

Subject Index

Vegetables

AUBERGINE

...See Pages: **20, 28, 30, 33, 52, 53, 74**

BETROOT



Photo Bajo

..... See Page: **88**

BORAGE

Borage grows wild in all kinds of places, such as road verges, among hedgerows and on low hills. In some areas it is highly appreciated and grown extensively. In Europe today, borage is grown commercially but only to a small extent.

Both leaves and stalks are edible, raw and cooked, while borage flowers are used as a condiment. Borage leaves and flowers have several medicinal properties.

It is very low-calorie, and thus suitable for dieters. It is rich in minerals, especially potassium nitrate, which gives it diuretic and purifying properties; it stimulates perspiration and has a tonic effect on cardiac function. Borage leaves

contain a natural gum with powerful benefits for digestive disorders, especially constipation, and for respiratory ailments, coughs, bronchitis and liver deficiencies. It can be applied as a poultice or taken in an infusion or as juice. Borage provides vitamins A and C, and minerals like potassium and iron. It also contains flavonoids, anthocyanosides, (hepatotoxic) pyrolicidinic alkaloids, tannins and essential oil; these components also stimulate diuretic activity, perspiration and suprarenal function.



Photo Semillas Mascarell

In Spain, borage is grown in La Rioja and Aragon, where it is thought highly of. Borage is a typical winter vegetable, and is hard to find, but is much sought-after in some regions.

BROAD BEANS

Broad beans are an ideal ingredient for stews, casseroles, purées and sautés, with ham or other vegetables. The plant leaves can even be used like spinach.

Freshly picked broad beans have a sweet, slightly bitter taste, and can be





eaten raw, either with or without their encasing pod.

Broad beans are especially rich in iron, the absorption of which is enhanced by the simultaneous presence of vitamin C, and also contain potassium, sodium, phosphorus and magnesium. They are high in carbohydrates, particularly complex carbs in the form of starch. They are thus energy-packed but virtually fat-free, and provide plenty of fibre and vitamins, such as vitamin B1, folic acid, and vitamin C – about half the vitamin C that an equal weight of citrus fruit would contain.



Broad beans are starchy and low in sugars, fat and salt. Their fibre content helps protect against intestine cancer and diabetes, and they are a source of polyphenols, whose antioxidant effect protects against heart disease and possibly against cancer.

Broad beans are one of the most popular vegetables. Fresh broad beans can be kept at ambient temperature in a cool, dry place protected from light for three or four days, or for a week if kept in the refrigerator. Dry broad beans can be stored for a long time in a sealed

container in a cool, dry place. In Spain, fresh broad beans are available from November to March (Aguadulce variety, which must be planted in late autumn) and from May to August (later varieties).

BROCCOLI



Broccoli belongs to the cabbage family. Its consumption is increasing steadily, because it is a healthy food that can be prepared in many different ways. Broccoli has a pleasant flavour, is rich in vitamins and minerals and low in calories.

Broccoli may help reduce stress or nervousness and ease sleep disorders. It is a good source of iron for women during menstruation and helps lower blood pressure.

Broccoli cultivation originated in Italy. It is of the *Brassica oleracea* species, of the *italica* variety. It is so close to the cauliflower that some experts regard it as being of the same species.

Broccoli cultivation is becoming more widespread because it is healthy and easy to use. It can be cooked as a gratin, steamed and used as a garnish, or even eaten raw with dips and cheeses.

The most widely consumed broccoli variety is the green Calabrian. The Romanesco variety is considered a type of cauliflower by some experts. Another variety is Verona.

Broccoli is a great source of vitamins, especially A and C. It contains fibre and minerals such as calcium, iron and potassium. It is low in calories and fat, and thus suitable for weight-loss diets.

Broccoli is similar to cauliflower. The edible part are the unopened buds which form clusters of inflorescences, though in a more uneven and open shape than in cauliflower. According to the variety, the colour can be dark green, bluish or purple.

Broccoli is rich in vitamins and other compounds that protect against disease. It has a wide range of cancer-fighting properties, and contains beneficial compounds like vitamin C, beta-carotene and fibre.

A medium-sized broccoli floret provides 220% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C and 15% of the RDI of vitamin A in the form of betacarotene. Vitamin C and betacarotene are both antioxidants, substances which help minimise and prevent damage to human cells by free radicals. Free radicals play an important role in the aging process, and in the onset of cataracts, heart disease and cancer.

Broccoli is high in the phytochemicals known as indole carbinol and sulphurophane. Indole carbinol breaks down oestrogen, a hormone which apparently stimulates the emergence of some types of mammary tumour. Some researchers believe that a portion of

broccoli a day provides enough indole carbinol to help lower the risk of a mammary tumour appearing. Sulphurophane stimulates enzymes that protect against cancer.

The high fibre content of broccoli helps combat diabetes. Fibre improves control over blood sugar and thus reduces the need to use insulin and other medication. Potassium plays an important role in controlling blood pressure. 100 g of broccoli provides 15% the recommended daily intake of potassium. Broccoli can also help prevent heart disease. It is a good vegetable for the winter months, helping to prevent colds and flu. It is also recommended for people who lead a sedentary life or consume a lot of salt, because it helps lower blood pressure.

..... See Page: **116**

CABBAGES

..... See Page: **114**

CARROT



Carrot is one of the world's most widely cultivated vegetables. The edible part is the root, which comes in many different shapes and flavours. Carrot is rich in carotene and vitamins A, B and C.

Carotene is a precursor of vitamin A, which is necessary for growth, bone development, eyesight, tissue maintenance, reproduction and the



endocrine system. Carotene is thought to help prevent cancer, and carrot is also high in fibre and low-calorie.

The largest carrot producer is Asia, followed by Europe and the United States. World carrot output has been on the rise in recent years, and reached 18,500,000 tonnes in 1998. Over the ages carrot has been used for food and also as a source of sugar, while the Celts and Romans used its seeds for medicinal purposes. Carrot is used in its fresh form and for industrial processing into purées and frozen and tinned foods. The range of carrot cultivars increases every day, thus improving quality and widening the variety of types, shapes, root colours and growing cycle.

