Nature’s delights

Recipes from

*Discovering Indigenous Treasures: Promising indigenous vegetables from around the world*

by Li-ju Lin, Yun-yin Hsiao and C. George Kuo
AVRDC – The World Vegetable Center, founded in 1971, is an international non-profit institute for vegetable research and development. The Center effectively mobilizes resources from the public and private sectors to foster the safe production of nutritious and health-promoting vegetables in developing countries. AVRDC’s improved varieties and production methods help farmers increase vegetable harvests, raise incomes in poor rural and urban households, create jobs, and provide healthier, more nutritious diets for families and communities.

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Vegetables can be prepared or cooked in several ways. The method chosen will affect the flavor and consistency of the vegetable. In general, denser vegetables with less water content require longer cooking times. Slicing or chopping vegetables into pieces can reduce cooking time. For strongly flavored vegetables, it is advisable to cook them in an open vessel, so that the flavor may be decreased by evaporation. Vegetables mild in flavor, however, are improved by being cooked in a closed vessel to retain their flavor.

Practically all vegetables, cooked or green, should be served with oil to enhance flavor and the intake of fat-soluble vitamins and phytochemicals. Seasoning with a small amount of salt helps to harden the tissues and draw out the flavor of vegetables. Here are the cooking methods used for indigenous vegetables:

- **Blanch**: drop vegetables into a large pot of boiling water, remove after a brief interval, then dip into ice-cold water to halt the cooking process.
- **Boil**: immerse vegetables in boiling water or stock until tender. Use the shortest boiling time necessary to preserve micronutrients and phytochemicals.
- **Cold-toss**: mix together vegetable ingredients away from a heat source; most common with salads.
- **Pickle**: preserve and flavor vegetables in a solution of brine (water nearly saturated with salt) or vinegar.
- **Puree**: finely mash vegetables with a blender or a sieve (usually after cooking) to give a smooth, fine pulp. Puree is often used as a garnish, served as a side dish, or added as a thickener to sauces or soups.
- **Sauté**: cook vegetables with a small amount of oil in a shallow pan over high heat for a relatively short period of time.
- **Simmer**: cook vegetables gently in water at a temperature just below that of boiling, or low enough that tiny bubbles just begin to break the surface.
- **Steam**: cook vegetables in a steaming basket over boiling water. This can be a stainless steel or bamboo basket set over a pan on the stove. It is a desirable method of cooking many vegetables because it retains many water-soluble micronutrients.
- **Stir-fry**: constantly and briskly toss chopped pieces of the vegetables in a large, heated pan with a small amount of oil over a short period of time. This method results in less loss of micronutrients and phytochemicals.

**Appetizing and Healthy Recipes**

Indigenous vegetables are so versatile they can be served as appetizers, side dishes, the main course, or even as dessert. The following 23 recipes are examples showing how indigenous vegetables can add interest, color, and vital nutrients to the diet.
Swamp Tune Sauce

Serves three  
Preparation time: 30 minutes  
Cooking time: 20 minutes

Ingredients
Tender swamp leaf (*Limnophila rugosa*) shoots, 10 g  
Red and yellow sweet pepper strips, 10 g each  
Tomato, 1 about 200 g  
Water bamboo (*Zizania latifolia*), 3 (each about 135 g)  
Mirin (a Japanese seasoning), 1 teaspoon  
Pickled cucumber sauce, 2/3 tablespoon  
Salad oil, 1/4 teaspoon  
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon  
Yellow mustard paste, 2/3 tablespoon

Preparation
1. Rinse swamp leaf shoots and sweet pepper strips, dry on paper towel. Chop into tiny pieces.
2. Mix chopped vegetables with yellow mustard paste and pickled cucumber sauce, make them into paste, and set aside.
3. Rinse and dry tomato. Cut in half, remove the inside flesh and seed, and pour in the swamp leaf paste for serving as dip.
4. Remove outer leaf sheaths of water bamboo, rinse and cut into 10-cm pieces, boil with salt and salad oil, and remove.
5. Eat water bamboo with the swamp leaf dip.

