

# A Guide to African Vegetables



**New Entry Sustainable  
Farming Project**



# New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

*To assist recent immigrants to begin sustainable farming enterprises in Massachusetts*



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## Amaranth

*Amaranthus creuentus*

**Other Common Names:** African spinach, Calaloo



### History and Background of Crop

Thousands of years ago, grain amaranth was domesticated as a cereal. Now, vegetable amaranth is a widespread traditional vegetable in the African tropics. It is more popular in humid lowland areas of Africa than highland or arid areas. It is the main leafy vegetable in Benin, Togo, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.

### Common Culinary Uses

Amaranth is consumed as a vegetable dish or as an ingredient in sauces. The leaves and tender stems are cut and cooked or sometimes fried in oil. Amaranth dishes are usually eaten with a main dish of cereal grains or tubers.

## STEAMED GREENS WITH GINGER AND WATER CHESTNUTS

3 cups amaranth greens, stems removed  
 1 tsp finely minced, peeled fresh ginger  
 1 tsp finely minced fresh garlic  
 1/2 cup diced canned water chestnuts (rinsed and drained)  
 1/2 Tbsp sesame seed oil, or as needed

First, sprinkle ginger and garlic over the top of the greens, then evenly drizzle a small amount of oil on top. Steam the greens until they are just tender, watching carefully as they make take as little as 30 seconds.

Meanwhile, heat a small amount of oil until hot in a small non-stick pan. Add water chestnuts and saute for 30 seconds. With a slotted spoon, immediately transfer to a plate covered with 2 sheets of paper towel.

As the greens become tender, transfer to a serving plate. Scatter sautéed water chestnuts on top. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe from [www.culinary.net](http://www.culinary.net)



## Cabbage

*Brassica oleracea L.*

**Other Common Names:** Headed cabbage, Kabichu



### History and Background of Crop

This brassica has its origins in western Europe around the Mediterranean Sea, where it evolved from leafy kale-like plants. Cabbages were likely domesticated about 2,000 years ago, before which they were collected from the wild, primarily for medicinal purposes.

### Common Culinary Uses

Cabbage dishes are great accompaniments to meat dishes. The leafy head of cabbage is often boiled in soups or stews or sliced for stir-fries, casseroles, and salads like coleslaw. It can also be pickled or fermented in brine for sauerkraut.

## KACHUMBARI (EAST AFRICAN COLE SLAW)

1 hot chile pepper, optional; cleaned, seeds removed, and chopped  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2-4 tomatoes, thinly sliced  
Juice of 1-2 lemons or limes or 2-3 T of vinegar  
1 tsp of salt  
1 cucumber, peeled and sliced  
1 small cabbage, shredded  
Chopped fresh cilantro leaves

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Toss to coat all ingredients with liquid. Set aside in a cool place for 20-30 minutes before serving. Serve within 12 hours.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Yard-Long Bean

*Vigna unguiculata*

**Other Common Names:** Asparagus bean, cowpea, black-eyed pea



### History and Background of Crop

This crop originated in Africa, with the most genetic diversity occurring in the savannah region of West Africa. The long bean is now the most important pulse crop in West and Central Africa, where its cowpea seed is also a widely used source of fodder.

### Common Culinary Uses

The seed, leaves, and pod of long beans are all used in cooking. The cowpea seed is cooked together with vegetables and spices, often to make a soup. Long bean leaves are often served boiled or fried and are eaten with a porridge. The seedless pod is sometimes used as a cooked vegetable, but this is a relatively uncommon use in Africa.

## AKARA (BLACK-EYED PEA FRITTERS)

Peanut, palm, or vegetable oil for frying  
2-3 cup dried black-eyed peas  
1 onion, finely chopped  
Hot chile pepper and/or sweet green or red pepper, to taste, finely chopped  
1/2 tsp fresh ginger root, peeled and minced  
Cayenne pepper or red pepper to taste  
Salt to taste

Clean the black-eyed peas in running water. Soak them in water for at least a few hours or overnight. Remove skins by rubbing them together between your hands. Rinse away skins and drain in a colander.

Crush, grind, or mash the black-eyed peas into a thick paste. Add enough water to form a smooth, thick paste of a batter that will cling to a spoon. Add all other ingredients except oil. Letting the batter stand for a few hours or overnight improves the flavor.

