



*Carrboro & Southern Village*

## **FARMERS' MARKETS**

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### **Recipe of the Week featuring Kohlrabi** May 14, 2005

**Market Shopper, Meet Kohlrabi!**  
**From Kelly Clark, Carrboro & Southern Village Farmers' Markets Staffer**

I have a lot of cookbooks. And I had to read a lot of them to find a kohlrabi recipe for inspiration. No wonder we don't know much about kohlrabi! Few recipes highlight this vegetable. Bert Greene's "*Greene on Greens*" devotes an entire chapter to this lowly veg, I think based on the fact that he lost a spelling bee as a kid because he didn't know how to spell kohlrabi! But it was Madhur Jaffrey's "*World Vegetarian*" recipe for sautéed kohlrabi, that made me realize I'd been looking for a recipe that didn't use kohlrabi as one of the ingredients, rather, a recipe for kohlrabi its-own-self. Jaffrey's recipe credits James Beard for encouraging her to keep it simple, adding nothing but butter, salt and pepper. She uses just the bulb in her recipe; I'm incorporating the whole plant, leaves and bulb in the one I offer here.

Kohlrabi is a member of the cabbage family. Its bulb grows above ground and is topped with spikes of dark leaves that are tender when cooked. Look for bulbs that are 3 inches in diameter or less, as a larger bulb can be woody. One pound of raw kohlrabi, leaves and all, yields 2 to 3 servings. Only 29 calories per 2/3 cup, it is very high in potassium, with good amounts of calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

#### **Simple Sautéed Kohlrabi**

1 pound kohlrabi, leaves included  
2 Tablespoons butter  
3 Tablespoons olive oil  
1/8 Cup water  
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
Salt and pepper

Trim leaves from the bulbs, remove the stems, then pile the leaves on top of each other and roll them like a cigar. Shred the leaves in 1/4 inch slices across the roll. Set aside.

Peel and cut the root end off the bulbs using a sharp paring knife. Then cut the bulbs into 1/8 inch slices, stack the slices and cut into 1/8 inch matchsticks (julienne strips).

Put 1 Tablespoon each of the oil and butter in a frying pan over medium high heat. Add the leaves and toss to coat with the butter and oil. Add the water and sauté until the leaves are tender, but not mushy. Add the lemon juice, toss to incorporate, and then remove leaves to a serving dish and cover.

(continued)

Return the pan to the heat, set at medium low and add the remaining butter and olive oil. When the butter has melted, add the kohlrabi sticks and stir and sauté until the kohlrabi is tender, and not too crunchy. Add salt and pepper to taste, pile on top of the leaves and serve immediately.

Serves 2 - 3

## What the heck is Kohlrabi?

from Alan Davidson's "The Penguin Companion to Food"

*Brassica oleracea* is a bizarre form of the common cabbage in which the base of the stem swells into a globe the size of an orange while the leaves remain comparatively slight. The globe, which forms just above the soil, is the part of the plant of most interest to the cook. When young, this has the texture of a good turnip and a flavor which has elements of both turnip and cauliflower.

The plant is a biennial; and there are two principal varieties, white and purple. The origins of kohlrabi are as mysterious as its shape. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD Pliny the Elder mentioned a 'Corinthian turnip' which grew above the ground, but gave no further useful facts about it. The first reliable evidence shows it to have been grown in France in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is now popular in Germany and Central Europe (also to some extent in Israel, India, China, and SE Asia,) but less so in Britain a curiosity or used for animal feed. The name comes from a mistaken belief that it is a cross between cabbage or kale (German kohl) and turnip (species name rapa.)

Lesley Chamberlain (1989) remarks on the popularity of kohlrabi as a root vegetable in Central Europe, emphasizes that 'its flavor...is only fully released when it is as tender as soft fruit, so there is no merit in undercooking it' – or in eating it grated and raw in a salad, as some do.

## Need a mid-week market fix?

We've got two options for you

### **Wednesdays in Carrboro on the Town Commons 3:30 – 6:30 pm**

From carrots to geraniums, cow's milk cheeses to strawberry preserves, there is variety to get you through 'til Saturday

### **Thursdays in Southern Village on the Village Green 3:30 – 7 pm**

Tomatoes with goat's cheese? Free-range chicken and new potatoes?  
Our vendors have dinner at your fingertips

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