Variations
Swamp leaf can be replaced with spiny coriander or Vietnamese coriander. Water bamboo can be replaced with asparagus, bamboo shoot, cauliflower, broccoli, onion, lettuce, or mushroom.
Colorful Salad

Serves three
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
Swamp leaf (*Limnophila rugosa*) shoots, 10 g
Head lettuce, 50 g
Tomato, 1 about 200 g
Dried bean curd sheet, 6 pieces
Red and yellow sweet pepper strips, 30 g each
White and purple onion shreds, 30 g each
Fresh chili pepper shreds, 5 g
Salad oil, 1/4 teaspoon
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon
Sugar, 1/4 teaspoon
Vinegar, 1/4 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry swamp leaf shoots, head lettuce, and tomato. Cut tomato in half and remove the seeds.
2. Cut all vegetables and the bean curd sheet into small strips.
3. Mix and toss all the ingredients with the sugar, vinegar, salad oil, and salt before serving.

Variations
Swamp leaf shoots can be replaced or mixed with spiny coriander leaves or Vietnamese coriander shoots.
Pas de Deux Salad

Serves four
Preparation time: 40 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
Water dropwort (*Oenanthe javanica*) shoots with tough petioles removed, 2 portions of 50 g each
Onion, 2 stems of green onion and 1 bulb onion of 80-100 g
Cherry tomato, 8-10
Pepper, red and yellow sweet, 80-100 g each; chili, 3 of small size
Garlic cloves, 2
Cassava starch, 2 tablespoons
Perch fillet, 200 g
Canned tuna, about 110 g
Lemon juice, 1 teaspoon
Salad oil, 2 tablespoons
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon for central portion, 1/8 teaspoon for outer portion

Preparation
1. Cut perch into finger-size strips, place strips into a container, sprinkle evenly with salt, set aside.
2. Chop green onion and garlic into tiny pieces and cut chili pepper into thin strips.
3. Coat fish strips with cassava starch; fry over medium heat until golden brown; remove from pan, drain off the oil; and set aside.
4. Stir-fry green onion, garlic and chili pepper with salad oil; when fragrant, add water dropwort and then fish; continue stir-frying until evenly mixed; remove and place in the center of a serving plate.
5. Cut onion and sweet peppers with seeds removed into thin strips.
6. Place vegetable strips into a container, sprinkle with salt, and toss well with water dropwort.
7. Drain oil from tuna; combine with water dropwort mixture; add lemon juice; and mix well.
8. Place the mixture in the outer portion of a serving plate.

Variations
Water dropwort shoots can be replaced with blanched young leaves of velvetleaf or young shoots of tropical violet and honewort.
**Idyllic Cheese Rolls**

Makes 35 rolls  
Preparation time: 40 minutes  
Cooking time: 25 minutes

**Ingredients**  
Tropical violet (*Asystasia gangetica*) shoots, 300 g  
Onion, 2 of about 250 g each  
Dried radish shreds, 200 g  
Cheese puff pastry (14 cm x 14 cm), 10  
Minced meat (beef, chicken, mutton, or pork), 150 g  
Black pepper powder, 1/2 teaspoon  
Salt, 1/2 teaspoon  
Sesame oil, 1 teaspoon  
Soy sauce, 1 tablespoon

**Preparation**  
1. Rinse and dry tropical violet shoots and onion. Chop into small pieces, set aside.  
2. To make the filling, heat the pan with sesame oil, stir-fry minced meat, onion, dried radish, and tropical violet before adding seasonings.  
3. Cut cheese puff pastry into four equal pieces, place a little of the filling on top of each pastry piece, fold opposite corners to form rolls, and tie with small strips of pastry (about 1 cm wide).  
4. Bake cheese rolls at 180°C for 10 minutes, and serve.

**Variations**  
Tropical violet shoots can be replaced with jute mallow leaves, ivy gourd shoots, chard leaves, etc.
Pastoral Salad

Serves six
Preparation time: 25 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients
Tender velvetleaf (*Limnocharis flava*) leaves, 50 g
Chopped tomato (seeds removed), 50 g
Chopped onion, 40 g
Egg, 3
Black pepper powder, 1 teaspoon
Mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons
Pickled cucumber paste, 1 1/3 tablespoons
Salt, 1 teaspoon
Yellow mustard paste, 1 tablespoon

Preparation
1. Boil eggs until cooked. Remove shells and cut into halves. Remove yolks; place in a bowl. Put the whites on a plate and set aside.
2. Rinse and dry velvetleaf leaves, and cut into small pieces. Combine with egg yolks, tomato, onion, and all seasoning ingredients, stir clockwise until well combined.
3. Fill the egg white halves with the mixture, and serve on a plate.