Heat oil in a deep skillet. Beat the batter with a wire whisk or a wooden spoon for a few minutes. Make fritters by scooping a spoonful of batter and pushing it into the hot oil. Turning frequently, fry until golden brown. Serve with African hot sauce or salt as a snack, an appetizer, or a side dish.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Hardy Yam

*Dioscorea batatas*



### History and Background of Crop

This species of yam, originating in Japan, can thrive in temperate zones. These tubers are used for medicinal purposes in China and Japan.

### Common Culinary Uses

Yams are a staple throughout much of Africa, where they are used to make fufu. The tubers can be boiled, baked, fried, mashed, grated, and added to soups. The roots are edible and have a nice flavor when baked, and the leaves are often used as greens.

## GREENS WITH TOFU

- 1 bunch yam greens, spinach, or salad greens
- 1 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- 8 oz. extra firm tofu
- 2 ripe tomatoes, seed and chopped
- Flour
- 1 T vegetable oil
- 3/4 c extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 c vinegar, balsamic or cider
- 1 tsp spicy brown mustard (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Drain the tofu and cut into cubes. Coat lightly with flour and brown in 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Season as desired. Divide the greens among plates or place in a large salad bowl. Sprinkle with chopped tomatoes, feta cheese, and browned tofu.

In a small bowl, combine olive oil, vinegar, garlic, and mustard. Whisk until blended and season to taste. Drizzle over salad and serve.

Recipe from [www.recipetips.com](http://www.recipetips.com)

## Cassava

*Manihot esculenta*

**Other Common Names:** Yuca, Tapioca, Manioc



### History and Background of Crop

Cassava was brought by Portuguese traders to Africa where it has become a staple source of carbohydrates in humid, tropical regions. Today, Nigeria and Zaire are some of the top producers of this crop worldwide.

### Common Culinary Uses

Generally grown for its roots which are a major starch source. These can be boiled, baked or fried. The young tender leaves can be used in a similar manner to spinach. Some cassava is not eaten raw because of potentially toxic concentrations of cyanogenic glucosides, which are destroyed with heat in cooking.

## GREENS IN PEANUT SAUCE

- 1-2 lbs cassava leaves, collard greens, or spinach
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 c peanut butter (or peanuts)
- salt and pepper to taste
- cayenne pepper or red pepper to taste

If you are using peanuts instead of peanut butter, make your own homemade peanut paste. Remove the peanuts' shells, roast the peanuts on a baking sheet in a hot oven, or in a large skillet on the stove, stirring often. Remove the skins. Place the peanuts in a saucepan, add a few tablespoons of water to partially cover them and bring to a slow boil, stirring often. Reduce heat. Crush peanuts with a potato-masher.

In a large pot, bring 2 cups water to a boil. Add greens. Cover and cook on high heat for 10 minutes, stirring often. Reduce heat. Remove most of the liquid from the pot and save half of it. Add tomatoes and onion to the greens, stir and simmer for 10 minutes or more. In a bowl, combine the peanut butter with enough of the liquid from the cooking pot to allow it to be mixed until smooth. Add the peanut butter mixture to greens. Season to taste. Simmer on very low heat until greens are tender.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Collard Greens

*Brassica oleracea L*

**Other Common Names:** Leaf Cabbage



### History and Background of Crop

This crop was likely domesticated 5,000 years ago, and it is now grown throughout the world. It was developed from species that originated around the Mediterranean Sea. Collard greens are popular throughout East and southern Africa, but less common in Central Africa. Leaf cabbage is the most popular leafy vegetable in the highlands of Kenya and surrounding countries. Most Americans know collards as a side dish popular in the southern U.S.

### Common Culinary Uses

Collard greens are grown for consumption of the fresh leaves. Traditionally, shredded greens are prepared in salted water with ingredients such as onions, tomatoes, garlic, and peanuts.

## BRAISED COLLARDS

4 bunches collards or turnip greens, long stems and tough ribs removed  
1/4 c butter  
1 onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes  
Salt and pepper to taste

Plunge greens into a large pot of boiling, salted water and cook until tender. Remove the greens to a bowl and set aside. Reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water.

Heat the butter with the onion, garlic, and pepper flakes in a wide skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the garlic is lightly colored and the onion is soft. Add the greens, the reserved cooking water, and 1 tsp salt. Cook for 10 minutes, or more to your liking, and taste again for salt and pepper.

Serve with hot sauce or peanuts as a side.

