



Collards with country ham and kielbasa
— Brig Cabe / Examiner

confirms that the antioxidants in dark, leafy greens help ward off cataracts. Further, researchers at the University of Liverpool in England found that eating plentiful greens reduces the risk of developing colon cancer.

Health concerns aside, greens make just plain good eating. Available year round, cooked greens become really welcome additions to the cold-weather table. But they do need some beforehand preparation: Before cooking, rinse them well to remove any sand and trim off tough stem ends; cook up the smaller, more tender stems with the leafy part. Experiment: Braise, steam, stir-fry or sauté (but don't overcook!) — and season liberally — greens until you find the method and recipe you like best. Don't be fooled by their bulk: One pound of greens cooks down dramatically, and offered as a side dish, may serve only two people.

Collards with country ham and kielbasa

This robust dish comes together very quickly, dispelling the myth that collards take forever to cook. If you like heat with your food, add more crushed red pepper, and for an incendiary version, try a few sprinkles of hot pepper sauce. Offer this collards mix with a side of steamed brown rice or scoops of good, old Southern grits.

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, cut into thin circles
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced lengthwise
- 1 1/4-oz. package kielbasa, preferably turkey, sliced in half lengthwise then into thin pieces
- 1 1/2 lbs. collard greens, stems trimmed
- 1/2 cup diced country ham.
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper, or to taste

1. Heat the oil in a large stockpot over medium heat, and sauté the onion and red bell pepper slices for 7 to 10 minutes, or until tender. Remove from the pan, and using the same oil, brown the sausage until skins darken.

2. Meanwhile, stack 8 or 9 collard leaves on top of each other; and roll them tightly into a tube. Cut the tube crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick strips; repeat until all the leaves are used up.

3. When the sausage pieces are browned, stir in the sliced collard greens and 3 tablespoons of water. Cover and steam until the leaves begin to wilt, about 5 minutes. Uncover, and cook 3 to 4 minutes more. Stir in the onion, red bell pepper, and the country ham, and serve hot. Serves 3 to 4.

Swiss chard tart with leeks

Elegant yet homey, this tart can glamorize a brunch table or work equally well as a casual dinner. Filled with cheese, nuts, eggs and greens, this becomes a meal in one.

- Bread crumbs for sprinkling
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 large leek, rinsed, quartered and thinly sliced
- 1/2 lb. ruby chard, trimmed and coarsely chopped
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded fontina cheese
- 1 3-oz. package pine nuts, toasted
- 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Spray a 10-inch pie pan with cooking spray, and sprinkle it generously with bread crumbs.

2. Heat the oil in a large stockpot over medium heat, and sauté the leeks about 5 minutes, or until wilted. Add the chard and stir well. Cover and cook over medium heat 2 to 3 minutes, or until wilted. Meanwhile, beat the eggs in a large mixing bowl and stir in the ricotta and fontina cheeses.

3. Drain off and squeeze off any liquid from the chard, and spoon the chard-leek mixture into the cheeses. Stir in the pine nuts and the Parmesan cheese. Season with freshly ground black pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan.

4. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the top is golden and the center

GOOD FORTUNE FARM

■ Good Fortune Farm is located at 18001 Horsehead Road, Brandywine, Md.

■ Its primary crops are seasonal certified organic market vegetables, free-range eggs and poultry, including chicken and turkey.

■ For more information go to www.localharvest.org/farms/M7175 or call 301-579-2105.

is firm. Serve hot. Serves 6.

Sautéed kale with Italian sausage

An ideal partner for a shaped pasta like fusilli, the kale-Italian sausage combination with its flavor layers deserves a regular place on the fall and winter table. For a change of pace, substitute dried cranberries for the raisins, and for more heat, use hot Italian sausages instead.

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- About 1 lb. mild Italian sausage, thinly sliced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 lb. kale, trimmed, coarsely chopped
- 2 cups chunky tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/2 cup raisins, soaked to plump, optional
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a large skillet and cook the sausage pieces over medium heat about 12 minutes, or until browned. Meanwhile, heat the remaining 1 tbsp. oil in a large, deep saucepan over medium heat and sauté the onion about 5 minutes, or until translucent.

2. Add the kale with its leaves still wet from rinsing, cover and steam about 8 minutes. Stir in the tomato sauce and continue cooking. Drain off excess fat from the sausage, and stir sausage into kale mixture.

3. Add the feta cheese, raisins if using and season with pepper. Serve hot. Serves 6.

CINDY GREENBERG

VineGal



Taking your wine out for dinner

I was recently on the phone making plans to get together with another couple that the Vine Guy and I had not seen in a while. My friend and I had just agreed on a new French bistro in the District when I casually asked, "So, what type of wine would you like us to bring?" Dead silence. "Hello? Are you still there?" My friend's reply simply stunned me: "You can bring your own wine to a restaurant?"

I just assumed everyone knew that you could take your own wine to certain restaurants. Guess not. So I figured that this was not only a great opportunity to become the Ann Landers of wine, but also a great idea for a column.

First off, restaurants in Montgomery County can only sell wine that they purchase through the county and are prohibited from allowing patrons to bring in their own wine. Period. End of discussion.

Virginia is a little less restrictive. In general, guests cannot bring their own wine to a restaurant. However, if the restaurant is either a private club or has a dedicated room for private functions, you may be allowed to bring in your own wine at the discretion of management.

In Washington, District law allows patrons to bring their own wines to a restaurant that has a corkage (opening outside wine) policy. It is important to understand that the ability to bring your own wine to a restaurant in the District is a privilege, not a right.

Now that you know where you can take your wine, let's talk etiquette. First, it is very poor form to take wine to any restaurant where the same wine is offered on their wine list. I strongly advise that you call the restaurant ahead of time to let them know what wine you are bringing so you can avoid this situation.

Next, make sure you understand the restaurant's corkage policy and pricing since both can vary widely. With that said, the District does dictate that a

restaurant that has a standing corkage policy may not charge more than \$25 per bottle.

Here are a couple of examples of how corkage policies can vary.

At Charlie Palmer Steak in Washington, there is no corkage fee for the first two bottles of domestic wine (there are only American wines on their extensive wine list). The fee for additional bottles or any non-domestic wine is \$25 per bottle. Fair enough.

At Vidalia, also in Washington, the corkage philosophy is a little different.

The corkage fee is only \$15 per regular size bottle of wine, up to two bottles per table, regardless of pedigree. But don't try to bring in any more. Mike Nevarez, the general manager, says the restaurant is extending a "courtesy to diners who are celebrating a special occasion or who would like an opportunity to enjoy a unique bottle of wine. But," he continues with a chuckle, "once in awhile, someone will bring in two magnums (an oversized bottle that holds two regular bottles) and insist it should still count as only two bottles."

Shame on them.

When you bring your wine to a restaurant, you are using their stemware and the sommelier's time. So be respectful of the restaurant's policy. After all, it's a restaurant, not a catering hall.

Lastly, I recommend that you always offer a taste of the wine to both the sommelier and your server. A little kindness goes a long way. And a sip of a unique wine just might help the server forget the bottle of wine they could not sell to your table. (P.S. — I always try to order at least one bottle of wine off of the wine list as a way of showing my appreciation).

So, when you want a special night out with that extraordinary bottle of wine you've been saving, just remember to call the restaurant ahead of time to get the scoop. That way, you'll be assured of having a pleasant experience.

Got a wine tip? E-mail me at cindy@vineguy.com.