Variations
Velvetleaf leaves can be replaced with blanched and finely chopped ivy gourd shoots and oval-leaf pondweed leaves, or finely chopped water dropwort shoots and Vietnamese coriander shoots. Egg whites can be replaced with toast (with crust removed).
Party Finger Tuna Sandwiches

Makes 12 sandwiches
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 20 minutes

Ingredients
Fragrant telosma (*Telosma cordata*) inflorescences, 100 g
Onion, large about 250 g
Canned tuna, about 110 g
Half loaf of thinly-sliced sandwich bread
Mayonnaise, 70 g
Ground black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Cut fragrant telosma flower buds from the inflorescence, rinse and dry. Quickly fry in the heated pan with black pepper, then set aside to cool.
2. Chop the onion into 5-mm pieces, dip the pieces into ice-cold water for 5-10 minutes, remove and dry. Set aside.
3. Drain the oil from the tuna.
4. Place the tuna in a bowl. Add the mayonnaise and mix.
5. Add the fragrant telosma flower buds and chopped onion. Mix well.
6. Spread the mix on bread slices, and cut the bread diagonally into four pieces before serving.

Variations
Fragrant telosma flower buds can be replaced with blanched and finely chopped ivy gourd shoots.
Salmon Rolls

Serves six
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients
Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) young shoots, 150 g
Onion strips, half cup
Sweet pepper strips, half cup
Head lettuce, whole or half about 250-300 g
Grapefruit, about 250-300 g
Smoked salmon strips, 6 pieces

Dressing
Ground black pepper, 1 teaspoon
Mustard powder, 1 tablespoon
Olive oil, 3 tablespoons
Orange juice, 1 tablespoon
Red vinegar, 2 tablespoons
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon
Sugar, 2 tablespoons

Preparation
1. Rinse tender roselle shoots in salt water, and dry.
2. Rinse and dry lettuce leaves. Cut into 2 cm x 2 cm pieces.
3. Remove grapefruit flesh.
4. Wrap roselle young shoots, sweet pepper strips, and onion strips with smoked salmon strips.
5. Mix all dressing ingredients. Combine lettuce and grapefruit flesh; pour half of dressing over top and toss, then place on a plate.
6. Place salmon rolls on top of lettuce and pour the remaining dressing over the salmon rolls.
7. Chill and serve.

Variations
Roselle shoots can be replaced with other sour-flavored indigenous vegetables such as blanched garden sorrel or purslane.
Bacon Rolls

Makes 20 rolls
Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
Young okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) pods, 20, about 12 g each
Bacon, 10 slices

Preparation
1. Rinse okra pods before blanching in boiling water. Cool and cut to the width of the bacon slices.
2. Cut the bacon slices in half crosswise.
3. Wrap each bacon piece around an okra pod, and fix with toothpicks.
4. Place bacon rolls in pan. Cook over medium heat until bacon browns or until most of the grease is cooked off. (If desired, spoon off excess drippings halfway through cooking time.)
5. Place cooked bacon rolls on paper towels to drain off excess grease. Remove toothpicks and serve warm.

Variations
Okra can be replaced with sesbania flower buds with their pistils and styles removed.
Burmese Leaf Soup

Serves two
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
Ivy gourd (*Coccinia grandis*) shoots, 150 g
Onion, 1 about 200 g
Pumpkin, 1 about 300 g
Bacon, 4 slices
Butter, 10 g
Flour, 2 tablespoons
Ground black pepper, 1 teaspoon
Salt, 1 teaspoon
Soup stock (meat, seafood or vegetable), 1 cup
Whipping cream, 1 cup

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry ivy gourd shoots, cut into 3-cm pieces, and set aside.
2. Rinse pumpkin and steam in a pot until half cooked. Slice a portion off the top and carefully remove the inside flesh, keeping the outer rind intact.
3. Blend ivy gourd shoot pieces and pumpkin flesh in a blender.
4. Rinse and dry onion, and cut both onion and bacon into 2-5 mm pieces.
5. Fry onion pieces in pot first, add bacon pieces and continue frying until bacon just begins to crisp. Pour in soup stock, add ivy gourd and pumpkin, and stir evenly until the mixture boils.
6. Add salt and black pepper to soup. Thicken the soup with whipping cream and flour. Cook gently until flour loses its raw taste.
7. Pour the soup into the half-cooked pumpkin and serve hot.

