

Real Foods That Heal



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Red Cabbage

I have a confession to make. Well, two really. One is that I have liked cabbage as long as I can remember. Steamed cabbage with a little salt and pepper is one of my comfort foods. When other kids were reaching for a Wonka bar, I would have been fine with cabbage. Now that that's out in the open, my other confession is that I thought the new Charlie and the Chocolate Factory was the funniest weird movie I have seen. Or was it the weirdest funny movie? And cabbage played a memorable role in the film, by being the boring food of choice for poor people. That's the myth I'd like to dispel right now: cabbage is anything but boring (and there are much more interesting ways to cook it than steaming)! And the most interesting of all the cabbages I have met is the red/purple color.

Red cabbage is a healthy food in many ways even before we get to its anti-cancer properties. It is an excellent source fiber of vitamin C, vitamin K, and vitamin A (as natural carotenoids such as beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin). It is very low in fats of course, and of the tiny amount of natural fats that do occur in this lovely vegetable, omega 3 fatty acids are one of the largest components. It also has a very low glycemic index, meaning it does not raise blood sugar in an unhealthy way.

Red cabbage is one of the great foods specifically to reduce risk of breast cancer, for several reasons. The pigment that makes red cabbage red is called an anthocyanin, which is a type of flavonoid. Flavonoids have been extensively studied, and women whose diets are higher in flavonoids have a reduced risk of breast cancer. Red cabbage, like other vegetables in the brassica family, is also rich in a compound called indole-3-carbinol (I-3-C). Foods high in I-3-C shift the metabolism of estrogen in women to a form that is less likely to promote the growth of breast tumors. Cabbage and its relatives also are able to promote detoxification of potentially dangerous compounds when they reach the liver, helping to minimize the cancer causing risk of environmental pollutants.

Red cabbage stir fry

This simple one dish meal is quick to prepare since everything cooks at once. I will leave out quantities since you can easily adjust depending on the number of people you are serving.

First, for a protein source, cut into bite sized pieces a sufficient quantity of free-range chicken breast, or extra firm tofu if you are vegetarian. Brown in a pan with olive oil, and set aside. A delicious and healthy option is to add some slices of shitake mushroom in this sautee, and use soy sauce and crushed garlic for flavor.

Prior to chicken preparation, chop and mix in a large bowl the following vegetables: red cabbage, yellow onion, leeks, carrots, red, yellow or green peppers, and broccoli.

Toss all the vegetables into a hot wok with olive oil, taking care to keep the heat down so that the oil does not smoke, but high enough to cook the vegetables rapidly with constant stirring. When the vegetables are cooked down but still bright in color, add the chicken or tofu, more soy sauce if needed for flavor, and stir all together.

Serve hot over brown rice for a healing food feast!

To your health,

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P.S. Your family and friends deserve to know how to reduce their cancer risk by food choices. PLEASE forward this e-mail to them using the link below.

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