



CABBAGE TALKING POINTS

2. A Head of Cabbage History

- Nearly 3,000 years ago, wild cabbage indigenous to Asia and the Mediterranean slowly spread into Northern Europe by the Celts and later the Romans.
- Able to store for long periods, cabbage was a staple item of Europeans in the Middle Ages. Its juice was commonly used to heal wounds and as a cough remedy.
- In 1541, French explorer Jacques Cartier introduced cabbage to North America.
- Since cabbage contains lots of vitamin C, other explorers, including Captain Cook, traveled with it in order to prevent scurvy. Cabbage rapidly spread across the continent.



3. How Does Cabbage Grow?

- Cabbage is the most easily grown vegetable of the Mustard family. It is a cool-season crop that matures prior to extreme heat. Cool-season crops are grown for vegetative parts, including the roots (carrots), leaves (cabbages), stems (celery), and immature flowers (broccoli).
- Cabbage needs cool weather to grow. Whether cabbage is grown in the garden or purchased from the store, it is an important vegetable that can be eaten raw or cooked.
- The cabbage family tends to be high in vitamins C and K and has many other ingredients that help the body fight disease. The outer leaves of the green and red cabbages tend to be a darker color than the newer, inside leaves where the light does not reach them.
- Fresh cabbage heads from the garden have many open leaves that can be eaten. These are the first leaves that appear as the cabbage head develops. When cabbage is purchased at the store; the darker outer leaves that are not tight against the head have generally been removed so just the compact head is seen.

4. What Season do we pick Cabbage?

- Cabbage is a cool weather vegetable, so it can be grown in many states throughout the year. California produces cabbage all year, Florida, Georgia, New Mexico, North Carolina and Texas produce the majority of their cabbage from January through June. Colorado, New York, Virginia and Wisconsin harvest from July through the winter months.

5. Why should we eat Cabbage?

- A ½ cup of shredded cabbage provides the following:
 - An excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin K (red, green, and savoy varieties).
 - A source of vitamin A (red and savoy varieties).
 - A source of folate (savoy variety).
 - Phytochemicals in the form of indoles and isothiocyanates*.
- One cup of shredded green or red cabbage is an excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin K. Vitamin C helps the body heal cuts and wounds and helps lower the risk of infection. Vitamin K helps stop cuts and scrapes from bleeding too much and

starts the healing process. One cup of cabbage is also a source of vitamin A, which helps maintain good vision, fight infection, and keep skin healthy.

What Are Cruciferous Vegetables?

- Cruciferous vegetables are plants that contain indoles and isothiocyanates, which are phytochemicals with possible anti-cancer properties.
- Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable. Other vegetables in this family include bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, Swiss chard, turnips, and turnip greens.
- Phytochemicals appear to work together with nutrients and fiber to provide health benefits.
- Phytochemicals may aid in detoxification of undesirable compounds and strengthen antioxidant defenses in cells.

Phytochemical Champions:

- Blueberries
- Citrus fruits
- Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage)
- Soy foods
- Tomatoes

6. How do you pick good Cabbage?

- Choose firm cabbage heads that feel heavy and are tightly-packed.
- Store whole or chopped cabbage in a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator. Use within one week.
- Before use, rinse cabbage thoroughly and remove tough outer leaves. Cut in half and trim core.
- Do not wash cabbage until you are ready to use it. Avoid slicing or shredding cabbage in advance. This will cause it to lose some of its vitamin C content. If you must prepare it an hour or more in advance before cooking, place it in a plastic bag, seal tightly, and refrigerate.

Ways to eat cabbage

- Boiled cabbage
- Sauerkraut
- Coleslaw
- Cabbage soup
- Cabbage casserole
- Cabbage rolls (egg rolls)
- Corned Beef and Cabbage
- Stewed Cabbage

Types of Cabbage

- There are at least a hundred different types of cabbage grown throughout the world, but the most common types in the United States are the Green, Red, and Savoy varieties. Chinese varieties are also available. The two most common types of Chinese cabbage are Bok Choy and Napa cabbage. Chinese cabbage cooks in less time than standard U.S. types, but can be prepared in the same ways. Cabbage can be steamed, boiled, braised, microwaved, stuffed, or stir-fried.
- Cabbage is a cole crop of the Mustard family (Brassicaceae) and its varietal name, *B. oleracea Capitata*, distinguishes this cruciferous vegetable as being “in the form



of a head.” (The Brassicaceae family was formerly called Cruciferae.) The word *cabbage* derives from the French word *caboche* meaning “head.”

- The species *B. oleracea*, or wild cabbage, is grouped into seven major cultivars based on development. Within the Capitata Group, there are more than 400 cabbage varieties but most common are the green, red, purple, and savoy varieties. Most Asian cabbage varieties belong to another species, *B. rapa*. This includes Chinese cabbage, which is also known as Napa or celery cabbage.

Home Grown Facts

- With over 13,000 acres harvested for cabbages, California leads the nation in commercial cabbage production.
- Cabbage is shipped year-round in California reaching its peak in March for traditional St. Patrick’s Day fare of corned beef and cabbage.
- China is the #1 producer of cabbage.

Just the Facts

- Many vegetables evolved from the original wild cabbage including broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, and kohlrabi.
- All cole crops can be cross-bred, making it easy and economical to develop new cabbage varieties*.
- Primary uses of cabbages include processed coleslaw (40-45%), fresh head (35%), sauerkraut (12%), various fresh-cut products (5-10%), and dried (less than 5%).
- Technological advancements in packaging have increased the number of cabbage heads for market about 30% since 1996.