The characteristic colour of carrot is owed to carotene, a fat-soluble substance first extracted from carrot and thus named after it. There are two kinds of carotene, alpha and beta carotene, which are vitamin A precursors.

To varying degrees of efficiency, carotenoids are converted into vitamin A in the human body, and are the main vitamin source in vegetarian diets. Vitamin A is essential for eyesight, growth, bone development, body tissue maintenance, reproduction and hormone and co-enzyme functions. In humans, high carrot consumption has been linked to decreased risk of certain cancers. Carrot also provides considerable amounts of the antioxidant vitamin E and fibre, and lowers cholesterol.

Popular wisdom recommends carrot consumption in the form of infusions, juice, broth or syrup to fight disorders such as anaemia, constipation and arteriosclerosis.

Carrot has many curative properties: it is anti-anaemic, increasing red blood cells and haemoglobin; it helps replenish minerals; it is a tonic and supports gastric and intestinal healing; and it is purifying, diuretic, carminative and vermifugous. Carrot rejuvenates the tissues and activates the healing of wounds, ulcers and burns.

Externally, carrot can be applied to help heal wounds, ulcers, burns, boils, eczemas, herpes, chilblains, cracked skin and abscesses.

Internally, carrot is recommended to help cure anaemia, intestinal infection, diarrhoea, gastrointestinal haemorrhage, constipation, gastroduodenal ulcers, rheumatism and arteriosclerosis. Each use determines a different form: juice, on its own or with milk or honey, or in a soup or infusion.

..... See Page: **112**



Cauliflower belongs to the cabbage family. The edible part is the flower or inflorescence, much appreciated for its flavour. It can be used in many different ways, both raw and cooked. It is a rich source of minerals and vitamins. It is low-calorie and high in fibre. It has similar nutritional properties to those of other cabbages.

Cauliflower is low-calorie and high in fibre, and thus suitable for weight-loss diets. Being rich in vitamins and minerals, it helps prevent cardiovascular diseases.

Cauliflower is a very ancient crop originating in Asia. A winter vegetable, its pleasant taste is very distinctive. Cauliflower can be boiled, stewed, baked, fried, grilled with a cheese topping, puréed or added to vegetable soup. It can also be preserved in oil, in salt or in pickling vinegar.

The edible part of the cauliflower is the large rounded head of flowers, generally white in colour. A member of the cabbage family, the scientific name for cauliflower



is *Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*. There is a wide range of varieties, white, purple and green.

Cauliflower is a rich source of vitamin C and folate. A 125 g portion provides 100% of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C and at least 10% of the RDI of folate. Folate is important in normal cell development; plentiful consumption helps ensure a healthy pregnancy, and protects against cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that strengthens the immune system. Cauliflower is a source of fibre and potassium and is low-calorie. The cruciferous vegetables contain a "cocktail" of phytochemicals that help protect against various forms of cancer.

Cauliflower helps combat bronchial and intestinal disorders according to popular wisdom, and was traditionally used medicinally to treat various ailments including diarrhoea and headache. Cauliflower leaves are sometimes used to make a broth to cure hoarseness and inflammation of the bronchial mucous membrane. Being sulphur-rich, cauliflower broth also supports intestine function.

..... See Pages: **32, 132**

CELERY

Celery has long, fleshy, juicy stalks known as "sticks". Celery sticks can be eaten raw on their own or in a salad, or fried or cooked, and added as a flavouring to sauces, soups, stews, etc. The leaves and seeds of the plant can

also be used as a flavouring. Celery is used in several different ways in the food industry, to make canned celery, dried celery and even celery oil.

Celery is mostly water and its low calorie content makes it a good ingredient for weight-loss diets, especially since it also helps repress hunger. Celery is also recommended for cases of lack of appetite and slow digestion. Their carbohydrate content is low, making celery acceptable for diabetics.

Celery is a good source of vitamins, especially A and C. Two sticks of celery provide about 15% of the recommended daily intake of each of these vitamins. White celery, however, does not contain much provitamin A. Celery also contains a large amount of folic acid. It is a source of potassium and carotenoids. Celery contains flavonoids in varying proportions by cultivar. Flavonoids have an antioxidant effect that protects against cancer, and some research suggests that they inhibit arteriosclerosis and thrombosis. Celery has long been a herbal remedy for various ailments. It is well-known for its diuretic effects and its benefits for the urinary tract and bladder, and also helps relieve rheumatoid arthritis.

Celery has traditionally been regarded as a remedy against nervousness, and its essential oil has been shown to contain tranquillising agents. Other health benefits of the essential oil of celery are its mucolytic and laxative effects: it helps the elimination of liquids and stimulates hydrochloric acid production in the stomach, thus supporting digestion and protein use.

Celery provides key nutrients for skin, eyes and hair. It is claimed that celery stimulates the sex glands... it's an aphrodisiac!

CELERY ROOT

Celery root is a large, round, thick root, earthy-brown in colour.

It is an especially rich source of potassium, but also contains chlorine and phosphorus and a small amount of sodium. Celery root is a source of folic acid and vitamin C. Its main mineral is



potassium. It also provides plentiful fibre.

Celery root is low-fat and low-calorie, and is suitable for weight-loss diets. Though not yet popular in Spain, celery root is much prized in French cuisine. Chopped into strips or grated it is ideal in salads, and is a cooking ingredient for many recipes, or as a garnish for fish and meat dishes. Celery root can be enjoyed steamed, boiled, puréed or sautéed.



Photo Graines Voltz

It is not the same as celery, because the edible part is the root. The yellowish-white pulp is fleshy, hard and compact. It is very juicy and flavoursome, but sweeter and more fragrant than celery. Celery root is a diuretic and purifier, though can be indigestible when eaten raw.

Choose an unstained, large celery root and have the greengrocer cut off the head of leaves. Keep it in the refrigerator inside a perforated plastic bag. Celery root is available in Europe from October to late March.

