
Swiss Chard 101

Don't discount this versatile green.





Swiss chard has expansive, pocketed leaves with stems in a spectrum of colors: red, white, green, or yellow. The term “Rainbow chard” does not denote a variety of chard, but rather is simply a seed mix of white-stemmed Swiss chard, red chard, and golden chard. Chard is actually in the beet family but doesn't develop a bulb. Its leaves are more tender and delicate than other greens. Eat small leaves raw in salads and blanch or steam larger leaves. You can freeze chard for recipes later.

How to store:

ATTENTION: HIGHLY PERISHABLE. Store chard in a plastic bag in the fridge for up to a week. For longer storage, you should separate and cut out the stems and store those separately. Try to eat this veggie early on, as the leaves will limp out on you quickly!

Picking out your Chard:

Bright green leaves and fresh-cut stems are the name of the game! Avoid bunches with yellowing or wilting leaves, or browned stalks. Small, tender leaves cook more quickly, but larger ones are great for braising.

Pairs Well With:

Balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, crème fraîche, goat cheese, garlic, bacon.

Preparing your Chard:

Wash leaves in basin of lukewarm water to remove grit. Remove the thicker stems by folding the leaves down the center and cutting out the stem. Stack several leaves on top of each other and slice into 1-inch wide ribbons. You can chop and use the stems for stir-fry, soups, or wherever you use celery.

Best Uses:

Raw in a salad	Smoothie
Soup	Sautéed
Wilted in pasta skillet meal	Lasagna
Quiche or Frittata	Juice
Pesto	Pizza Topping
Snack Chips	Gratin
Braised	Stir Fry
Stuffed Leaves	Pickles (Stems)
Dip	Roasted (Stems)
DIY Veggie Broth	

Substitutes:

Spinach, beet greens, kale, arugula, collards, radish greens, broccoli leaves

How to Freeze:

Blanch leaves for 2 minutes in a pot of boiling water. (Blanch stems separately for 3 minutes). Place leaves and stems in ice water for 2 minutes. Use a strainer to fish out the leaves. Dry leaves by placing them on a towel. Roll it up and squeeze to remove excess water. Quick-freeze small clumps of chard individually on a cookie sheet. After they're frozen, place clumps into freezer bags in bulk. Remove as much air as possible from bags before sealing.

6 Ways to Use Chard Stems

Don't throw those stems in the compost! Here are 6 ways you can cook with them!

Refrigerator pickles: These pickled chard stems are spicy, sweet, acidic, and especially pretty when made with rainbow chard.

Soup: Throw them in with the onions and carrots in place of celery. The crisp stem will create great flavor.

Dip: Swiss chard stalks and tahini can be combined in a Middle Eastern dip similar to baba ghanoush.

Vegetable stock: Toss the stems in the freezer along with other vegetable scraps. When you've collected enough, make an easy vegetable stock.

Roasted: Yup! This popular vegetable exit strategy works for the stems too. Just toss with olive oil and salt and put them on a roasting pan.

Stir Fry: Crispy texture makes them perfect for a quick stir-fry.



Chard ribs and stems are crisp and thick, almost like celery. They should be cut out and cooked separately in many cases. I like to use them like celery.

Suggested Recipes

Sautéed Swiss Chard with Bacon

Ingredients:

2 pounds chard, red-ribbed, green, or rainbow

3 slices bacon

1/4 cup diced onion, optional

1/2 teaspoon Creole seasoning or seasoned salt blend

Pinch garlic powder, optional

Salt and pepper, to taste

Hot pepper sauce or vinaigrette for serving, optional

Directions:

Wash chard and cut stems into 1/2-inch pieces. Cut leaves into 1-inch strips or chop coarsely.

In a large kettle or Dutch oven, cook the bacon with onion until bacon is crisp and onion is lightly browned.

Add the chard, Creole seasoning, and garlic powder to the bacon. Cover and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until wilted and tender, about 5 minutes.

Taste and season with salt and pepper, as needed. Serve with hot pepper sauce or a favorite vinaigrette.

Sheet Pan Bratwurst, Beets, and Chard

Adapted from www.thekitchn.com

Serves 4 to 5

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

1 bunch Swiss chard, thick center stems removed

6 uncooked pork bratwurst sausages

1.5 pound small red potatoes, cut in half lengthwise

1.5 pounds golden beets (about 6 medium), trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1/4-inch-thick rounds

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons caraway seeds

Directions:

Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 375°F. Pour 2 tablespoons of the oil on a rimmed baking sheet and brush or rub with a paper towel to coat the entire surface.

Place 2 or 3 large chard leaves on the baking sheet in a rough rectangle whose width equals the length of your sausage (usually about 6 inches), overlapping the leaves so there are no holes. Place 1 sausage at one end of the rectangle and roll the chard around it, ending seam-side down. It will not be flat or neat. Slide the sausage roll to a corner of the pan. Repeat with all the chard and sausages, tucking them next to each other.

