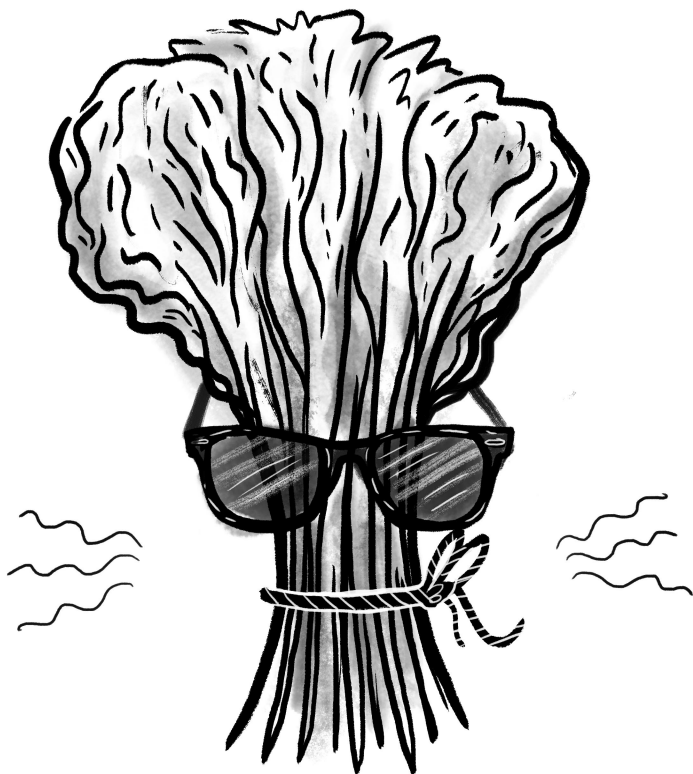


# TREND GREEN



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**Editor** Thom Ryan

[thom@jokevinegar.org](mailto:thom@jokevinegar.org)

[thom.bigcartel.com](http://thom.bigcartel.com)

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## *Brassica oleracea (acephala)*

### Sicilian Kale

All of the wank around food. It's an endless discussion and I fucking love it. My friends and I, we're in this constant circle jerk over what we eat. Sourdough starters from air. Sugarless homemade yogurt from bacteria-laden 'bath milk.' Elaborate banquets take up weekends and cheese selection is a perfectly acceptable thing to do with an entire Saturday morning.

I took myself to New York; ostensibly to eat. On the third night, I met the strangest man. He turned up to a haphazard gathering at Eataly, an obnoxious Italian food hall not so far from Times Square. Everyone at the table was recruited by Aurora, a pretty Italian who works in 'tech' and seems to have built some sort of empire from non-specific means. The strangest man was from Melbourne, like me. He immediately mocked my delighted review of Roberta's broccoli rabe with ramps—"hip greenery." I took a shine to him anyway. We decided that we would cook at his place in Fort Greene the following Friday.

Culinarily speaking, you might not be as with it as you think. There will always be someone who

actually knows what they are doing. I get that ancho chillies work best in just a few contexts and can fix a batch of soft meringues unaided by a recipe. Skills, right? I quite liked the strangest man and wanted to make a good impression and be impressive. We started at the organic grocery store. Following Brooklyn's white food and fried things, I just wanted a goddamn vegetable. "*Should we sauté some kale?*" I asked, jamming a bunch into the shopping basket like there was no discussion.

"*Sure. That's actually cavolo nero.*"

"*I know. Sicilian kale.*"

I had already accepted his quiet, impressed nod when I realised it was actually Tuscan kale and that he had decided to let me have my mistake. Quiet increase in regard.

We had a nice time preparing dinner. His charm and competence made me nervous so I drank quickly. Like a proper Australian. He was also clearly good at food and very comfortable in his kitchen. I started with prattle, weak jokes and nearly sawed-off fingertips. His fancy knives.

I oversalted the kale. Forgetting the first hefty dose, adding another and finishing the job with anchovies and capers. My cavolo nero was inedibly salty. The best thing about fucking up like this is being with someone who finds obvious fuck-ups

endearing. I have big eyes and long eyelashes. Men often find my fuck ups endearing. I looked on pathetically, practically slumped and pigeon toed, feeling small and useless as he rinsed the kale, threw it back into the pan and doused it in olive oil, lemon and chilli.

So we ate. His three dishes worked out. My salvaged entry had a weird, briny edge that we both delicately ignored. We talked about trendy ingredients that become passé, swamp otherwise delicious meals and rightfully fall out of favour. Balsamic reductions, rocket,<sup>1</sup> truffle oil. We traded Melbourne recommendations and found that we mostly liked exactly the same places. He regarded my endorsement of a Mexican breakfast place with suspicion. I insisted he give it a try and made him write down the name.