CHERRY TOMATO

..... See Page: **36**

COURGETTE

..... See Pages: **20, 28, 30, 32**

CUCUMBER

Cucumber is a summer vegetable with an elongated shape and about 15 cm long. Its green skin lightens to yellow as it ripens. Cucumber is available both fresh and pickled in vinaigrette.

Cucumber is a very refreshing vegetable owing to its water content. It is low-fat, low-carb and low-protein. It provides vitamin C and vitamin B9, and acts as a laxative and helps relieve kidney disorders.

The cucumber varieties typically used for pickling are small, sometimes called gherkins. When choosing a fresh cucumber, make sure it is green and clear of yellow spots.



Long, fine-peeled cucumbers are known as "Dutch" or, more recently, "Almería" cucumbers. They can be eaten with the peel on but thorough washing and peeling may be advisable. Cucumber is commonly used in salads, cut into slices or strips, added to soups and stews, or puréed.

A good quality cucumber should not have fully formed pips, so the harvest takes place before pips have hardened.

Different varieties have different sizes, cross-section shapes, peel colours and degrees of bitterness. Cucumbers can be classified into oval, medium-long cylinders and long cylinders.

Popularly regarded as a vegetable, cucumber contains a modest amount of vitamin C. One hundred grams of cucumber provide around 10% of the





recommended daily intake of 60 mg per day. Cucumber is fat-free and low in calories and cholesterol, and contains cancer-inhibiting substances including phytochemicals such as phytosterols and terpenes.

Cucumber has been known for its health-promoting properties for a long time: it improves protein absorption from food, it is a laxative and detoxifier, it helps relieve kidney and gall bladder disorders, improves the appearance of skin and hair, and helps cure sunburn.

Cucumber is up to 96% water, which makes it refreshing and very low-calorie. It can be indigestible if eaten in large amounts. It should be chewed thoroughly, or can cause intestine disorders. It triggers flatulence in people with a propensity.

..... See Pages: **20, 26, 30, 31, 32, 43, 52, 53**



Endive is a salad vegetable that is forced-grown from chicory roots in a warm, dark place. The whitish or yellow leaves are crunchy, refreshing and with a slightly bitter taste that has become milder in modern varieties.

Eaten in salad or cooked, the leaves are regarded as having tonic and purifying effects, while the root contains bitter ingredients such as intibin, colin and inulin and minerals like potassium, iron and calcium.

Also known as Brussels chicory or witloef ("white leaf" in Flemish), the low sugar, protein and fat content of endive makes it a low-calorie food suitable for dieting. It is thought to be diuretic, digestive, re-mineralising, tonic and an appetite stimulant.

A rich source of vitamin A, endive also contains vitamins D and E and small amounts of vitamins C, B1, B2, B3 and B6; its calcium and phosphorus support bone and tooth growth, and, with potassium, are needed for nerve and muscle function.

Endive keeps for 5 to 7 days if refrigerated in a perforated plastic bag. Endive is generally eaten raw in salad, preserving all its nutritional properties, or boiled, roast or fried. It is traditionally combined with mayonnaise, blue cheese, ham and dips.

After the endive has been force-grown, the roots can be used as energy-packed cattle fodder.

Endive – of which roots, flowers and leaves are all edible – is a source of fibre, iron and potassium, and is regarded as mildly laxative, purifying, diuretic, choleric (stimulating bile production), stomachic, and tonic, and stimulates appetite and perspiration.

Endive is recommended for liver failure and disorders, urine retention, constipation, heavy digestion and intestinal parasites or worms, and helps clear up skin disorders when used externally as a compress.

The plant can be used as a coffee surrogate to avoid the drawbacks of coffee and take in minerals – this use is traditionally attributed to chicory, and in fact many experts regard endive and chicory as the same plant.

..... See Page: **88**



ESCAROLE

Escarole is a great source of essential minerals like phosphorus, sodium, magnesium, potassium and calcium, and provides vitamins, folic acid and folates. The edible part of the plant is its leaves, which can be curled or flat, and range in colour from green to yellow.



Escarole is a slightly bitter-tasting vegetable with high nutrient and vitamins content and used mainly in salads. It combines well with celery, tomato, onion, anchovy, walnut and fruit. The greener, harder leaves can be used in stews, broths and purées. The bitter taste is accentuated on cooking, so it is a good idea to squeeze some drops of lemon juice over the escarole first and change the cooking water after a few minutes.

Escarole is very good for the stomach, and refreshing, laxative and purifying, because its leaves contain a bitter compound, intibin, that stimulates appetite, supports digestion and enhances bile vesicle function.

Like chicory and endive, escarole is high in carbohydrate and fibre. It is eaten raw in salads or in cooked recipes. It is a low-calorie food that provides vitamins and minerals.

FENNEL

Sweet fennel gives off a powerful scent, and the fennel we have today is a variety of common or wild fennel.

For its pleasant fragrance and support for easy digestion, fennel is used in cooking as a condiment for recipes – especially fish dishes – and as a dressing for olives. Its crunchy, fleshy texture, its distinctive aroma and mild, sweet taste makes it increasingly appreciated as a vegetable.



Photo: Bejo

Boiled with other vegetables, fennel is very flavoursome and combines well. It is a great herb for flavouring fish, with a unique aniseed scent, and is thus a frequent ingredient in Mediterranean cuisine.

Fennel can also be boiled, steamed, or used as a flavouring for meat, fish, pulses, rice or pasta. It is wonderful when raw, in salads, especially if you use the tender bulbs and white, thick, fleshy fibres of the stalk.

FIELD MUSHROOM



Mushrooms are available all year, sourced from different countries. Their delicate flavour and special texture makes them an increasingly cooking





ingredient. At room temperature (18 to 20°C) mushrooms keep only for one or two days, so it is important to keep them refrigerated.

Mushroom is consumed fresh and tinned, raw and cooked, in salads, fried or roast, and as a garnish for a whole range of dishes, and even in sauces.

It is a very popular food whose health benefits are becoming better known. In Spain, La Rioja is the main mushroom producer.