From Deborah Madison's *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

## Tomato

*Lycopersicon esculentum*



### History and Background of Crop

The tomato genus originated in the South American Andes, with evidence suggesting the tomato was domesticated in Mexico. In the 17th century, the tomato was introduced from Europe to Asia and later to the United States, Africa, and the Middle East. The tomato is one of the most important vegetables throughout the world.

### Common Culinary Uses

The edible, fleshy tomato fruit is consumed fresh in salads, cooked in sauces, and flavors soups and meat or fish dishes. Processed forms such as puree, juice, ketchup, and canned tomatoes are widely used as well.

## PEANUT TOMATO SAUCE

1-2 Tbsp peanut oil (or another vegetable oil)  
1-2 onions, chopped  
1-2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 cup tomato paste or tomato sauce  
1 cup peanut butter (natural is best)  
1 cup water  
Cayenne pepper, red pepper, black pepper, and salt to taste

Fry the onions and garlic in heated oil. Stir in tomato paste. Reduce heat and simmer for a few minutes. Stir in peanut butter (if using peanuts, first shell and roast them, then grind or mash them into a paste, adding water if needed). Be sure to use a very low heat or peanut butter will scorch. Stir in enough water to make tomato paste and peanut butter into a smooth sauce. Add spices to taste. Stir. Simmer to thicken. Cook or serve with chicken and/or vegetables.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)



## Sweet Potato Greens

*Ipomoea batatas*



### History and Background of Crop

The sweet potato dates back to pre-historic times, likely originating in the tropical climates of Peru and Ecuador.

### Common Culinary Uses

These vines have a delicate texture and can be used similarly to spinach or turnip greens.

## SWEET POTATO GREEN AND MUSHROOM STIR-FRY

- 1 T corn oil
- 1/4 lb sweet potato vines, cut into 3-inch lengths
- 1/4 lb mushrooms, caps only
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 small carrot, julienned (about 1/3 cup)
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- Salt to taste

Heat the oil in a wok or skillet. Add the vines and mushrooms and stir-fry over medium heat for 1 minute. Add all the other ingredients and stir-fry for another 8-10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Recipe from *The Korean Kitchen* by Copeland Marks

## African Eggplant

*Solanum aethiopicum*

**Other Common Names:** Garden egg, Bitter tomato, Bitterball, Aubergine, Tingne



### History and Background of Crop

Grown throughout tropical Africa and South America (mainly Brazil) and also in southern France and Italy, African eggplant is one of the most commonly consumed vegetables in tropical Africa. This slightly sweet, tender fruit ranges in color depending on the variety and is part of the nightshade family.

### Common Culinary Uses

Grown for the immature fruit and leaves, this bitter variety of eggplant is often cooked in stews and soups to complement other flavors and sometimes eaten raw. The leaves and shoots are also cooked.

## EGGPLANT CURRY (Mchuzi wa Biringani)

- 2-3 Tbsp cooking oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1-2 tsp curry powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp grated ginger
- 1-2 hot chile peppers, cleaned and chopped
- 2 large eggplants, chopped, salted, and squeezed to partly remove moisture
- 3-4 potatoes, chopped
- 2-3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 small can tomato paste
- salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper or red pepper to taste
- 1/4 tsp sugar
- 1 cup coconut milk

Heat oil in a large pot. Saute onions for a few minutes, then add curry powder, garlic, ginger, and chile pepper. Continue frying over high heat for a few more minutes, stirring continuously. Add eggplant and potatoes. Stir and fry until eggplant begins to brown. Reduce heat. Simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and tomato paste. Adjust seasoning. Simmer until sauce is thickened and the vegetables are tender. Stir in coconut milk just before serving. Serve with chapati or rice.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Groundnut

*Arachis hypogaea*

**Other Common Names:** Peanut



### History and Background of Crop

Originally from a species of groundnut that was native to Bolivia and Argentina, this cultivar species was introduced to West Africa around 1560. Groundnuts are an important cash crop around the world. Belonging to the legume family, the seeds are a rich source of edible oil and proteins.

### Common Culinary Uses

The nuts (seeds) can be eaten roasted, crushed into peanut butter, or flavorful oil can be extracted from them.