Variations
Ivy gourd shoots can be replaced with pumpkin shoots, tropical violet shoots, chayote shoots, or bird’s nest fern fronds.
African Sticky Soup (Ewedu)

Serves three
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
Jute mallow (*Corchorus olitorius*) leaves, 200 g
Sweet potato, 200 g
Dried small fish or shrimp, 15 g
Salt, 1 teaspoon
Water, 2 cups

Preparation
1. Wash sweet potato, peel the skin, and cut into cubes.
2. Boil water in pot, add sweet potato cubes, and cook until soft.
3. Add small dried fish or shrimp to soup; continue to boil.
4. Rinse jute mallow leaves well, then rub the leaves until foamy and sticky.
5. Add jute mallow to soup, season with salt, and cook until the soup thickens.

Variations
Jute mallow leaves can be replaced with other mucilaginous indigenous vegetables such as okra, or with non-mucilaginous plants such as amaranth, cowpea, tropical violet, etc. In the latter case, some corn starch or potato starch is first mixed with water, then poured into the soup, and the soup is stirred until it thickens.
Mixed Sardines and Peanuts

Serves four
Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Tender ivy gourd (*Coccinia grandis*) shoots, 200 g
Garlic cloves, 5
Shelled and dried peanut, 20 g
Dried or salted small sardines or shrimps, 30 g
Ground black pepper, 1/4 teaspoon
Salad oil, 1 tablespoon
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry ivy gourd shoots. Cut into 3-cm pieces, and set aside.
2. Crush garlic cloves and set aside.
3. Heat salad oil in a frying pan or skillet; stir-fry crushed garlic cloves, peanuts, and sardines or shrimps.
4. Add salt and black pepper powder while stirring.
5. Increase heat. Add chopped ivy gourd shoots, stir-fry for 15-20 seconds, and immediately pour all the mixed ingredients onto a serving plate. Serve hot.

Variations
Ivy gourd shoots can be replaced with other leafy indigenous vegetables such as pumpkin shoots, chayote shoots, kangkong shoots, bird’s nest fern fronds, etc.
Grandmother’s Plain Stir-Fry

Serves four
Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Tender tropical violet (*Asystasia gangetica*) shoots, 200 g
Cassava starch, 1 teaspoon
Shredded ginger, 1 teaspoon
Meat strips (beef, chicken, mutton, or pork), 50 g
Salt, 1 teaspoon
Sesame oil, 1/2 tablespoon
Soy sauce, 1 tablespoon
Sugar, 1/4 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Rinse tropical violet and blanch, set aside.
2. Mix meat strips with starch, sugar, and soy sauce in a bowl, set aside.
3. Gently heat a pan or wok. Add sesame oil; stir-fry ginger over low heat until fragrant, then add and stir-fry marinated meat strips with high heat.
4. Add tropical violet, stir-fry until cooked, and add salt at the end.

Variations
Shredded chili pepper could be added for a spicier flavor. Shredded ginger can be replaced with minced garlic. Tropical violet shoots can be stir-fried alone with 1 tablespoon of water before seasoning with salt. Tropical violet shoots can be replaced with other indigenous vegetables such as shoots of ivy gourd, pumpkin, chayote, drumstick, kangkong or sweet potato leaves, or leaves of Chinese boxthorn, Ethiopian kale, etc.
Amphibious Porridge

Serves four
Preparation time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
Tropical violet (*Asystasia gangetica*) shoots, 100 g
Rice, 1 cup
Fish fillet (codfish, perch, or milk fish), or salted sardines, 100 g
Salt, 2 teaspoons
Water, 1.5 liter

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry tropical violet shoots. Cut into 3-cm pieces, set aside.
2. Rinse rice, pour into water, bring to a boil and then cook over low heat with constant stirring until rice is mushy and thick.
3. Cut fish into 1 cm x 1 cm pieces, set aside.
4. Add tropical violet to rice and continue cooking.
5. Add fish to rice porridge, maintain at a gentle boil, and season with salt. Serve when fish is cooked.

