



ጎሙን GOMEN SAUTÉED GREENS

INGREDIENTS

200 grams of cavelo nero or kale

[large central stalks removed and leaves thinly shredded, traditionally this recipe uses yehabesha gomen rather than cavelo nero]

2 cloves of garlic [crushed]

2 tablespoons of olive oil

Sea salt

1 jalapeno pepper for garnish

[seeds removed & halved length ways]

A pinch of freshly ground Kororima [Ethiopian cardamom]

OPTIONAL

A bunch of cleavers leaves, stem washed and chopped roughly

A bunch of chickweed leaves, stems washed

A bunch of three cornered leeks chopped

a bunch of alexander leaves chopped



Serves 4	[as a side]
Preparation time:	3 mins
Cooking time:	7 mins [approx]

1. Boil a kettle whilst you're preparing your veggies (you might need a splash of hot water during the cooking process).
2. Pick the leaves from the stem of the cavelo nero, wash and drain.
3. In a saucepan, add the oil on a medium heat and when it starts to heat add your garlic for a minute.
4. Add the cavelo nero (one small handful at a time) mix with the garlic oil, and add a pinch of sea salt and a splash of hot water and cover with a lid. Leave it to sweat and wilt for 5 minutes stirring once or twice.
5. Then add the cleavers, cook for 2 minutes, you want all the fibrous part cooked.
6. Finally add the alexanders and three cornered leeks and chickweeds.
7. Garnish with jalapeno pepper and taste the salt.
8. Add the Ethiopian cardamom if using, it's so pungent, savoury and delightful.

Tip: Traditionally served on Ethiopian fermented teff flat bread 'Injera' with a selection of other vegetarian dishes, but works well as a side dish for pretty much any meal.

Background

This dish is one of the easiest and most accessible Ethiopian dishes to cook. All the essential ingredients are easily available in most countries and markets, so it's a great introduction to Ethiopian cooking. It's delicious, nutritious and versatile too. I cook this dish all the time, either serving it more traditionally as part of an Ethiopian vegetarian platter or adding to pretty much any dish as a side.

Gomen is a very typical side dish which actually can sometimes be served as a main with the addition of short ribs, one of my favourites. But generally you see gomen as part of a vegetarian platter (yetsom beyaynetu).

Since I can't obtain the exact same greens abroad, I use a variety of alternatives, which have been different depending upon where I've been living at the time. These days though I tend to stick to cavolo nero when in season which perhaps feels the closest in texture to the greens back home, and they're very nutritious and rich in vitamins and iron.

So this recipe is my take on of the delicious gomen dish, with some foraged highly nutritious additions (optional).

A few years ago I embarked on my studies into herbal medicine, and I tend to elevate what I'm cooking with my knowledge, to nourish my family and friends I often add wild, abundant, local and highly nutritious plants.

For this recipe I'm adding what is currently abundant and easy to forage, these are spring greens aka 'weeds'. First are cleavers which are commonly known as sticky willy or gooseberry and then my beloved chickweed. Both are very nutrient rich and excellent spring greens - cleansing, nourishing and restorative tonics. I'm also adding alexanders and three cornered leeks. Alexanders are everywhere on the coast, an ancient medicinal herb known as the parsley of Alexandria, very pungent. Three cornered leeks grow abundantly mostly taking over every corner they find. It's a milder taste compared to wild garlic, I'm using them here as a replacement to spring onion.

So for me, by adding these foraged ingredients a simple gomen becomes even more nutritious with each special ingredient upping the flavour too. This is my personal take on gomen, reflecting my locality and showcasing the goodness and abundance of the earth.