

Everyone Eats

Cultural Community Garden

Native to China and used in a variety of cuisines across Asia, choy sum is a leafy green vegetable in the same species as bok choy, Napa cabbage, and turnips. In Cantonese, its name translates to “the heart of the vegetable” – referring to its tender, edible stem. It’s also known as Chinese flowering cabbage, or cai xin.

CHOY SUM

Vietnamese speakers may refer to it as cai ngot, Thai speakers as pakaukeo, and Japanese as saishin. Choy sum is characterized by its yellow flowerheads and bright oval-shaped leaves. It thrives in tropical and monsoonal climates and grows best in the cooler months, though it's available year-round.

BENEFITS

- Folate
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C

HOW TO STORE

Place in a breathable or open bag in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Alternatively, blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes, drain and rinse with cold water, and then freeze.



HOW TO PREPARE

Wash and roughly chop the whole bunch, including stalks. Then steam, stir fry, boil, or even eat it raw in a salad. The Cantonese blanch it to maintain its original flavor which is mildly sweet and mustardy. It pairs well with many other flavors, especially garlic, ginger, and chilies. Choy sum makes a great addition to any soup, stew, or curry.

WHERE TO FIND

- St. Mary's Episcopal Church – 3055 Main Street, Barnstable
- Marina F. Andrews Community Garden at Tony Andrews Farm – Berry Patch Lane, East Falmouth
- Faith Assembly of God – 154 Bearses Way, Hyannis
- Canaan Seventh-Day Adventist Church – 204 Route 28, West Yarmouth





Chinese Stir-Fried Choy Sum

Serves: 4

Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- $\frac{2}{3}$ pound choy sum or other Chinese leafy green
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp light soy sauce
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ginger finely chopped or cut into slivers
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp sesame oil (optional)
- 2 tsp peanut oil or other neutral, high smoke-point oil

Instructions

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the greens. If you're using choy sum, you can leave the stems whole or cut them into more manageable bites. If you're using a larger/tougher green like gai lan, slice the stems into relatively thin pieces to ensure that they cook evenly.
2. Combine the soy sauce, sugar and sesame oil and set aside.
3. Heat a wok over very high heat (as hot as you can manage) for about 30 seconds. Add the peanut oil and swirl to cover the bottom of the pan. Heat until the wisps of smoke begin to appear at the edges of the oil.
4. Add the ginger and garlic to the wok and stir-fry for about 30 seconds, or until the garlic is golden but not brown. Add the choy sum and stir-fry until the leaves are wilted and the stems softened; about 2 minutes. Try to make sure that the vegetables don't mound in the center of the wok, as this will prevent them from cooking evenly. Instead, you want to keep them as spread out as possible.
5. Add the soy sauce/sugar/sesame oil and stir/toss to ensure that the ingredients are thoroughly covered. Stir-fry for an additional 30-45 seconds or so to reduce the sauce and caramelize the sugars a little bit. Remove from heat and serve immediately.

Source: <https://www.diversivore.com/universal-chinese-greens-part-1-stir-frying/>

Chinese Rice Soup

Serves: 4

Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

Broth

- 32 oz chicken stock/broth, low sodium
- 1 cup water
- 2 garlic cloves , smashed
- 1/2" ginger piece, cut into 3 slices
- 1 1/2 tbsp light soy sauce , or normal all purpose soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tbsp Chinese cooking wine or rice wine (can substitute with dry sherry, sake, or chicken/vegetable stock)
- 1/4 - 1/2 tsp sesame oil , toasted (optional)
- 1/4 tsp white pepper (sub black, can omit)



Add-ins

- 3/4 cup uncooked white rice - long grain, medium grain, short grain, jasmine
- 3 stems choy sum , cut into 2cm / 1" lengths, stems separated from leaves
- 8 oz white fish filets , cut into 1" cubes
- 1 green onion , finely sliced

Toppings (choose one or more)

- Crispy fried shallots
- Crunchy fried noodles
- Chili oil or paste

Instructions

1. **Combine broth ingredients:** Place chicken stock, soy sauce, Chinese cooking wine, garlic and ginger in a small pot over high heat.
2. **Simmer to infuse:** Place lid on, bring to simmer then reduce to medium and simmer for 5 minutes to allow the flavors to infuse.
3. **Add rice and cook uncovered for 10 minutes** - the broth surface should be bubbling very gently.
4. **Add fish and stems of choy sum, cook for 2 minutes.**
5. **Pick garlic and ginger out of soup.**
6. **Stir in choy sum leaves (they will wilt almost instantly), sesame oil and pepper. Serve immediately.**

Source: <https://www.recipetineats.com/chinese-rice-soup/>

Creamy Roasted Choy Sum Pesto Pasta

****While not a traditional preparation of choy sum, this recipe was created by a Chinese chef who wanted to explore new culinary possibilities for Chinese greens.***

Serves: 3

Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ pound choy sum, washed thoroughly
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt and pepper
- ½ pound fettuccine (any long pasta will work)
- ½ lemon (juiced)
- 3 cloves garlic (divided)
- ½ cup onion (finely chopped)
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- a big pinch of crushed red pepper flakes (or to taste)
- ½ cup toasted sunflower seeds (substitute toasted pine nuts, walnuts, pecans, etc.)



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bring a large pot of salted water to boil for your pasta. Keep the choy sum whole and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast until just starting to char, 15 minutes, turning the veggies once, halfway through baking. While that's happening, cook your pasta until 1 minute less than fully cooked. Set aside a cup of pasta water and drain the rest.
2. Transfer your roasted choy sum to a food processor with the juice of half a lemon, a clove of garlic, and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil. Pulse until well blended.
3. In a large skillet, heat a tablespoon of olive oil and add the onion and 2 cloves of chopped garlic. Cook down until golden and tender, 7 minutes.
4. Add the cream, pasta, choy sum mixture, lemon zest, and crushed red pepper flakes. Stir all together. Loosen it up with some of the reserved pasta water, if necessary, and adjust seasoning if needed. Serve sprinkled with Parmesan and toasted sunflower seeds.

Source: <https://thewoksoflife.com/creamy-roasted-choy-sum-pesto-pasta/>