Variations
Tropical violet shoots can be replaced with amaranth leaves, jute mallow leaves, chard leaves, nightshade leaves, etc. Fish can be replaced with other seafood. Rice can be replaced with other starchy foods such as sweet potato, yam, plantain, or cassava that is pounded first, as in West African fufu.
African Vegetable Loaf

Serves six
Preparation time: 40 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes

Ingredients
Tender baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) leaves, 100 g
Carrot, 100 g
Onion, 200 g
Cassava or potato starch, 1 tablespoon
Minced meat (beef, chicken, fish, mutton, or pork), 200 g
Ground black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon
Garlic cloves, 5
Salad oil, 1 tablespoon
Salt, 1/2 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Wash and dry baobab leaves, carrot, onion and garlic. Cut baobab leaves and onion into 1 cm pieces, carrot into thin threads, and garlic in fine pieces; set the cut pieces aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine the cut vegetables with the minced meat, the cassava starch, black pepper, and salt; mix thoroughly.
3. Add salad oil to a frying pan or skillet over medium heat.
4. Add the vegetable mixture and sauté or fry gently until cooked.

Variations
Baobab leaves could be replaced with other leafy indigenous vegetables.
Saag (Indian Creamed Greens)

Serves four
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Tender chard (Beta vulgaris) leaves, 200 g
Cherry tomato, 60 g
Onion, 75 g
Potato, 1 about 150 g
Butter, 2 tablespoons
Milk, 200 ml
Chopped green chili pepper, 5 g
Curry powder, 50 g
Finely chopped garlic and young ginger, 10 g each
Ground black pepper, 1 tablespoon
Toasted cumin seeds, 1/2 teaspoon
Salt, 1 teaspoon
Water, 100 ml

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry chard leaves, onion and cherry tomato; chop into fine pieces; squeeze any excess water out of the chopped chard; set the cut pieces aside.
2. Wash potato and boil it in water. Remove the peel, then mash the potato with a fork; set the mashed potato aside.
3. In a pot over low heat, cook chard with mashed potato and milk, stirring continuously.
4. Heat frying pan, add butter, and fry chopped garlic, young ginger, green chili pepper, and curry powder until fragrant, then add chopped onion, tomato and cumin seeds. Continue frying until fragrant, then pour all into the pot with the potato mixture, and stir well.
5. Simmer with constant stirring until the mixture becomes thick, then season with salt and black pepper.

Variations
Chard leaves could be replaced with other leafy indigenous vegetables. Amount of spices used depends on personal preference.
Coconut Milk Casino

Serves four  
Preparation time: 30 minutes  
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Tender African nightshade (Solanum scabrum) leaves, 220 g  
Chopped green chili pepper, 5 g  
Diced onion and red sweet pepper, 50 g each (about 1 cm x 1 cm)  
Finely chopped garlic and young ginger, 10 g each  
Diced beef, chicken, mutton, or pork, 110 g (about 1 cm x 1 cm)  
Coconut milk, 50 ml  
Milk, 150 ml  
Salad oil, 1 tablespoon  
Salt, 1 teaspoon

Seasoning
A: for marinating the meat
Chili pepper powder, 1 1/3 tablespoons  
Curry powder, 2 tablespoons  
Ground black pepper, 1 1/3 tablespoons  
Salt, 1 teaspoon

B: for the cooking
Chili pepper powder, 1 1/3 tablespoons  
Curry powder, 2 tablespoons  
Toasted cumin seeds, 1/2 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry African nightshade leaves. Chop into small pieces.  
2. Mix diced meat with seasoning A in a bowl, set aside for 20 minutes.  
3. Heat frying pan, add salad oil, and fry chopped garlic, young ginger and green chili pepper until fragrant, then add seasoning B, marinated meat, diced onion and sweet pepper. Continue frying until meat loses its raw look, then add milk and coconut milk and cook gently for 2 minutes.  
4. Add African nightshade, stir the mixture thoroughly, bring to a boil, and season with salt. Serve hot.