## PEANUT SOUP

- 2-3 c chicken or vegetable stock or broth
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 small sweet green or bell pepper, minced
- 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- Salt, black pepper, and red or cayenne pepper to taste
- 1 hot chili pepper, minced (optional)
- 1 carrot, finely chopped (optional)
- 1 yam or sweet potato, boiled and mashed (optional)
- 1-2 tomatoes, chopped or canned (optional)
- 1 cup natural unsweetened peanut butter or homemade peanut paste

To make peanut paste, roast the peanuts in a baking pan in a hot oven or on the stove in a large skillet, turning often. Remove the skins from the peanuts and mash them with a mortar and pestle, mince them with a knife, crush them with a rolling pin, or use a food-processor.

If using homemade peanut paste, simmer it with the broth for fifteen minutes, then add all other ingredients and simmer over low heat until everything is thoroughly cooked. Stir often. Soup should be thick and smooth.

If using peanut butter, combine all ingredients except the peanut butter and simmer over medium heat until everything is tender. Reduce heat, add the peanut butter and simmer for a few minutes more. Stir often. Soup should be thick and smooth.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## African Spinach

*Basella alba L.*

**Other Common Names:** Kontomire, Malabar Spinach, Ceylon or vine spinach



### History and Background of Crop

While the exact origin of this crop is unknown, it may be native to southeastern Asia. It is widely cultivated in the tropics for sale in markets, and it is even grown as an annual crop in temperate zones.

### Common Culinary Uses

This variety of spinach has large, meaty leaves and is rich in minerals, protein, and vitamins. This green has a taste similar to spinach but has a slimy, sticky consistency when cooked. African spinach can be cooked or used like any other spinach or greens as it has a similar earthy flavor. This vegetable is often added to soups or stews, but it is also fried in oil or used as a salad green.

## COTTAGE SPINACH SALAD

- 1 lb fresh spinach, washed and torn
- 1 lb cottage cheese
- 1/2 c pecans, chopped
- 1/2 c sugar
- 3 T cider vinegar
- 1/2 c sour cream or yogurt
- 1 T horseradish or to taste
- 1/2 t dry mustard
- 1/2 t salt

Wash and dry spinach leaves, then tear into bite size pieces, and put in a large salad bowl. Add the cottage cheese.

Mix the sugar, vinegar, sour cream, horseradish, dry mustard, and salt together until well blended. Pour the blended contents over the top of the spinach and toss.

Garnish with pecans and enjoy!

Recipe from [www.recipetips.com](http://www.recipetips.com)

## Purslane

*Portulaca oleracea*

**Other Common Names:** Pigweed



### History and Background of Crop

Purslane occurs throughout the world particularly in warm areas. In Africa, purslane grows in the tropical regions. It is one of the oldest leafy vegetables, used in Europe, Japan, Australia, the Americas, and Africa, where it is especially popular in Sudan and Egypt. Purslane is gathered from the wild or grown for home consumption or local markets.

### Common Culinary Uses

The fleshy, succulent stems and leaves of this trailing weed are eaten in salads or cooked as a vegetable.

## TOMATO, POTATO, AND PURSLANE SALAD

- 1 lb firm ripe plum tomatoes
- 3 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and boiled
- 2 medium red onions, halved and thinly sliced (about 1 and 3/4 cups)
- 2 small, round cucumbers, washed, peeled, and cut into 1/4 inch slices
- 1 hot green chili, seeded and chopped
- 1 small bunch purslane, thick bottom stems removed, broken apart by hand
- 2/3 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3 T red wine vinegar or more to taste
- Salt to taste

Wash and core the tomatoes, then cut them in half lengthwise. Drain the potatoes, rinse under cold water, and cut into 1-inch cubes or chunks. Place the potatoes at the bottom of a large serving bowl. To build the salad, add the tomatoes, the purslane, onions, cucumbers, chilli, and parsley. Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, and salt and pour over salad just before serving.

Recipe from [www.gourmet.gr](http://www.gourmet.gr)

## Huckleberry

*Solanum scabrum*

**Other Common Names:** Garden Huckleberry



### History and Background of Crop

Huckleberry is likely to have originated in the warm humid forests of West and Central Africa, but this crop is now very common in lowland and highland regions of West and East Africa.

### Common Culinary Uses

Huckleberry leaves and fresh shoots are widely used as a cooked vegetable, often served with corn, plantains, potatoes, and yams. The fruits are similar in texture and taste to blueberries, although slightly more tart. They contain edible seeds and can be used in many of the same recipes as their blueberry cousins.

