

## Kohlrabi Boiled Dinner

Kohlrabi is a wonderful vegetable cooked, or raw. It has a woody skin, and needs peeling before you can munch away; if they are smallish, say golf ball size, cook them with their greens. Kissing cousins to cabbages, and turnips, I favor a German approach to raw kohlrabi: salt shaker, and a stein of beer. There is much to recommend being German.

In the US, we tend to serve raw vegetables with some type of salad dressing as a dip. Break the habit, and serve raw kohlrabi with an Indian raita for dipping. Raita translates loosely as yogurt with stuff. You can serve kohlrabi with a simple yogurt mix, or both the kohlrabi, and the raita could accompany a meal of dal, or curry.

A simple raita would be 1C yogurt blended with 2T shredded carrot, and 1/2t black mustard seeds popped in hot oil. Ginger, garlic, cilantro, hot chilies...the flavoring ingredients can simply be whatever is fresh from the garden added to yogurt.

Incidentally, yogurt is a snap to make. Place jars of milk or 1/2 & 1/2 cream in a boiling water bath (canning jars work best, and are safest) for at least 1 hour. Let cool to 120° – 130°F, add 2T plain yogurt per pint, stir it in thoroughly, and keep warm (around 120°) for about 6 hours, more is fine: like overnight. Done. I use a water bath in my rice cooker for both heating milk, and incubating the yogurt. Make sure to put a trivet under any glass jars you heat; direct contact with the burner will crack them.

Simple meals are a boon in the summertime, and kohlrabi is wonderful in a boiled dinner. It completely takes the place of cabbage, and unlike its sibling, keeps a nice shape when cooked. Boiled dinner has its name because the main ingredient was customarily a ham bone, corned beef, or a piece of salt pork that required a long boiling to tenderize it. Using smoked sausage, ring baloney, or boneless ham chunks allows this dish to be very fresh. Peeled kohlrabi, with the usual suspects: new potatoes, fresh carrots, and peeled onions can be steamed covered in an inch of water for about 20 minutes until tender. Put a precooked meat like kielbasa in with the veggies if you like, or any raw sausages that will cook in the same amount of time. You might like to season the meal with a pinch of caraway seeds, and as it gets into fall, sauerkraut would be a nice addition. White wine or beer could replace the water.