Variations
African nightshade leaves can be replaced with other leafy indigenous vegetables. Amount of spices depends on personal preference.
Japanese Domburi

Serves two
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) leaves, 100 g
Tomato, 1 about 200 g
Onion, large about 250 g
Minced meat (beef, chicken, mutton, or pork), 100 g
Steamed rice, 2 cups
Garlic cloves, 2
Salad oil, 1 tablespoon
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry baobab leaves, tomato and onion. Cut into 1-cm pieces, and set aside.
2. Crush garlic cloves and set aside.
3. Heat the pan, add salad oil. Stir-fry garlic, and when fragrant, add minced meat and stir-fry.
4. While stir-frying minced meat over high heat, add chopped tomato and onion first, and then baobab leaves. Season with salt.
5. Stir-fry the ingredients well and serve on top of the steamed rice.

Variations
Baobab leaves can be replaced with mucilaginous okra or jute mallow. They also can be replaced with non-mucilaginous leafy indigenous vegetables. In this case, some corn starch or potato starch is first mixed with water, then stir-fried with the vegetables before turning off the heat.
Flavored Rice

Serves two
Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients
Spiny coriander (Eryngium foetidum) leaves, 30 g
Rice, 1 cup
Pre-cooked oat flakes, 1/2 cup
Dried small fish, 30 g
Chopped ginger, 5 g
Chopped fresh chili pepper, 5 g
Furikake (a Japanese seasoning), 1 tablespoon
Salad oil, 1 tablespoon
Salt, 1/4 teaspoon
Water, 1 1/2 cups

Preparation
1. Rinse and dry spiny coriander leaves, chop into 2-mm pieces, and quickly stir-fry in heated pan.
2. Divide cooked spiny coriander into halves. Set aside one portion, and mix the other with the furikake for later use.
3. Rinse rice and soak for 15 minutes.
4. Rinse dried small fish and dry on a paper towel. Chop into tiny pieces.
5. Heat a frying pan, add salad oil and fry chopped small fish with chili pepper and ginger for a few seconds.
6. Mix together soaked rice, oat flakes, and fried small fish pieces. Cook in a rice cooker until rice is cooked.
7. Add the spiny coriander/furikake mixture into the cooked rice while still warm.
8. Wet hands in water and rub them with some salt; place the rice on hands, and form the rice into a ball or a triangle by pressing lightly with both palms. Top the rice ball with spiny coriander pieces.

Variations
Spiny coriander leaves can be replaced with perilla or Chinese toon. The cooked rice can be served directly as pilaf, without forming into balls.
Chinese Bao-Tzu

Makes 15 buns
Preparation time: 60 minutes
Cooking time: 20 minutes

Ingredients
Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale) leaves, 150 g for the dough and 300 g for the filling

Dough: All-purpose flour, 300 g; baking soda, 5 g; yeast powder, 8 g; egg, 1; salad oil, 10 g; salt, 5 g; sugar, 20 g

Filling: bamboo shoot diced, 3 tablespoons; chopped green onion, 2 tablespoons; shiitake mushroom dice, 2 tablespoons; minced beef, chicken, mutton, or pork, 300 g; brown sugar, 3 tablespoons

Seasoning: combine ground black pepper, 2 teaspoons; oyster sauce, 1 tablespoon; rice wine, 1 tablespoon; salt, 1/2 teaspoon; sesame oil, 1 tablespoon; sugar, 1 tablespoon

Preparation
1. Blanch rinsed dandelion leaves, cut into 3-cm pieces and blend with 1/4 cup of water as juice.
2. Pour the flour into a container, add other dough ingredients, and use the juice to make dough.
3. Knead the dough, cover with a wet cloth and let it rise for 40 minutes.
4. Blanch rinsed dandelion leaves for filling in brown sugar water, drain and cut into small pieces. Place in a bowl with minced meat, other stuffing ingredients, and the seasoning mixture; stir thoroughly.
5. Knead the raised dough. Pull off pieces about 40 g each and roll into smooth balls. Flatten each ball with hands, then roll it out into a thin, flat round shape. Insert about 1.5 tablespoons of filling, and wrap the dough around it to make a bun.
6. Place the buns in a steamer, let rest for 15-20 minutes. Steam buns over boiling water for 15-20 minutes and serve hot.

