



# RECIPE for health

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featured food:

**BELGIAN ENDIVE**

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The cone-shaped heads of Belgian endive (EN-dive or ahn-DEEV) look like pale, miniature versions of romaine lettuce. While they are members of the same plant family, Belgian endive's trip from farm to table is much more convoluted than any lettuce.

Commercial growers follow the same basic steps discovered accidentally by Jan Lammers in 1830. So the story goes Jan stored chicory roots in his cellar intending to dry and roast them for use as a coffee substitute. When he returned to his farm near Brussels after months away at war, the roots had sprouted small white leaves. Being adventurous, Jan tasted the leaves and found them to be crisp, tender and delicately flavored. Today, still known by its rather utilitarian name, witloof ("white leaf") chicory is considered to be the national vegetable of Belgium. The rest of the culinary world, confusing though it may be, calls it Belgian endive.

Endives and chicories are close cousins with bitterness as a common trait. The process of harvesting the chicory roots and forcing a second growth in the dark tames this taste. The result is succulent heads called chicons with color, either yellow or red, on the tips of the leaves. The delicate flavor and tender texture are easily lost by exposing the chicons to light.

In the market, look for smooth, pale chicons with tightly wrapped (not unfurled) leaves. Do your best to protect them from light in your shopping cart and on the trip home. Wrapped in moist paper towels inside a plastic bag, they will keep for weeks in the refrigerator. Since Belgian endives are produced under sanitary conditions, there's no need to wash them. To prepare them, simply remove any damaged outer leaves and trim the bottom.

Use it raw in salads or load its boat-shaped leaves with tasty fillings. The faint bitter aftertaste of the raw leaves turns into nutty deliciousness when sautéed, braised, grilled or added to soups.

## Grilled Belgian Endive Salad

*Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Makes 2-4 servings.*

- 2 heads of Belgian endive
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Cracked black pepper
- 2 Tablespoons walnuts pieces
- 1 ¼ ounces goat cheese
- Orange zest from ¼ of an orange
- 2 teaspoons honey

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cut a thin slice off the stem end of Belgian endives, then cut the heads in half lengthwise and remove the small core. Drizzle endive halves with oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Let rest for 15-20 minutes

Meanwhile, place walnuts on tray in oven and roast about 5 minutes or until fragrant.

Heat grill on medium high and make sure grill grate is clean. Grill Belgian endive about 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Remove from grill to serving plate. Top with walnuts, goat cheese, and orange zest; then drizzle ½ teaspoon honey over each piece.

Try **Grilled Belgian Endive Salad** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on June 12.