Inexplicably, chard is called Swiss chard in the U.S. Since chard is native to the Mediterranean region, not Switzerland, I asked around, “Why is chard called Swiss chard?” Two main themes emerged—because its leaves have holes like Swiss cheese (they sometimes do); and to add a touch of elegance to a name that, in the English language, reminds one of burnt food (charred).

Happily, chard tastes nothing like it sounds. Raw chard is pleasantly tart, turning sweet and meltingly tender when cooked.

Chard derives from the beet family and is a two-for-one vegetable:

1. The ribs and stems are white, red, yellow or orange; bunches of “Rainbow chard” have some of each. Ribs wider than an inch require longer cooking time than the leaves.

2. Chard’s dark green leaves are curly-edged and should feel crisp, not limp. Leaf size is not an indicator of age, flavor or texture. Like other greens, Swiss chard has a high water content causing it to shrink drastically when cooked. It takes about a pound of leaves, cleaned and cooked, to serve 3 or 4 chard lovers.

Store unwashed chard in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to five days. When you’re ready to use it, separate the leaves from the stems. To do this, fold each chard leaf in half and place on a cutting board; cut along the rib through both thicknesses of the leaf. Another method is to grasp the folded leaf with one hand and pull the rib away with the other hand as if separating perforated paper. Next swish the leaves in a generous container of water, shake off excess water and coarsely chop. The stems need to be washed as well, then chopped.

The leaves can be served raw or cooked simply by steaming, boiling or sautéing; added to soups or stuffed. The crisp-textured stems and ribs need separate preparation but may be added with the leaves in a single dish.

**Sautéed Swiss Chard**

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. 4-5 Servings

- 1 bunch (about a pound) Swiss chard
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon minced garlic
- ¼ cup julienne shallot
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup white wine
- ½ to 1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Red pepper flakes to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Remove stems and center ribs from chard; discard tough portions, then cut stems and ribs crosswise into 2-inch pieces. Stack chard leaves and roll up lengthwise into cylinders. Cut across cylinders to make 1-inch-wide strips. Place chard stems in steamer basket over boiling water. Cover and steam for 3 minutes. Add leaves; steam until chard leaves are softened, about 3 minutes.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the garlic and shallot; cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.

Deglaze the pan with the white wine. Simmer until the stems are soft and the chard leaves are tender and mild. Toss with lemon juice, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper to taste.

Use a slotted spoon to transfer chard to serving bowl. Top with Parmesan cheese.

Sautéed Swiss Chard will be served for lunch at Brody Square, The Gallery at Snyder-Phillips and Riverwalk Market on October 19. Visit [www.eatatstate.com](http://www.eatatstate.com) for dining hall hours and menus.

Also on October 19: Recipe for Health Cooking Series meets in the Brody Square Demonstration Kitchen. For details, please visit our [website](http://www.eatatstate.com) - or reserve your spot in the audience at 353-2596 or [health4u@msu.edu](mailto:health4u@msu.edu).