



Celtuce

Celtuce, also called stem lettuce or celery lettuce, is a type of lettuce that is grown for its delicious thick stem that has a mild, nutty flavor. It's been a favorite vegetable in China and Taiwan for thousands of years.

Plant: Like many annual lettuce varieties, celtuce is a cool season crop. Plant from seed in March to April or September to November when the soil is an average of 50 °F. Bury the seed no deeper than twice the width of the seed. Water the seeds after planting and every day for 5 days or until sprout emerges from the ground. These plants can also be transplanted much the same as lettuce. Each plant should be spaced 10-12 inches apart in a well composted bed or container.

Grow: The young leaves are ready in 4-5 weeks and edible stems will grow up to 1 foot tall. As the large stem grows taller, the leaves become large and bitter.

Harvest: Harvest when the plant has reached 10-12 inches tall. Take a knife and cut at the soil line. Keep the remaining leaves on the top of the plant until ready to prepare the stem.

Nutrition Information:

One pound of celtuce, which is about 2-15 spears or 2 servings, contains 80 calories, 1.5 g fat (none of it saturated and no cholesterol), 50 mg of sodium, 16 grams of carbohydrate (half of that is fiber) and 4 g of protein. It's a great source of folate and other B vitamins as well as potassium and vitamin C.

How to Prepare:

Celtuce has been described as having a cucumber texture with hazelnut flavor. Both the stem and the leaves can be eaten raw or cooked (pickled, grilled, roasted, or stir-fried). Like an asparagus, the stem can be peeled if its exterior is tough or woody. Celtuce pairs well with Asian flavors or Mediterranean flavors like lemon, walnuts, and olive oil.



Quick Celtuce Pickles

Yields: 4 servings

Serving size: 1/4 cup

Ingredients

- 1 pound celtuce stems
- 2 ¼ tsp kosher salt
- 1.5 cups water

Preparation

1. Wash celtuce and remove leafy parts. If necessary, trim any parts of the stems that may be super tough with a vegetable peeler.
2. Slice celtuce into 1/4 to 1/2 inch rounds (like cucumber slices). They'll weep a little milky liquid. Place celtuce slices into a quart glass jar, but be sure to leave about 1 inch between the top of the vegetables and the rim of the jar.
3. Dissolve the salt into water and pour liquid into jar. The brine should cover the vegetables. The vegetables will release more liquid over time. Secure the lid and turn the jar upside down and right-side up a few times to displace any air bubbles. Store in the fridge for 3-5 days, occasionally turning the jar upside down and right-side up. Some small bubbles may appear as part of the natural fermentation process.
4. Celtuce pickles will be ready within a few days and will maintain their texture for up to 2 weeks. Use them on salads, sandwiches or wraps or as a condiment to any Asian inspired dish.

Nutrition Facts per Serving:

20 calories, 0 g fat, 4 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 1 g protein