Mushrooms are low-calorie, and thus suitable for weight-loss diets. They provide protein, vitamins – B-group vitamins especially – minerals and fibre. The dietary fibre in mushrooms helps prevent intestinal disorders, including colon cancer, and has a satiating effect that supports weight loss. Mushrooms are good for the intestine and the stomach, and help eliminate phlegm and regulate energy.

They contain two components that protect against cancer. These are selenium and an inhibitor of aromatase (an enzyme involved in oestrogen production, which is thought to have a carcinogenic effect on post-menopausal women). Selenium is an antioxidant that destroys the free radicals that attack cells and can lead to cancer. Coupled with vitamin E, selenium eliminates toxic substances and accumulated heavy metals from the body. Its selenium content makes mushroom a suitable food to promote prostate health, and combat premature aging, arteriosclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, infertility and acne.

..... See Page: 135

GARLIC

Garlic is especially appreciated in southern Europe for its strong flavour. Its sulphur content is responsible for a wide range of medicinal properties, and it is sought-after as a condiment for its powerful and distinctive taste – it is one of the most widely used ingredients in Mediterranean cuisine.

Garlic is key ingredient in many recipes (Galician ajada, aioli sauce, Malaga



ajoblanco, Basque zurrurutuna, and more). Garlic is also harvested when still in the form of green shoots, for other culinary uses. Garlic shoots are sown at the same time as garlic generally, but picked when the bulb only just starts to form.

Garlic is one of the natural remedies with the greatest scientifically proven medicinal properties. Awareness is now being raised of the beneficial properties of garlic in a bid to encourage wider consumption.

Garlic is good for the circulation and lowers blood pressure. Raw garlic is a



powerful purifier of the blood and is especially good for the heart. It helps lower so-called “bad cholesterol”, and is indicated in cases of high blood pressure, tachycardia, arteriosclerosis and hyperlipidaemia.

But it is low-calorie. Garlic provides vitamins C, B1 and B3, and the minerals potassium, calcium, phosphorus, iron and magnesium, but its value chiefly lies in its various sulphur compounds, mainly allicin. These compounds have health benefits, eliminating harmful bacteria from the stomach and intestine, disinfecting the digestive system, and producing an expectorating effect.

..... See Pages: **72, 80**

KOHLRABI

Kohlrabi, *Brassica oleracea gongyloides*, derives its name from the German words kohl and rabi. It is a cabbage cultivar bred for its almost spherical fleshy root, sometimes jokingly compared to the Sputnik.

The kohlrabi was bred by artificial selection as a meristem-growth plant by crossing wild mustard (wildkohl) and wild white turnip.

It is generally chopped into 1 cm dice, boiled for under a quarter of an hour and added to soups or salads. The leaves, though only rarely edible, are sometimes cooked and served as cabbage.



Photo Bojo

Kohlrabi can be eaten both raw and cooked. It is high in selenium, vitamin B, folic acid, vitamin C, potassium, magnesium and copper, and provides 24 kcal per 100 g.

100 g of kohlrabi contains: 24 kcal, 92 g water, 380 mg potassium, 68 mg calcium, 43 mg magnesium, 63 mg vitamin C. (Source: Souci. Fachmann. Kraut 1994).

LAMB'S LETTUCE



Lamb's lettuce is a delicious herb that withstands the cold and grows wild in fields and meadows. Its small green leaves are arranged into a distinctive rosette pattern, which are used as a delicately flavoured salad ingredient or to decorate ambitious recipes.

The taste is sweet and slightly nutty, with a somewhat piquant aftertaste that will add a touch of distinction to your salads. Its delicate savour means the rest of ingredients should not have overpowering tastes. The smaller the leaves, the more tender and flavoursome, and ideal for eating raw. The crunchy texture is somewhat reminiscent of plant shoots. It requires only a light, mild dressing if you want to enjoy its herby, fresh and slightly spicy appeal.

Lamb's lettuce is best kept in the fruit and vegetable locker of the refrigerator; it will be good for four days, but it is best to buy the leaves very shortly in advance of use so as to enjoy its properties - use within two days.



Lamb's lettuce is a health food. It is particularly high in vitamins A and C, vitamin B6, iron and iodine. It also contains potassium, manganese and phosphorus. Lamb's lettuce is a low-fat, low-calorie food that helps balance out the winter diet. It provides protein and vigour thanks to its chlorophyll and other micro-nutrients.

Lamb's lettuce is available in Spain from October to March.



LEEK

Leek has been grown since ancient times for its edible cylindrical bulb at the base of its leaves. It is thought to have originated in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, where it was already grown 4000 years ago. Leek is much prized as a flavouring, and can be eaten raw or in purées, soufflés and tarts. It provides vitamins, minerals and essential oil.

Leek is diuretic and antiseptic, and helps relieve kidney disorders, arthritis and rheumatism.

Leek belongs to the same family as garlic and onion, but, unlike them, its bulb is narrow. The larger the white section of a leek, the better the quality: this is achieved by repeatedly burying the base of the leaves.

Leek is used in many haute cuisine dishes, particularly as a condiment. Recipes include vichyssoise, a typical cold summer soup, and leek is also used

in soufflés, purées, tarts and savoury pastries. It can be eaten raw in a salad. The green leaves can be used to lend flavour to stocks and stews.

Leek is a low-calorie food, with low protein and fat content, and thus eligible for weight-loss diets. But it provides vitamins and minerals and an essential oil that supports digestive function.

Leek is low-calorie, but provides vitamins and minerals and contains an essential oil that stimulates appetite, supports digestive function and clears the stomach and intestine of fungi and bacteria. It helps relieve bronchial congestion, and, being high in fibre, is a satiating food with laxative properties. Leek oil contains allicin, a sulphurous substance that lends flavour and aroma and has major curative and preventive properties. Leek is high in folic acid, which is necessary for tissue growth and white blood cell formation. It also contributes potassium, iron and vitamins C and B6, as well as magnesium, calcium, phosphorus and vitamin A. Iron is necessary for red blood cell formation and magnesium for nervous function.

