

Burdock Kinpira

Burdock root has long been prized in the Orient for its pleasant, crunchy texture and earthy flavor, as well as for its medicinal qualities. It is highly regarded in Oriental medicine as a blood purifier. The long, slender cultivated burdock roots are available in better supermarkets and natural foods stores.

This adaptation of a traditional Japanese recipe is our family's favorite way to enjoy burdock, especially during the late fall and winter months.

Scrub burdock well, and cut into very thin, 2-inch-long julienne strips. Immediately submerge strips in cold water to prevent discoloring. Heat oil in a frying pan or heavy saucepan. Add drained burdock, and sauté over medium heat for several minutes. Add water, if necessary, to prevent scorching. Cover and cook over medium-low heat 10-15 minutes, or until burdock is nearly tender. Add carrots, salt, and one tablespoon mirin. Sauté briefly. Cover and let cook. Check often to be sure vegetables are not sticking to the bottom of the pan.

When the liquid in the skillet is absorbed, add one tablespoon tamari, another tablespoon mirin, and pinch of cayenne pepper or Japanese 7-spice (if desired). Toss, cover, and cook briefly until tender, adding 2 tablespoons water if necessary. Transfer to a bowl and serve hot.

Preparation List:

Serves 4

- 3 burdock roots (each approximately 12 inches long)
- 2 large carrots, cut into julienne strips
- 2-3 teaspoons light or toasted sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 2 tablespoons mirin
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- Pinch cayenne pepper or Japanese 7-spice (optional)