

· Family ·

Asteraceae

Botanically speaking, the endive is a variety of chicory.

THE BELGIAN
ENDIVE

Latin name

Cichorium intybus

Origin : Belgium

Breton name

Endivez

HISTORY

The Belgian endive, also known in the UK as «chicory», was accidentally created in the 19th century.

It is said that, during the Belgian revolution of 1830, a farmer from a town to the north of Brussels was forced to leave his farm in haste. When he returned a few months later, he found that white leaves, nested one inside the other, had grown on the roots of the chicory originally left covered with soil in his cellar. Witloof chicory (white leaves in Flemish) was therefore born.

The endives' adventure continues! Around 1850, the head gardener of the Brussels horticultural society made the same discovery, while Henri de Vilmorin – a French botanist – would also go on to present an endive to the National Horticultural Society of France in 1875. The first crate

THE ENDIVE
on the
CÔTE DES LÉGENDES

An endive can be seen on the coat of arms of Kerlouan

It was Alain Jaouen, a son of Doctor Jaouen of Kerlouan, who carried out the first experiments in endive cultivation in Meneham.

In the 1950s, a forcing house was set up in the centre of the department which, two decades later, would contribute to the development of endive cultivation.

ENDIVE
CULTIVATION

Today, Breton endives account for 3-4% of endive production in France.

France is the world's leading producer of endives with 200 000 tonnes per year and only 530 producers in 2011. The neighboring departments of Belgium (Nord, Pas-de-Calais et Somme) alone account for 77% of endive production.

The process is divided into 2 stages

1

outdoor root cultivation

2

«forcing» of the endive in the cellar

THE ENDIVE
CYCLE

1 - OUTDOOR SOWING AND
HARVESTING OF ROOTS

First of all, the ground is prepared and the seeds sown outdoors between May and mid-June. Around four weeks after sowing, weeding and thinning is carried out. The roots are pulled out around mid-September, then sent to the forcing site, where the crown is pruned and graded. One root will produce one head, in other words, the edible part of the endive.

2 -FORCING IN THE CELLAR

When forcing in a dark room, the roots are placed side by side in 1 m x 1.20 m trays and fed with a nutrient solution in a room heated to between 18 and 20 degrees. This stage in the dark of the cellar lasts 21 days and allows the leaves to retain their white and fleshy colour, limiting their bitterness. This technique was first employed in the region in 1977, at the Hermine Cooperative for the Use of Common Agricultural Equipment (CUMA) in Plounéour-Brignogan-Plages, developed by 31 producers.

3 - STRIPPING AND CONDITIONING

The endive is separated from the roots, stripped manually and packaged head to tail in boxes, wrapped in dark blue paper to slow its greening. The root will then be used for animal consumption.

Anatomy

tongue flower

collar

Endive

Root

The varieties

Young endives, or baby chicory, remain in the «forcing» stage for just 14 days. They are less bitter. The Carmine is a red endive. Its two-tone colour has earned it great success in restaurants, where it is used to decorate dishes.

THE ENDIVE
ON THE PLATE

Endive
Tarte tatin
recipe

by the chef of the restaurant

La Gare

LESNEVEN

Rich in fibre, this vegetable can be prepared raw to enjoy its crunch, or cooked – where it takes on a more tender texture.

Ingredients for the biscuit base

150 g flour

150 g semi-salted butter at room temperature

150 g grated parmesan

1 egg

Fresh thyme

Pepper

Ingredients for the orange-caramelised endive

12 Belgian endives

100 g sugar

100 g salted butter

Juice of 3 oranges

Salt and pepper

Decoration ingredients

180 g de roquefort

6 teaspoons Plouescat buckwheat honey

THE BISCUIT
BASE

Mix the flour, butter chopped into cubes and grated parmesan in a mixing bowl, with a pinch of thyme and a dash of pepper.

Add the beaten egg and mix with your fingertips to obtain a ball of biscuit dough.

Roll the dough out between two sheets of baking paper and set aside in a cool place.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 6).

Cut out circles the size of the mould to be used and place them on a sheet of baking paper.

Bake for 20 minutes, until golden brown.

ORANGE-CARAME-
LISED
ENDIVES AND
ASSEMBLY

Wash and cut the endives

Melt the butter, add the sugar and make a caramel.

Add the endives and melt until browned, deglaze with the orange juice and let reduce.

Place a circle of baking paper in the moulds and fill it with endives.

Bake at 180°C (gas mark 6) for 20 minutes.

Place the circle of dough on the endives and turn them over onto a plate.

Remove the mould and the parchment paper.

Place the Roquefort cubes and add the honey.

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