Popular wisdom has it that leek is diuretic and antiseptic, and helps relieve kidney disorders, arthritis and rheumatism. It is also of use for people who suffer from colics, kidney stones, urine retention, kidney failure and arteriosclerosis.

Leek roots blended with milk act as a vermifugous remedy, and can be macerated in white wine for kidney disorders. Leek broth is a very old cure for rheumatism.

Leek can be applied externally to cure boils and against urine retention and cystitis, insect bites, wounds and face rashes.

..... See Page: **72**

LETTUCE

..... See Pages: **32, 72**



MINIMAL PROCESSING (IV GAMMA)



..... See Page: **38**

ONION

The onion is the edible bulb of the onion plant. Of Asian origin, onion was grown by the Sumerians in 6000 BC. From the region of what is now Iran and Pakistan the crop spread across Europe, and from there to the Americas. There is now a wide range of varieties, classifiable by bulb colour, shape, size, uses, origin and precocity. Onion has many culinary uses, both raw and cooked. Onion is a member of the Liliaceae family, and its scientific name is *Allium cepa*.

Onion has been used traditionally as a medicinal plant, and features in a wealth of recipes and remedies for various ailments, whether as a juice, tincture, wine, poultice, infusion or simply roast.

Onion is a tunic bulb, which means it comprises several layers, as can be observed on slicing. The layers are leaves arranged one upon the other, which thicken and become fleshy. Onions can be of different shapes, sizes and colours, varying from white to yellow and red. Varieties can be classed by use, taste, colour, shape or precocity. Onion is consumed raw, fried, boiled and baked, almost always as a flavouring ingredient. There are also several by-products: dehydrated onion is used

in the food industry as a flavour enhancer; onion powder is used to make onion salt; onion oil is blended into vegetable or used to fill capsules; tinned and bottled onions; frozen onion rings; and pickled onions. Spring onions are also available, fresh and in bunches.

Onions can also be classified by country or origin and use. The different onion varieties can be classified by characteristics such as bulb shape, which can be globular, flattened, turbinated, disc-shaped, pear-shaped, oblate or conical; by bulb size; by bulb colour (inner layers), which can be white, yellow or red. In the UK and the US, onions are also classified by taste type. Mild onions are sweet, while strong onions are "hot". Mild onions tend to be earlier, and have less soluble solid content, while strong onions mature later in the year and provide more nutrients.

Onions can also be classified by use. Bulb varieties are grown for their bulbs, while salad varieties – also known as spring onions, and sold by the bunch – have a white outer membrane and a sweet taste. Varieties intended for pickling have small bulbs with a silvery outer membrane and a piquant taste.



Onion is relatively low in vitamins and minerals, but high in sulphur-containing essential oils. A plethora of health benefits have been found for this vegetable, including: it is bacteriostatic; it activates bile secretion; stimulates digestive function in the intestine; lowers blood pressure; supports blood



regeneration in cases of severe anaemia; acts as a diuretic, expectorant and intestinal disinfectant. Onion is useful against rhinitis, facial neuralgias, tonsillitis and pharyngitis, earache, colds and infectious diseases. It is antiseptic, vermifugous and lowers blood sugar.

The characteristic strong smell of onion only comes forth when the onion is sliced: its endogenous enzymes trigger the formation of a tear-inducing compound called allicin. Allicin then breaks down into other sulphurous compounds that seem to help control diabetes and blood lipid levels.

It has been shown that onion, especially those with coloured tissue, are a major source of flavonoids, a substance whose antioxidant activity protects against cardiovascular diseases and possible against cancer. Flavonoids, in the form of glucosides, are extraordinarily stable during storage and cooking. Onion can play a key role in maintaining a balanced diet.

Among its health benefits, onion helps protect against stomach disorders, including cancer and ulcers. Its vitamin B content aids the nervous system. Onion has been used for medicinal purposes since ancient times. It is used in different forms whether as a juice, tincture, wine, poultice, infusion or simply roast.

Popular wisdom claims that a poultice of clay and onion helps clear up acne. It is also effective against fever. For a sore throat or loss of voice, the traditional cure is a maceration of onion and lemon. Onion broth is indicated for cystitis, while the common cold calls for a syrup of onion and lemon.

A maceration of garlic, onion and lemon juice is said to combat high blood pressure. Onions marinated in dry white wine are thought to aid kidney function.

Get rid of toxins by drinking an infusion of fresh onion. When cooked with honey, onion is purifying and vermifugous. Onion juice is good against bee and wasp stings, coughs, colds, asthma and bronchitis. Onion wine is vermifugous and diuretic. An onion poultice is a cure for headaches,

abdominal inflammation, tonsillitis, wounds and haemorrhoids.

Onion contain 15% carbohydrates and B-group vitamins. Popular tradition claims that it is diuretic, detoxifying and anti-rheumatic and helps ease menstruation pains. A soup of parsnip, onion and leek is recommended for its diuretic properties.

..... See Pages: **74, 81, 95, 112**

PARSLEY



Parsley is a highly nutritious food that contains vitamins A, C, B1 and B2, and large amounts of iron, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, iodine, magnesium and other minerals.

It is the most widely used culinary herb in the world, adding a touch of flavour or as decoration.

Parsley is widely used to flavour all kinds of recipes, sauces, fillings, omelettes, fish and meat, and also decoratively. Parsley can be flat-leaf or curled - flat-leaf parsley is used mostly as a flavouring, and curled parsley for decoration.

A special variety known as "large parsley" is popular in Germany, where it is cooked as a vegetable or used as a flavouring, but never eaten raw. Some claim that chewing a sprig of parsley is the best way to suppress the smell of garlic on one's breath.



PARSNIP

Photo Semillas Mascarell

Parsnip, *Pastinaca sativa*, is the fleshy root of the parsnip plant. It is cream-coloured and generally 20 to 30 cm long. Parsnip is very aromatic and has a sweet, hot taste. Before the potato was introduced into Europe, the parsnip was a major winter food owing to its reserves of sugars and starch.