For dessert there were cookies<sup>2</sup> and shots of bourbon with ice-cream straight from the tub. Halfway through the bourbon, we kissed; then we made out. I started to giggle. Stopped. Whispered

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<sup>1</sup> Arugula. I will go ahead and call it rocket despite the setting.

<sup>2</sup> Biscuits. I will go ahead and call them cookies because of the setting.

'banana gelato' like he would get the joke, then stayed the night.

A little giddy the following day, I had a thought I did not like. Flicking back through my Instagram feed, I found the touted Brunswick tacos. My filtered breakfast share. They were covered in rocket.■

**Lysandra Godley**

## *Brassica oleracea (capitata)*

### Three cabbage recipes

There's a lot to say about cabbage. According to the New South Wales Department of Agriculture (in Vo Bacon's *The Vegetable Cookbook*), it first grew from the tears of a prince, whom Dionysus (Greek god of wine and ecstasy) punished for trampling his grapes. In lieu of any more, here are three recipes which manifest the excellence of this most dependable green.

#### 1. choucroute

Alright, this is sauerkraut, but what's one foreign language next to another? My attachment to sour cabbage stems from Sunday morning visits to the produce markets along the bank of the Saône in Lyon. After doing our weekly shop, me and my friend would buy a slice of Comté and a tub of choucroute (with meat and potatoes) to eat that afternoon. So, my recipe is French.

The most difficult part of making choucroute is finding an appropriate vessel. You need a pot or jar which you can fill with cabbage and then apply pressure while the choucroute develops. I used a glass swing-top jar with a piece of plastic (the top of

a peanut butter jar) jammed between cabbage and the inside of the lid. If you're making a greater quantity (multiple cabbage heads), you could use a pot with a weighted plate on top. Here's the recipe:

1. Select your cabbage. In the past, I've used purple (which gave a beautiful blue result) and savoy (for the curls). Any cabbage will do.
2. Slice thinly.
3. Alternately layer cabbage and a generous scatter of non-iodised salt in your container of choice. When you reach the top, push down on the cabbage to make more room. You ought to be surprised by how much cabbage can fit. If you aren't, keep packing it in.
4. Every now and then, or once you have run out of cabbage, throw in a juniper berry and a piece of bay leaf. How much? Up to you. Try a dozen berries and a single leaf, for a 500mL container.
5. Press down some more. Try to close your container or weigh down your plate such that the cabbage is submerged under the liquid drawn out by the salt. Oxygen is the enemy.



6. Wait a week or so.
7. Consume with on a hotdog bun with beetroot and lentil sausages, mint, mustard, and hot sauce.

While you're waiting at step six, bacteria from the cabbage is hard at work producing lactic acid. Like other fermented foods, this preserves the choucroute to some extent. Still, if your ferment goes awry and your cabbage ends up gross, don't eat it. Part of the beauty of living foods (like choucroute, other pickles, yoghurt, beer, and wine) is that it involves processes that are out of our hands. If you're a friend to your cabbage, it will reward you with a delicious sour and salty snack.

## 2. cabbage salad

My grandmother would always make this salad when she took me and my sister to the art gallery or museum. In hindsight, it is very simple and travels well. Now, whenever I taste pepper and vinegar, especially with a crunch of raw cabbage, I think of Robin Gibson's monoliths and time spent next to the Brisbane River.

The salad itself is a simple assemblage of thinly sliced cabbage, roughly diced capsicum, and grated carrot. It's dressed with parsley, chopped shallots

and a vinaigrette composed of just vinegar (white? white wine?), a splash of oil, salt, and pepper.

### 3. colcannon

You can make colcannon with kale, but today it seems fitting to make it with cabbage. Not only does the Irish *cál ceannann* supposedly translate as “white-headed cabbage” (and kale, the *acéphale*, has no head), but it’s hard to imagine nouveau-riche kale associating with the plebeian potato. As kale inevitably falls from stardom, it will be welcomed back into the creamy folds of potato. Until that time, here’s my favoured recipe. You’ll need a few potatoes, a quarter head of cabbage, butter, milk, and S&P. Alliums and some kind of cured pork are recommended optionals. Then:

1. Boil the potatoes for twenty minutes.
2. Sauté the cabbage in butter (or, butter and pork, or butter, pork, and onion) for a minute or two. Chuck some garlic (no, more) in towards the end if you want your colcannon to be delicious.
3. Mash the potatoes with milk and butter.
4. Combine the cabbage and mash. Season well.■

Thom Ryan