

Radicchio (Cichorium intybus)



General Overview

Radicchio is a leafy vegetable that belongs to the chicory family. Its distinct flavor and texture render it perfect for a wide selection of recipes. Popular uses range from raw, as a salad or antipasta ingredient, to cooked—in an endless variety of ways. Its popularity has grown in recent years, spurred by gourmet cooks and top chefs, to one of the most favored vegetables in the world.

The origins of common radicchio varieties consumed today are attributed to several factors, including spontaneous hybrids and both natural and engineered selection.

Today, radicchio is classified based on the characteristics of the plant, especially its color and the shape of its leaves. The red radicchio group have leaves ranging from deep red to carmine red, and with a well-developed, white central rib. The red radicchio group includes Treviso Red, Verona Red and Chioggia Red.

Variegated radicchio leaves are more petal shaped, and each leaf contains stripes in varying intensities of red and white coloring, with a yellowish-green base. These include the Castelfranco Variegated and the Chioggia Variegated.



History and Background

Although radicchio is grown in many regions of northern Italy, it is cultivated and developed primarily in Venetia because local farmers have successfully attained crop specialization.

Radicchio was introduced in Venetia in the 15th Century. Until the middle of the 20th Century it was popular only among local farmers. It gained popularity around the 1970s as Italian exports of the product increased.

In the Chioggia Island, radicchio was grown in areas out of sea reach, but in fertile sand conducive to cultivating vegetables. This sand is the original soil where the famous radicchio “Rosa di Chioggia” grows still today.

Radicchio - Commercialization periods in Italy

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Radicchio Chioggia											
Radicchio Rosso Precoce Treviso IGP											
Radicchio Rosso Tardivo Treviso IGP											
Radicchio Variegato Castelfranco IGP											

Disclaimer: The information provided is thought as general information about the produce. Average counting, weights and dimensions may vary throughout the harvesting season and the production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com

Radicchio (Cichorium intybus)



Late Red Radicchio of Treviso ("Radicchio Rosso Tardivo Treviso IGP")

The late red radicchio of Treviso is also known as the "winter flower" because it thrives on cold winter frosts.

After harvesting, the damaged outer leaves of the plant are removed. Burrowed beneath are beautiful, crisp deep red leaves which are free of green pigmentation. The leaves are long and compacted, and they enclose the head at the apex.

The plant's tap-root is connected to the end of the vibrant red leaves. The entire plant is delicately cleaned with spring water. Both the leaf and root are edible, and present a pleasantly bitter taste.



Early Red Radicchio of Treviso ("Radicchio Rosso Precoce Treviso" or the authentic one "Radicchio Rosso Treviso IGP")

The early red radicchio is defined by its elongated red leaves with a main white artery that channels out into smaller veins. Not quite as crisp as the Late Red Radicchio and with a smaller tap-root, the colorful leaves have a slightly bitter taste.

Early red radicchio is a favorite choice for grilling, roasting and as an ingredient in risotto. It is also commonly used raw as an addition to salad green mixes.



Castelfranco Variegated Radicchio ("Radicchio Variegato Castelfranco IGP")

Visually distinct from other common radicchio variations, the Castelfranco variegated is 15 cm or greater in diameter. Its leaves are round, flat and less crisp. Perhaps most noticeable is it's the creamy white foliage of its leaf, which is accented with modest hints of color ranging from light purple to bright red.

This radicchio variation has a unique but appealing taste. At first bite, the leaf is mildly sweet, but the flavor gradually transforms to a delicately bitter taste, resulting in an engaging experience for the palate.

Disclaimer: The information provided is thought as general information about the produce. Average counting, weights and dimensions may vary throughout the harvesting season and the production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com

Radicchio (Cichorium intybus)



Nutritional information

Available on the market year-round, radicchio is purifying to the body in its diuretic, tonic and laxative effects. It also aids digestion, liver function and it stimulates the secretion of bile. Radicchio juice is also beneficial in its healing properties as a topical that soothes irritated skin.

Radicchio is eaten both raw or cooked, and is used as a recipe ingredient in everything from appetizers to deserts. Chicory, a species relative of radicchio, is usually eaten cooked. The cooking water is highly valued for its purifying, diuretic and digestive properties, and for its benefits to the liver.

When purchasing radicchio, leaves should be crisp and relatively dry. The product's vitamin content depends greatly on its freshness. Green varieties of radicchio are rich in Vitamin A, Vitamin C and Iron.

There are as many ways to cook radicchio as there are varieties. It is commonly eaten raw in salads, used in crudité, grilled, sautéed or included as an ingredient in risotto. The sprouts, which run from the heart of the head, are similar to asparagus, and are especially tasty eaten raw.

NUTRITIONAL AND ENERGY INFORMATION FOR RED RADICCHIO (100 grams of product)

Edible part	72 %	Sodium	0 mg
Water	94 g	Potassium	0 mg
Proteins	1.4 g	Iron	0.3 mg
Lipids	0.1 g	Calcium	36 mg
Glucides	16 g	Phosphorus	30 mg
Fiber	3 g	Niacin	0.3 mg
Energy	13 kcal	Vitamin C	30 mg

Source: National Nutrition Institute

Disclaimer: The information provided is thought as general information about the produce. Average counting, weights and dimensions may vary throughout the harvesting season and the production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com