It is a source of fibre and potassium. It also contains a small amount of vitamin C, which is usually lost in cooking. Fibre consumption helps protect against digestive tract disorders, including intestinal cancer.

Parsnip grows wild all across Europe on fallow fields and grassland, and is especially abundant in England and Wales and in the Caucasus. Parsnip is eaten as a vegetable in its own right and in soups and purées. This tuber is composed mostly of water, followed by carbohydrates, chiefly starch, which does not cause caries.

Parsnip is one of the vegetables with the highest fat content.

It provides a large amount of soluble fibre that helps lower blood cholesterol. Every 100 g of parsnip provides 22 to 64 kcal. When buying parsnip, avoid the larger ones: the texture may be hard and woody. Parsnip keeps very well in the refrigerator or frozen, provided it is done properly. Parsnips can be eaten raw in salads, or boiled, baked, candied or puréed. It can also be used to make a kind of pale wine. Parsnip is available in almost any greengrocer's.

It is a source of fibre and potassium. Fibre consumption helps protect against digestive tract disorders, including intestinal cancer.

PEAS

Peas belong to the family of leguminous plants, although they are popularly regarded as a vegetable. With broad beans, they are the only pulses that can be eaten raw when their seeds are harvested fresh.

Peas originated in the Middle East and Central Asia, where they have been grown for thousands of years and feature in many of the typical dishes.

Depending on the variety, peas have smooth or wrinkled skin and are of different colours (most commonly green, but also yellowish green, greenish blue or brown), shapes and sizes (round or flattened).

Dry peas are energy-packed owing to their high carbohydrate (mostly starch) and vegetable protein content. They are also a source of vitamin B1 and of fibre – especially in the skin, which lends them rigidity and hardness.

PEPPERS

Peppers are vegetables of variable shape, size and colour. They can be green, red, yellow, orange and even black, and their flavour ranges



from mild and sweet to hot and piquant.

The vast range of different pepper varieties includes long peppers used for salads and frying – “Italian peppers” – and the more conventional kinds include square California peppers and the long Lamuyo peppers, with their multiple culinary uses.



Varieties of bite-sized peppers of different colours have been developed which are set to become a widely popular snack food.

The soils and climate of Spain allow for growing many kinds of peppers, some of which bear official quality marks tied to their region of origin and traditional production methods, such as Pimiento Asado del Bierzo, Pimiento Riojano, Pimiento del Piquillo de Lodosa, Pimiento de Guernika, Pimiento de Padrón, and peppers used to make pimentón (Spanish paprika powder), such as Pimentón de La Vera o el Pimentón de Murcia, and some very narrow, long peppers, such as Guindillas de Ibarra.

.....See Pages: **20, 26, 30, 32, 42, 52, 53, 73, 134**

POTATO

Potato is one of the world's most widespread crops. It is used for human consumption, as animal feed, and as a raw material for the food industry's

manufacture of crisps, potato flakes, frozen potatoes, etc. A vast number of countries grow potatoes, in a huge range of varieties. Potato is a good source of energy, with high folate, vitamin C, B-group vitamin, iron and potassium content. It is dangerous to eat greenish potatoes because they contain a substance which in large amounts can be poisonous.

There are thousands of potato varieties around the world. One reasonable basis of classification is the length of the cultivation cycle, ranging from 90 to 200 days. This means potatoes can be termed 'early', 'semi-early', 'semi-late' and 'late'. Potatoes of different varieties and cultivation cycles are suited to different uses.



The potato is a starchy round or oval tuber with protuberances called 'eyes', which are in fact growth buds. Size varies considerably, and skin colour ranges from yellow to purple.

According to PBHF, in nutritional terms the potato, a staple food, is a good source of energy (75 kcal per 100 g) and folate, vitamin C, thiamine (vitamin B1), potassium and iron, and provides a significant contribution of protein. A sufficient amount of potato to satisfy energy needs makes for a balanced mix of nutrients, except fat-soluble vitamins. The phytochemicals in potato include coumarins and anthoxanthins.

Potato extract is good for digestive tract disorders such as ulcers, gastritis, etc.



Starch is good for gumboils, wounds, burns, rashes, etc. Potato is 75% water, 15% starch, 2% protein and only 0.1% fat. It contains carbohydrate, potassium, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus and a large amount of vitamin C.

Potato is also rich in B-complex vitamins, vitamins B1, B6 and pantothenic acid. Contrary to a widespread misconception, potato is an energy food suitable for diabetics and the overweight, and aids intestinal functions by acting as ballast. It is also thought to have anti-ulcer and wound-healing properties.

Raw potato extract is good for dyspepsia, gastritis, gastric and duodenal ulcers, liver disorders and bile stones, constipation, haemorrhoids, glycosuria and diabetes florida, owing to its properties as a diuretic, emollient and antispasmodic and its soothing action on the digestive mucous membranes. Starch, for its topic emollient effects, is recommended for gumboils, erysipelas, burns, atonic wounds, leg ulcers, rashes and cracks.

..... See Page: **126**



PUMPKIN

The edible varieties can be elongated or rounded, with a ribbed surface and of a colour ranging from yellow to orange, sometimes streaked with green. The rind is hard and contains a bright orange or yellow pulp with a slightly sweet flavour and a mass of edible seeds.

Pumpkin pulp is used in Spain for making *cabello de ángel*, a sweet filling for cakes and pastries. It is also cooked, fried, grilled, served with sauce or as a garnish for a range of recipes. It can also be used to make compote and jam.

Winter varieties are widely used for bakery purposes; pumpkin is grown both for the fruit and the seeds, which are highly prized as nuts. Even the leaves and flowers of the plant can be eaten as vegetables. Pumpkin is high in fibre, vitamins, enzymes and pigments.

Its fibre content helps cure constipation. It is low-calorie and low-carb, thus making it very suitable for diabetics and the overweight.

