here and abroad. It stores well and so is available all the year round but it is best during fall and winter when it is in season and other vegetables may be less abundant.

Choose firm and dense heads with shiny, crisp, colorful leaves. Once it is cut it starts to lose its vitamin C so should be kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper and used as quickly as possible.

Now winter is here I still enjoy a salad meal but turn to cabbage for a crisp fresh alternative to lettuce and other softer salad leaves. Here then is my variation of a yummy winter meal. The ingredients are for one serving, Increase quantities as required.

Linda's Crunchy Winter Salad

1 hard boiled egg

1 portion of smoked salmon fillets

1/8 of a cabbage,

1 small carrot,

1 stick of celery

¼ of a Granny Smith apple

¼ of an avocado

¼ red onion (optional)

Thousand island dressing

Chan's Crispy noodles

Chop the egg and salmon into small pieces and arrange all over a small plate. Finely slice the cabbage, onion and celery and cut the pieces to a maximum of 3cm long and place in a dish.. Grate the carrot over the top. Peel the apple and avocado and chop into small pieces. Add to the salad. Mix gently together and pile over the egg and fish on the plate. Pour a tablespoon of five islands dressing over the top then sprinkle it with a desert spoon full of crispy noodles .

Writing this has made my mouth water, so I'm off to make up my Crunchy Winter Salad now.

If you enjoy this recipe there are many variations to the protein elements you can serve with it, like a slice of ham, some chicken, cheese, last night's rissoles. Just use your imagination!

LAMB THE MONGOLIAN STEPPES WAY

This year the Country Women's Association is studying Mongolia as our 'Country of Study'.

Amongst other things, we have been finding out about the type of food that Mongolians eat. Of course in the capital Ulaanbaatar, where almost half the population live, they have as many fast food restaurants as we would have here in NSW and certainly lots of Chinese and Russian cuisine.

For those who still work as nomadic herders, many hundreds of kilometers from town the food is more traditional and influenced by a need to keep warm and travel far with the herds most days. They may move their felt covered homes, called GERS, as many as 6 times in a year as they chase the pastures with their flocks which are comprised of sheep, goats, cattle, horses and camels. Fatty meat and dairy produce are the main staples of their diets. Vegetables are very mundane with potatoes, cabbage, and a few carrots and onions as their main ones. They also use rice and noodles.

When we have our international day we invite friends from other branches to join us to share information and a meal.

At our day we made a lamb based casserole which turned out rather yummy (But we did take all the fat off, unlike our Mongolian friends).

LAMB STEW

For 4 people

8 BBQ chops, defatted and deboned and cut into cm sized cubes.

2 large carrots chopped into bite-sized pieces,

1 large onion sliced and chopped,

500gs potatoes peeled and diced, Ones that do not fall are best

2 cloves of garlic, salt, pepper, 2 stock cubes.

200gms cabbage

200gms noodles

Place the chops, potatoes, onion, carrot, seasoning, and water to cover, into a slow cooker or pan and cook until the meat is falling apart. At least an hour.

Half an hour before serving, finely slice the 200gms of cabbage then cut into 3cm strips and add to the pot and cook, when ready add the 200gms of noodles. Simmer for a further 10 minutes until they are cooked. Check the flavour and adjust according to your taste. You may prefer to have enough water content to serve in bowls with a spoon, or, if you prefer, reduce the liquid and serve on a plate with a knife and fork.

Enjoy, as you imagine yourself on the other side of the equator.

CHICKPEAS

2016 is the Year of Pulses. There are many of these grown in NSW and on sale in our shops and supermarkets. Many are sold dried and need to be soaked before cooking but some come ready to eat in cans, or frozen. They are a high source of protein. Some examples are: lentils, kidney beans, black beans, peas, quinoa and chickpeas, just to name a few of the 20 available.

Today I am taking a closer look at chickpeas. There is evidence to suggest that these have been used by humans from 6700BC. Australia is now the second largest producer in the world behind India.

They are very versatile.

They can be dry roasted to form a good crunchy snack or ground up to sprinkle over salads.

Why not make your own HUMUS? Cook the chickpeas in water until the flesh is soft if you are using dried ones, then crush the cooled chickpeas in a blender and combine with garlic and oil. If using the canned version just open your tin of Australian chickpeas, drain and blend. A great standby if unexpected guests drop in. The humus can be served with crackers and vegetable crudité as a light snack with drinks.

CHICKPEA CURRY

My favorite use of chick peas is to make a chickpea curry, one of my specialties when we lived in Manchester, England

1 onions, 1 x 400 g tin chickpeas, 1 x 400 g tin of tomatoes,
2 cloves crushed garlic or a teaspoon of garlic paste
1 teaspoon of rice bran oil, 1 teaspoon sugar, or to taste, optional
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Mexican chili powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon coriander powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cumin powder
1 teaspoon garam masala powder.
Rice for 4 people

Method

Peel and finely chop the onions, drain and rinse the chickpeas

Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat then stir in the onions and fry until transparent.

Chop and add the tinned tomatoes, then cook for another 5 minutes, before adding the ginger, garlic, chili, turmeric, coriander, cumin and garam masala powders, sugar (if using), and a pinch of sea salt. Keep stirring and cook for a further 5 minutes.

Add the rice to a second pan of boiling water before beginning the final step

Stir the chickpeas into the curry mix. Add 250ml water or whatever is needed to make a thick sauce. Place the lid on the pan, lower the heat and simmer for 5 to 7 minutes.

Enjoy with a side salad of finely chopped lettuce, cucumber, onion and tomato.

SALMON

One of my favorite foods is salmon.

We are lucky that Tasmania has developed the aquaculture industry as it is today and beautiful salmon is so readily available to us, on sale in our local fish markets, fish shops, green grocers and supermarkets. It is a premium product. They have world-leading food safety, animal health and animal welfare standards. Salmon is a 'safe food'. Tasmania's geographic isolation and biosecurity measures mean we are free from diseases and pests commonly affecting aquaculture production elsewhere in the world.

We can always buy fresh salmon ready for cooking, packets of ready to eat fillets and beautiful smoked salmon.

At our CWA Christmas party my contribution to the nibbles selection is often a tray of small biscuits, smeared with 'philly' cheese topped with a roll of smoked salmon with capers on top. Always the first plate to empty!

BAKED SALMON WITH ASPARAGUS

Another firm favorite with dinner guests is salmon fillets or steaks (or a full salmon if there are a lot of diners!) wrapped in foil and cooked in the oven.

For 4 people:

4 salmon fillets, 2 table spoons of butter, 2 cloves of garlic, 3 lemons, spray of dill, 2 bunches of asparagus, 8 small potatoes.

Pre heat the oven to 200C. Place a roll of foil in a baking tray, enough to cover and seal the fish. Lay the washed asparagus on to the foil then slice the lemons and crush the garlic.

Now place the cleaned fish on top of the asparagus in the tray, and cover with the sliced lemons, butter, and crushed garlic and season with sea salt. Fold the foil over to make a parcel scrunching the ends together. Create a dome so that the foil doesn't directly touch the fish.

Bake in the oven for 25 minutes. Put the potatoes on to boil at the same time. Once the fish is cooked tear open the foil and place individual serves of asparagus and fish onto the plates with the potatoes. Garnish the fish with some sprigs of dill if available. Share out the stock from the pan by spooning over the potatoes as well as the fish.

Enjoy.