



CAULIFLOWER

Description

As their names imply, cauliflower and broccoflower are actually flowers. The part of the plant that is eaten is the head of underdeveloped, tender flower stems and buds. While growing, the head is surrounded by heavy green leaves that protect it from sunlight and discoloration. Many of the leaves are trimmed off during preparation for shipment and sale. Cauliflower has a strong odor when cooked and a rich, cabbage-like flavor. Broccoflower is a hybrid of broccoli and cauliflower.

Varieties

Cauliflower falls into three variety types. The most commonly grown and sold is the white cauliflower, which has creamy curds and bright-green leaves. The green variety is actually the hybrid broccoflower developed about 10 years ago, which has bright lime green curds. Less commonly known is the purple headed cauliflower.

Uses

Ahead of cauliflower should be unbruised, firm and uniformly cream-colored without a trace of black, and it should be heavy for its size. It can be stored in perforated plastic vegetable bags in the refrigerator crisper for several days. The raw florets are tasty in salads, as crunchy appetizer with dips, or pickled. It is a flavorful addition to soups and stews or to other vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes, peas, bell pepper or broccoli.

Recipe

Mashed Cauliflower

5 lbs. cauliflower florets, cleaned
5 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled.
8 oz. butter
1/2 cup heavy cream or milk
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large stockpot with water, add a pinch of salt and bring to boil. Add cauliflower and blanch 2 to 3 minutes until bright white in color. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add potatoes to water, boil until fork tender. Drain water and add chopped cauliflower to potatoes. Mix with electric mixer for 2 minutes. Add butter and melt evenly add cream and season. Mixture will be lumpy.

Nutrient Content

Cauliflower is high in Vitamin C. As a cruciferous vegetable cauliflower contains phytochemicals that may help prevent cancer.

Availability

Cauliflower is available fresh and frozen, but processing required for freezing destroys some of the nutrients. Spring and fall are the best times for this vegetable.

Origin

Cauliflower is native to the Mediterranean region and Asia Minor, where it has been cultivated for more than 2,000 years. By the 16th century it had spread to western Europe and in the United States it became an important vegetable in the early 20th century. Today it is grown in numerous states with California and New York being the leading producers as well as Arizona, Michigan, Oregon, Florida, Washington and Texas. Cauliflower requires cool temperatures and rich, fertile soil with good moisture. It is usually planted as an annual, but milder climates can support winter varieties. Peak seasons are spring and fall.

www.pafarm.com