The bright orange colour indicates its high carotenoid content, which is transformed by the body into vitamin A. Vitamin A is essential for eyesight, growth, bone development, body tissue maintenance, reproduction and hormone and co-enzyme functions. Carotenoids also have protective antioxidant properties. Pumpkin also contains potassium and vitamins E and C.



RADISH

Radish varies widely in the colour of its skin, from red through white, purple and black to red and white combined; red varieties are the most widespread. The flesh is white, except for some Asian radishes, which are pink. The flavour is variable, the mildest being small, elongated red-and-white radishes.



The radish is a piquant-tasting root of variable size, shape and colour. Varieties can be round, conical, cylindrical or oval. Radish has gradually become a very popular hors d'oeuvre eaten raw with its traditional cross-cut and a pinch of salt, or in salads, sandwiches or other preparations dressed with olive oil, salt and vinegar.

Most of the therapeutic properties of radish are owed to its containing sulphur compounds thought to be powerful antioxidants that help prevent disease. Radish is ideal for dieting because of its very low calorie content. Its sulphurous components combat bacteria and viruses and have a balsamic and expectorant effect, making radish suitable for people with respiratory disorders. These compounds also have a diuretic effect, enhanced by the potassium content.

Radish stimulates the digestive glands and increases appetite, and is thus good for people with anorexia and gall bladder and liver disorders.



an ancient city in Palestine where it may have been grown profusely.

Shallot or scallion is a little-known vegetable. The edible portion is the bulb. The flavour is halfway between onion and garlic, and it is highly prized by leading chefs for the delicate aromatic touch that it lends to a recipe.

It is not grown in Spain to any commercially significant degree. Output is low, and scallion is infrequent on the market. Its main uses are culinary, and it is devoid of any major medicinal use.

Nutritionally, it is rich only in phosphorus, fluorine and potassium. It is a re-mineralising and stimulating food mainly composed of water. It is very low in protein and fat, and contains some carbohydrates, being a low-calorie food overall.

Scallion is regarded as having a more delicate flavour than onion, and generally replaces onion in the more sophisticated recipes, such as in high-class French cuisine.



RUNNER BEAN

..... See Pages: **20, 32 43, 195**



SCALLION



Scallion is very much like onion, but smaller and comprising cloves, like garlic. The name comes from Ashqelon,

SPINACH



Spinach are easily prepared and delicious both raw and cooked. Available fresh, frozen and tinned, spinach is a versatile vegetable: it is the main ingredient in spinach cream, it can be sautéed with raisins and pine-nuts to make espinacas a la catalana, or added to soup, sautéed, steamed, scalded, etc.



Spinach is nutritious, flavoursome and easily digested. Regarded as the “queen of vegetables” by the Arabs, its exquisite flavour is coupled with high nutritional value. The delicious green leaves can be eaten raw in salad or cooked.

Like most leaf vegetables, spinach is high in water, and low in protein, carbohydrate and fats; its vitamin and mineral content, on the other hand, is greater than that of the rest of vegetables.

Spinach is one of the vegetables that is richest in calcium, magnesium, iron and potassium, and in vitamins A, C and folic acid. To enhance iron absorption, spinach should be eaten in conjunction with vitamin C-rich foods, such as tomatoes and orange juice or other citrus fruit. Spinach is an effective treatment for anaemia, speeds up blood replenishment after an operation and helps treat internal bleeding.

Spinach should be kept dry and loose in a plastic bag in the lower section of the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to 3 or 4 days. Choose spinach with green, fresh, crunchy leaves and a pleasant smell. Fresh spinach is available all year.



Photo Semillas Mascarell

Swede, also known as rutabaga, is a thick white root similar to turnip, and much prized in Central and Eastern Europe.

The pulp is yellow, while the outer skin varies in colour by cultivar, the

best-known being white, red-necked white and smooth with short leaves. All are similar in their nutritional properties.

Rutabaga contains potassium, and its diuretic action makes it suitable for people with kidney disease.

It can be boiled, fried or even grated raw into a salad; it is usually peeled, chopped and boiled and then puréed.

The leaves are also edible, and contain almost twice as much carotenes, vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus and iron than the bulb.

If the leaves are fresh and tender they can be used to make delicious stews. Choose a smooth, unstained rutabaga of medium size - the larger ones can be very fibrous; it will keep for up to three weeks in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator.

The potassium, phosphorus and magnesium content and low sodium makes rutabaga suitable for people with heart trouble and high blood pressure. Made up chiefly of water and carbohydrates, rutabaga is low-calorie, and hence suitable for dieters.

SWEET CORN



Sweet corn is sold on the cob or as loose grains, fresh, tinned or frozen.

Corn grains are usually juicy and bright yellow when ripe. They are highly nutritious and are often used to make a range of products, such as popcorn.





Sweet corn is a frequent ingredient in salads, sauces and cold starters.

Sweet corn is highly nutritious, providing carbohydrates, protein and fibre, plus vitamins and minerals. Its health benefits help prevent heart disease, nervous disorders, etc.

Sweet corn grains are tightly packed and bound to a central core, forming rows of 8 to 30 grains or juicy seeds when unripe and then hardening. Depending on the variety, the colour is yellow, white or reddish. Corn cobs are known in Spanish as panochas, panojas or mazorcas.

Sweet corn is available, fresh, frozen and tinned, as a whole cob or in the form of loose grains used to make salads, sauces and garnishes. Corn can be used to make popcorn, pasta, wafers, bread, flakes, etc. In Asturias, Santander and Galicia, corn is the main ingredient of borona; in Central America, it is used to make atole (grits made from cornflour); in Italy, polenta (boiled cornmeal); in Argentina, locro; and in the Canary Islands, gofio, made with cornmeal or cornflour. Corn can also be used to make oil or as a fermentation substrate to make alcohol. Ripe, dry corn grains are used as animal feed, and some varieties are used as fodder.

Corn provides a lot of calories in the form of sugars and protein, and fibre and a range of vitamins and minerals, such as folic acid. It is a good source of

vitamin C and low in sodium. It is free of saturated fats and cholesterol, and thus helps reduce the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.