## GREENS WITH GREEN PEPPER

- Oil for frying
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 sweet green or bell pepper, chopped
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped (or canned tomato, drained)
- 1-2 lbs greens, cleaned, stems removed
- 1/2 c peanut butter
- 1/4 c water
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Cayenne pepper or red pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion and green pepper until they begin to become tender. Add tomato and spinach or greens and water. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer until all are tender, stirring occasionally. Add spices and peanut butter. Reduce heat as low as possible, and stir sauce until smooth. Serve as a side or with fufu.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)



## Kale

*Brassica oleracea L.*

**Other Common Names:** Leaf cabbage



### History and Background of Crop

Like collard greens, kale is a member of the cabbage family originating in western Europe around the Mediterranean Sea.

### Common Culinary Uses

This member of the cabbage family has ruffled leaves and a hearty flavor. The tough stems and ribs should be removed before the greens are cooked. Kale can be substituted for spinach in most dishes (with longer cooking time). Try it in soups, pasta sauces, stir-fries, omelettes, or sautéed as a side dish.

## SAUTÉED KALE

1 bunch kale  
2 tsp oil  
Chopped garlic  
Chopped onions or leeks  
Salt and pepper to taste

First blanch the kale by dropping into a large pot of boiling water until just wilted. Drain and cool before squeezing out excess moisture. Accelerate cooling by running the kale under cold water.

Once kale is blanched and chopped, it can be sautéed quickly in a small amount of oil. Add 2 tsp oil to a non-stick pan for about 3 cups of blanched kale. Heat the kale along with a generous amount of finely chopped garlic. Add chopped onions or leeks if desired, and cook all until tender. Serve as a side dish to accompany beans, meat, chicken, or fish.

Recipe from [www.wholehealthmd.com](http://www.wholehealthmd.com)

## Hot Peppers

*Capsicum annuum*

**Other Common Names:** Chillies



### History and Background of Crop

The genus *Capsicum* originated in Central and South America, but members of the genus have been crossed so that many intermediate forms occur. Therefore, they are treated as one large group of cultivars. The aromatic hot pepper was likely introduced to West Africa later than the chili pepper.

### Common Culinary Uses

Peppers are consumed in fresh, dried, or in processed form. Hot peppers are usually consumed in small quantities as a condiment or spice for seasoning.

## AFRICAN HOT SAUCE

1 dozen hot peppers  
1 small sweet green or bell pepper  
1 clove garlic  
1 medium onion  
2 cans tomato paste  
4 Tbsp vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon salt

Remove stems and seeds from peppers. (BE CAREFUL! Wear kitchen gloves, and do not touch your eyes or face while handling hot peppers! Wash your hands with soap and water after you have handled hot peppers.) Grind or process hot peppers, green pepper, garlic, and onion. Combine all ingredients in a sauce pan. Simmer for 1-2 hours. Add cayenne pepper if desired. Put in jars and refrigerate.

Serve with everything!

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Palava Sauce

*Silverbeet spinach*

**Other Common Names:** Spinach, Silverbeet, Melokhia, Jute Greens



### History and Background of Crop

This is just one of the many types of greens found throughout tropical Africa. The slightly bitter leaves are eaten as vegetable, typically chopped and served in soups, stews, and sauces. It is also used in traditional medicine to treat a variety of ailments.

### Background of Dish

There are many variations of this traditional spinach and greens dish from West Africa. It's precise origin is unsure—some say it's from Nigeria, Ghana, or Sierra Leone. This dish is also called Kontomire, Kentumere, or Nkontomire.

## PALAVA SAUCE

2 lbs palava sauce / jute greens / spinach  
1/4 pint of water  
2 lbs meat, chicken, or dried fish  
1 green onion, chopped  
8 T palm or peanut oil or 4 oz. butter  
2 medium onions, thinly sliced  
3 tomatoes, finely chopped  
4 small hard boiled eggs, finely chopped  
2 eggs, beaten  
12 oz. cooked kidney beans  
1 tsp. nutmeg  
Salt  
Water

Place greens in a saucepan, add water, and boil for 10 minutes. Strain and reserve liquid. Chop the greens. Cut meat, chicken, or fish into pieces, place in a saucepan, and sprinkle with a little salt. Add chopped green onion and water to cover. Simmer gently for 10 minutes.

