



*Because Life Should Be Beautiful™*

## Celery

Before the sixteenth century, celery was used exclusively as a medicinal herb. Now it has become one of the most popular vegetables in the world. Celery is known to have been commonly eaten in salads in Italy for hundreds of years.

Some people say that the very act of eating celery has a slimming affect because chewing it uses up more calories than the vegetable contains. Although it may be insubstantial, celery nevertheless has a distinct and individual flavor, sharp and savory, which makes it an excellent flavoring for soups and stuffing, as well as good on its own or in salads. The astringent flavor and crunchy texture of celery contrasts well with the other ingredients in salads such as Waldrof or Walnut and Avocado salad.

Celery requires much water and nitrogen fertilizer.

The crop is ready to cut in 90 - 100 days after transplanting. Harvest by cutting below the ground through the tap root. The edible portion is the fleshy leaf petioles. If long periods of cool temperatures occur during growth, seed stalk development may occur. Over mature plants show cracking and pithiness in the petioles.

When celery is allowed to grow naturally, the stalks are green. However, by banking up earth against the shoots celery is blanched. The stalks are protected from sunlight and remain pale and white.

At time of harvest, white celery is often dirty, covered with loose soil, and green celery will be always be clean.

White celery, which is frost hardy, grows best in the winter. It is more tender and less bitter than green celery and is generally considered superior. Celery therefore is thought of as a winter vegetable and is traditionally used at Christmas time, for stuffing as a sauce to go with turkey or ham. Celery in general can be served raw and finely sliced in salads. It also always works well in stir fries. Braised celery is tasty. Either whole or sliced, celery has a distinctive, savory astringent flavor so is excellent in soups or stuffing.

During harvesting, choose firm bunches that are tightly formed; the leaves should be green and crisp. Store celery in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for several days. Leave the ribs attached to the stalk until ready to use. Limp celery can be revived by wrapping it in absorbent paper and standing it a jar of water. Celery should be washed and trimmed of leaves at the base. To extend harvest, cut a few stalks off at a time.

Lately, celery root has become very popular throughout the restaurant scene and food network has contributed to its popularity. It is a different plant than green or white celery. It is called celeriac, and you can get it at the produce market. Mostly available September through May. It is has not been available at the nursery.

Primary nutrients of celery are folic acid and vitamin c.

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