

## ENDIVE



Endive (*Cichorium endivia*) is variation of chicory which can be cooked or used in salads.

In 2005, Yuma County producers grew a little over 150 acres of Endive valued at \$1.2 million.

Endive is part of the genus *Cichorium*, made up of bitter leaf vegetables. It is divided between *Cichorium endivia* and *Cichorium intybus*. The former includes Chicory, Belgian Endive (witloof), and Radicchio.

There are three main varieties of endive: Frisée, curly endive and escarole.

Curly endive, sometimes mistakenly called chicory, has green, rimmed, curly outer leaves. Frisée has finely cut, frizzy leaves.

Escarole has broad, pale green leaves and is less bitter than the other varieties.

Endive and escarole is rich in many vitamins and minerals, especially in folate and vitamin A and K, and is high in fiber.

Endive is grown like lettuce. Endive heads should be clean, free of browning, crisp and bright green. Endive resembles Dandelion leaves and should be fresh and free of brown streaks or spots. Young, tender leaves are preferred over older, tougher leaves.

Endive placed in plastic bags will store in refrigeration for about ten days. Chicory roots should be stored in the refrigerator at 38 to 42° F.

Endive is closely related to and often confused with its cousin, chicory. They're both part of the same botanical family, *Cichorium*. There are three main varieties of endive: Belgian endive, curly endive and escarole.

Curly endive, often mistakenly called *chicory* in the United States, grows in loose heads of lacy, green-rimmed outer leaves that curl at the tips. The off-white center leaves form a compact heart. The leaves of the curly endive have a prickly texture and slightly bitter taste.

Escarole has broad, slightly curved, pale green leaves with a milder flavor than either Belgian or curly endive. Both curly endive and escarole are available year-round and should be selected for their fresh, crisp texture; avoid heads with discoloration. Store curly endive and escarole, tightly wrapped, in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Endive is used mainly in salads, but can also be briefly cooked and eaten as a vegetable or in soups.

Endive is ready for harvest 90 days after planting. When the plants reach 12 inches in diameter, tie the leaves together at the top to blanch the hearts.

A crisp, broadleaf type of endive most often served as a salad green that is also known as escarole, broad chicory, or common chicory. This member of the endive family has broad outer leaves with a crinkled shape.

The leaves provide a slightly bitter taste, yet not as bitter as Belgian or curly endive. As the outer leaves are removed, the inner leaves display a paler green coloring with more white and a taste less bitter than the outer leaves.

Escarole is popular as a salad green, eaten raw with mayonnaise or a vinaigrette dressing. When cooked, the greens are often served as a vegetable steamed or braised, and can be added to soups for flavoring in the later stages of soup making.

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