Heat oil or butter in a saucepan. Fry onions, tomatoes, and hard boiled eggs. Add beaten eggs. Simmer gently for 5 minutes. Add beans, meat, chopped greens, and 1/2 pint stock from spinach and meat. Add salt and nutmeg. Stir well. Simmer gently for 1 hour, or until meat is tender. Serves 4-6.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)

## Kittely

*Solanum macrocarpon*

**Other Common Names:** Small Bitterball, NganNgan



### History and Background of Crop

Kittely is just one of the more than 100 species of eggplant indigenous to Africa. Wild species of this crop are still found through tropical Africa. It is also cultivated for its fruit and green leaves.

### Common Culinary Uses

This small, round eggplant is slightly sweet and bitter. Usually dried or preserved, kittely is often used to thicken soup. The leaves, fruit, and roots of this crop serve a variety of medicinal purposes.

## KITTELY STEW

2 lbs kittely (fresh or dry)  
3 hot peppers (optional)  
1 large onion, sliced  
3 T bouillon  
2 T salt  
1 T season salt  
1 T black pepper  
8 small pieces of dry fish  
1/2 lb fresh seafood, like crawfish (optional)  
1/2 pound fresh beef  
1/2 pound fresh chicken  
1 1/2 cups vegetable or olive oil

Soak the dry fish overnight in water, replacing the water a few times, to remove some of the saltiness.

Boil the kittely along with 1 teaspoon salt for about 40 – 50 minutes. Drain the water and rinse the kittely. Add all the other ingredients to the pot, and cook very well for about 55 – 60 minutes until it is almost dry. Meanwhile, puree the boiled kittely with a potato masher or in a blender or food processor. Return the pureed kittely to the pot, and mix well into the cooked soup.

Serves 10 hearty meals over rice.

Recipe courtesy Hawa Massaley Ballah

## Mustard Greens

*Brassica juncea L.*

**Other Common Names:** Leaf mustard



### History and Background of Crop

This green is related to the cabbage family. Before domestication, mustard greens grew wild around the world for thousands of years, primarily in Asia and Europe. This crop is grown for its seeds and green leaves.

### Common Culinary Uses

Mustard greens have a slightly bitter, sometimes spicy flavor. Add mustard greens to soups or stews or combine with the sweeter flavors of sweet potatoes, corn, or carrot. Young, tender leaves can be used in salads.

## POTATO SOUP WITH MUSTARD GREENS

2 T olive oil or butter  
2 onions, finely diced  
3 small bay leaves  
2 lbs potatoes, peeled  
2 T parsley, chopped  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 bunch mustard greens  
Red pepper flakes to taste

For the soup, first heat the oil in a soup pot over medium heat, add the onions and bay leaves, and cook slowly. Meanwhile, quarter and thinly slice potatoes.

Add the potatoes, raise the heat, and sauté, stirring frequently, until the onions begin to color and a glaze builds up on the bottom of the pan, about 10 minutes. Add 1-2 tsp salt and 1 cup water, and scrape the bottom of the pan. Add 2 quarts water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer, partially covered, until the potatoes are soft, about 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaves, taste for salt, season with pepper, and stir in the parsley. Run some soup through a food mill or processor for a soup with more body.

Boil 1 bunch mustard greens in water, without their stems, until tender and bright green, about 10-15 minutes. Drain and coarsely chop the greens. Stir them into the soup with a few pinches of red pepper flakes. Serve hot, with parmesan to taste.

From Deborah Madison's *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*

## Okra

*Abelmoschus caillei*

**Other Common Names:** West African okra



### History and Background of Crop

Okra traces its roots to Ethiopia and Sudan. As early as the 13th century, okra was known to be growing along the Nile River and is currently grown mostly in humid climates in Africa. Common okra can be found worldwide throughout the tropics, subtropics, and warm temperate regions. Okra is a member of the mallow family and closely related to hibiscus and cotton.

### Common Culinary Uses

Young, immature okra are consumed cooked or fried. In West Africa, they are usually boiled in water to thicken soups or sauces. The okra fruit can be dried, and leaves are sometimes consumed as well.

## OKRA AND GREENS

1 onion, chopped  
2 Tbsp palm or other cooking oil  
1 cup water  
1 lb greens, cleaned, stems removed, and shredded (cassava leaves, kale, or collard greens)  
20 young okra  
2 cups palm butter, canned palm soup base, or peanut butter  
2-3 chili peppers, chopped (or cayenne pepper)

Heat oil in a large pot. Saute onions until translucent. Add water and bring to a boil. Add all remaining ingredients. Cook until all the vegetables are tender, stirring often.

Recipe from [www.congocookbook.com](http://www.congocookbook.com)