A population that depends on corn as its staple food may suffer from nicotinic acid deficiency (pellagra) unless the grains are treated with alkali, a common process to separate the husks to release niacin. Nicotinic acid plays a key role in energy metabolism and in the nervous system.

Sweet corn is said to support nervous function, act as a stimulant, improve intellectual performance and concentration, provide nutrients to maintain healthy skin and hair, enhance endurance under stress, improve mood, rejuvenate, stimulate cell growth and aid cell respiration, stimulate red blood cell formation in the bone marrow, strengthen muscles and the heart, regenerate connective tissue, strengthen the immune system, and help reverse loss of libido and impotence.

..... See Page: **88**

SWEET POTATO

Sweet potato, like the potato, is a tuber, but its high sugar content makes it sweet. It mostly composed of carbohydrates, which account for 20% of its weight.



In Spanish, it is known as boniato, batata or camote. Sweet potatoes can be light red, brownish-yellow or off-white; the most widely grown worldwide are pink or red-skinned, with a white pulp.

The sweet potato is one of the best-rounded foods, with a good energy/protein ratio. Its combination of nutrients and carbohydrate content make it a restorative food providing a high energy boost. Raw sweet potato contains sugars such as sucrose, glucose, fructose and sometimes maltose, with concentrations varying by cultivar.

Carotene content also differs by variety. Sweet potatoes with orange pulp are higher in carotene, while cream-coloured ones are low, and white-pulp sweet potatoes are wholly devoid of it.

In cooked sweet potato, maltose concentration rises steeply, because cooking breaks down the starch into maltose and dextrins. In cooked sweet potato, maltose concentration rises steeply, because cooking breaks down the starch into maltose and dextrins. Other carbohydrates found in sweet potato are various forms of fibre, including pectic substances, hemicellulose and cellulose.



It also contains vitamins and pigments. Sweet potato is consumed cooked, the classic method being oven-roasting. Sweet potato can also be fried or puréed and used to make cakes, soufflés and fillings. It goes well with cinnamon, coconut, lime and nutmeg, and is a

suitable garnish for pork and poultry dishes. Sweet potato is a very low-fat, cholesterol-free food.

SWISS CHARD



Photo Semillas Fitó

After spinach, Swiss chard is one of the vegetables with the highest calcium content. It is refreshing, laxative, diuretic and digestive. Swiss chard can be steamed, cooked or sautéed. It is important to wash them before cooking, bear in mind that their volume shrinks drastically in the cooking process, be careful not to over-salt the recipe, and not to overcook, to prevent them from releasing larger amounts of oxalic acid - which is bad for people who suffer from kidney stones.

Both the green leaves of Swiss chard and its stems are edible. The flavour is reminiscent of spinach but milder. With age, Swiss chard loses its nutritious properties and to become bitter, especially in the stem.

This vegetable has many medicinal and nutritional uses. Its high fibre content makes it ideal against constipation. It is also very good for weight-loss diets, because it is satiating, nutritious and very low-calorie. Swiss chard effectively soothes digestive and intestinal problems. It is mildly diuretic and relieves irritation in the urinary tract.

Choose smaller bunches of Swiss chard, which are more flavoursome. Make sure the leaves are firm and unstained. Swiss chard spoils easily even in the





refrigerator: it keeps for about four days if kept in an open or perforated plastic wrap.

Its high iron content makes it advisable for people with anaemia. Its powerful alkalinising effect is key to aiding the absorption of minerals. Its only drawback is that it contains oxalic acid, and must thus be consumed in moderation by people with kidney stones.

Besides iron, Swiss chard provides calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, iodine, folic acid and some vitamin B.

Swiss chard is available all year both fresh and frozen.

..... See Page: **72**

TOMATO



The tomato is the world's leading vegetable and is consumed in all kinds of ways. Today, there is a vast range of varieties grown all year round, with different sizes, shapes and colours.

Red round tomatoes, smooth beef tomatoes, ribbed green tomatoes, salad tomatoes, tomatoes on the vine, cherry tomatoes, pear tomatoes and tomatoes for industry. These are just some of the myriad cultivars on the market, and the number is set to increase even further.

The emergence of new tomato types and varieties will arouse interest in the retail world. Consumption will continue to rise if growers and distributors are able to keep in touch with consumers,



who will invent new cocktails, snacks, salads and other innovative recipes, while becoming informed about the flavour, smell and vitamin content of tomatoes.

Tomatoes are defined by the word "healthy". They have exceptional antioxidant properties. They contain lycopene, which, together with other compounds, reduces cancer risk, among other benefits. Tomatoes provide a mass of vitamins that the body needs, as well as being a rich source of potassium and zinc.

..... See Pages: **20, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 37, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 52, 53, 72, 93, 110, 113**

TURNIPS

Turnips, which can be round, flattened or cylindrical, are a fleshy root with a white pulp encased in a fine yellow or white skin, sometimes even green or purple.

The plant belongs to the same family as cabbages and crucially contains sulphur compounds, which are powerful antioxidants that help prevent diseases. Today, it is usually only the root that is consumed; the leaves, known as grellos in the Santiago and Blanco de Lugo varieties, are only consumed in Galicia,

where they are cooked much as spinach, or even added raw to salads.

Turnip is low in calories, protein, carbohydrate and fat, and is thus suitable for weight-loss diets. It is very rich in vitamins and minerals, providing a considerable amount of vitamin C and folic acid, potassium (238 to 318 mg per 100 g of fresh product), and, to a lesser extent, calcium, phosphorus, iodine and sodium.



Photo Semillas Fitó

Turnip serves to lend mildness to a wide range of dishes and is a common ingredient in pot recipes, such as cocido madrileño and cocido canario. Being a root that stores nutrients, it contains a small amount of sugars and is a source of fibre, about half of which is soluble fibre. This helps maintain low blood sugar and cholesterol levels. The other half is insoluble fibre, which aids digestive tract function.

Turnip keeps very well for about a month in the vegetable locker of the refrigerator.

Information drawn from:
Fruit & Veg, PBHF y El "saber popular"

