



## THE ART OF COOKING WITH KIDS

### Exotic Vegetables and Preparation Notes

Go on a veggie adventure with your children by introducing them to vegetables that they've never heard of or tried before. Try preparing a new veggie each week for Sunday dinner, and let your kids select the vegetable that you'll celebrate. It can be as easy as taking them to a farmers' market, vegetable stand or a green grocer to choose their next veggie adventure. Here are a few exotic varieties you can prepare with your kids:

#### **Artichoke**

Artichokes are a tasty vegetable that come primarily from California. The part of the plant that is eaten is actually the bud of the artichoke flower.

*Prep Tips:* Artichoke buds are usually either boiled or steamed until tender. If boiled, salt can be added to the water to add additional flavor. The leaves are often eaten one at a time, perhaps with a ranch dip or butter. The base of the artichoke, known as the heart, can also be eaten.



#### **Fennel**

Fennel is an herb with a white bulb, feathery leaves and seed-producing yellow flowers that originated in the Mediterranean region. Interestingly, the bulbs, stalks, leaves and seeds are all edible.

*Prep Tips:* Fennel make a great addition to Italian dishes, where the bulbs and leaves can be cooked with pastas or served raw in salads. The seeds are also common ingredients in Italian sausages and meatballs.



#### **Eggplant**

The eggplant is a delicious, hearty vegetable that is usually dark purple in color. In the U.S. eggplant is technically a fruit – classified as a berry – but like the tomato, we use it as a vegetable when we cook. In addition to the typical eggplant found in most grocery stores, you may be able to find Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Thai or White eggplant in specialty grocery stores

*Prep Tips:* Eggplant is best when cooked, becoming tender and flavorful, and sprinkling it with salt prior to cooking removes some of the excess moisture. It is very absorbent, tasting great with sauces or stews, and many people use it to replace meat in recipes like eggplant parmesan or lasagna.





### **Broccolini**

Broccolini is a cross between broccoli and kai-lan (or Chinese broccoli). It has long stalks and small florets.

*Prep Tips:* All parts of the broccolini can be eaten. And like asparagus, it can be sautéed, steamed, boiled, or stir fried.



### **Radicchio**

Radicchio is a leafy vegetable, sometimes called Italian chicory, which usually grows white-veined red leaves.

*Prep Tips:* Radicchio has a zesty flavor that becomes milder when cooked or grilled, but it is most commonly used to add color and excitement to salads.



### **Jicama**

Also referred to as the Mexican Potato, jicama is a root with a whitish crunchy interior and a crispy sweet flavor very popular with children.

*Prep Tips:* While it can be cooked, jicama is an excellent raw option. Sliced into jicama sticks, it makes a great vegetable for dipping when paired with carrots.



### **White Asparagus**

White asparagus puts a fun twist on its green cousin. Considered a delicacy, white asparagus is grown in such a way that it is not exposed to direct sunlight, covered either with plastic or mounds of dirt. It could be considered the “veal of asparagus.”

*Prep Tips:* While it is more tender and mild than green asparagus, which may make the white variety a friendlier option for veggie-resistant youngsters, it can be cooked and prepared using the same recipes.