Place the potatoes in a row next to the chard-wrapped sausages. Place the beets next to the potatoes. Sprinkle the potatoes and beets with the salt and pepper. Sprinkle the beets with the caraway seeds. Drizzle the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil over the beets and potatoes and gently toss, keeping the beets separate from the potatoes.

Roast until the bratwursts are cooked through and the tip of sharp knife pierces both the beets and potatoes easily, 40 to 50 minutes.

Swiss Chard Slaw with Creamy Avocado Dressing

Adapted from thekitchn.com

Serve this over tacos or as a simple salad.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup very thinly sliced red onion (from about 1/4 medium onion)

1 tablespoon Mexican hot sauce

1 medium bunch Swiss chard

1 large or 2 small carrots

1 medium avocado

1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro

1/4 cup vegetable oil

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon water

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon salt

Black pepper

1/4 cup roasted pumpkin seeds, plus more for serving

Directions:

Place the onion and hot sauce in a large bowl and toss to combine; set aside while you make the salad and dressing.

Cut and remove the stems of the chard. Stack the leaves and thinly slice crosswise into ribbons. Transfer to the bowl with the onions (do not mix). Peel and grate the carrot on the large holes of a box grater and add to the bowl of chard and onions; set aside.

Scoop the flesh of the avocado into a blender. Add the lime juice, cilantro, oil, water, cumin, and 1/4 teaspoon of the salt. Season with pepper, and blend until smooth. Taste and add more seasonings or lime juice as needed.

Transfer the dressing into the bowl of Swiss chard and add the pumpkin seeds and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Transfer the slaw to a serving bowl and top with more pumpkin seeds before serving.

This recipe yields about 3/4 cup of dressing and is also great as a dip. It can be made up to 2 days in advance and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Press a piece of plastic wrap on the surface of the dressing to keep it from browning.

Garlicky Swiss Chard

From NYTimes Cooking

Ingredients:

2 bunches Swiss chard, stems removed

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 garlic cloves, minced

Large pinch crushed red pepper flakes

Salt

Directions:

Stack chard leaves on top of one another (you can make several piles) and slice them into 1/4-inch strips.

Heat oil in a very large skillet (or use a soup pot). Add garlic and red pepper flakes and sauté for 30 seconds, until garlic is fragrant. Stir in the chard, coating it in oil. Cover pan and let cook for about 2 minutes, until chard is wilted. Uncover, stir and cook for 2 minutes longer. Season with salt.

Spicy Sausage and Chard Pasta

Adapted from Sunset.com

Ingredients:

12 ounces whole-wheat or regular linguine

12 ounces hot Italian sausages, casings removed

1/2 cup chopped onion

2 large garlic cloves, chopped

1 bunch Swiss chard, stems discarded and leaves chopped

5 Roma or medium beefsteak tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1/2 cup whipping cream

1/3 cup slivered fresh basil leaves

Shaved parmesan cheese

Directions:

Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, heat a large, wide pot over medium heat. Cook sausage, onion, and garlic, stirring frequently, until sausage starts to brown, about 5 minutes. Add chard and tomatoes and cook, covered, until chard wilts, about 4 minutes. Stir in cream.

Put drained pasta in a large, shallow serving bowl. Pour sausage and chard mixture over pasta and sprinkle with basil and parmesan cheese.

Sautéed Swiss Chard with Garlic and Lemon

www.foodandwine.com

Ingredients:

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

3 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced

4 pounds rainbow or ruby chard—thick stems discarded, inner ribs removed and cut into 2-inch lengths, leaves cut into 2-inch ribbons

Salt and freshly ground pepper

1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

Directions:

In a large pot, heat 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Stir in the garlic and cook over moderately high heat until lightly golden, about 1 minute. Add the chard leaves in large handfuls, allowing each batch to wilt slightly before adding more. Season the chard with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until the leaves are softened and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 8 minutes. Transfer the chard to a bowl. Wipe out the pot.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil to the pot. Add the chard ribs and cook over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the wilted chard leaves and season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a bowl, sprinkle with the lemon zest and serve right away.

Swiss Chard and Pecan Pesto

allrecipes.com

Ingredients:

1/2 cup olive oil, divided

10 leaves Swiss chard, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 cup basil leaves

1 cup pecans

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1 tablespoon lemon juice

(3 ounce) package grated Parmesan cheese

salt and ground black pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat 2 teaspoons of the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir the Swiss chard and garlic in the hot oil until the chard leaves have wilted, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Process the basil, pecans, sea salt, Parmesan cheese, and remaining olive oil in a food processor until all the ingredients are well integrated. Add the Swiss chard mixture and the lemon juice to the food processor; continue chopping until the mixture is pureed. Season with salt and pepper.