Variations
Dandelion can be replaced with ivy gourd shoots, or with the leaves of endive, drumstick, chard, nightshades, cowpea, tropical violet, or sweet potato.
Boiled Dumplings

Makes 40 dumplings
Preparation time: 60 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
Dough: Bread flour, 2 1/2 cups; salt, 1/4 teaspoon; water, 1 cup

Filling: Ivy gourd (Coccinia grandis) shoots, 100 g; chopped cabbage, 300 g; chopped green onion, 2 tablespoons; minced beef, chicken, mutton, or pork, 300 g; salt, 1 teaspoon

Seasoning: Ginger juice, 1 teaspoon; ground black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon; salt, 1/2 teaspoon; sesame oil, 1 teaspoon; soy sauce, 1 tablespoon

Preparation
1. Make dough by slowly mixing flour, salt and water; let rise for 15-20 minutes under wet cloth.
2. Chop rinsed ivy gourd shoots, set aside. Sprinkle cabbage with salt; leave for 5-10 minutes before squeezing out the water; set aside.
3. Mix minced meat, ivy gourd, cabbage, green onion and all seasoning ingredients in a clockwise direction for about 10 minutes.
4. Knead the dough again and divide into 40 balls, and roll out as flat, round wrappers.
5. Place 1/2 tablespoon of filling in the wrapper, fold it over and pinch at the end to make dumplings.
6. Drop dumplings in boiling water, stir carefully to prevent sticking together, cook until all the dumplings are floating, use a mesh strainer to lift the dumplings, and serve hot with a dipping sauce.
7. The dipping sauce is a mixture of soy sauce, sesame oil, vinegar, chili pepper, ginger, and garlic.

Variations
Ivy gourd can be replaced with shoots of water dropwort, tropical violet, cluster mallow, white mugwort, etc. The dumplings also can be fried in oil with a little water.
Taiwanese Koe

Makes 10 pieces
Preparation time: 60 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
Jute mallow (*Corchorus olitorius*) leaves, 100 g each for the crust and the filling
Glutinous rice flour, 350 g, for the crust
Rinsed banana leaf disks in oval shape (10 cm x 15 cm), 10, for the base
Dried radish shreds, 100 g
Dried small shrimp, 10 pieces
Minced meat (beef, chicken, mutton, or pork), 200 g
Shallot cloves, 5

Seasoning: black pepper powder, 1/4 teaspoon; salt, 1 tablespoon; soy sauce, 1 tablespoon; sugar, 1 teaspoon

Preparation
1. Cut rinsed jute mallow leaves for filling; cut shallot and soaked radish shreds into tiny pieces.
2. Grease the surface of banana leaf disks with 1 tablespoon of salad oil.
3. Fry dried shrimp, minced meat and radish in 1 tablespoon of salad oil; add jute mallow and continue frying, add all seasoning ingredients, and stir well. Cool and set aside for use as filling.
4. Blend rinsed jute mallow leaves for crust with 200 ml of water in a blender to make juice.
5. Slowly add the juice into rice flour, and mix well with 1 teaspoon of sugar to make dough.
6. Knead the dough into 10 balls, flatten, place about 1 tablespoon of filling in the center, round up and then flatten again and place on top of banana leaf disks. Brush each dumpling with salad oil.
7. Steam the dumplings for 10-15 minutes and serve hot.

Variations
Jute mallow can be replaced with leaves of dandelion, endive, drumstick, amaranth, chard, nightshade, tropical violet, ivy gourd, etc. Banana leaves can be replaced with leaves of shell ginger (*Alpinia speciosa*), white ginger-lily (*Hedychium coronarium*), or beach hibiscus (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*).
Rice Ball Bean Soup

Makes 30 rice balls
Preparation time: 60 minutes
Cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients
Tender drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*) leaves, 75 g
Sticky rice flour, 300 g
De-hulled mungbean (*Vigna radiata*), 90 g
Adzuki bean (*Vigna angularis*), 100 g (soaked in cold water overnight)
Sugar, 200 g (20 g for mungbean, 180 g for adzuki bean)
Water, 400 ml

Preparation
1. Rinse drumstick leaves and blend with 100-ml water in a blender. Filter the juice through a fine net bag and mix well with sticky rice flour.
2. Knead the dough to form 15 g balls, and flatten each ball to make a crust.
3. Cook de-hulled mungbean with 100-ml water in an electric cooker (about 20 minutes) or simmer in a pot until beans are fully tender (about two hours). Add 20 g of sugar, stir thoroughly to make bean paste, divide into 3 g portions.
4. Wrap the sticky rice ball crusts around each ball of the bean paste filling to make sticky rice balls. Set aside.
5. Cook adzuki bean with 100-ml water in an electrical cooker (about 20 minutes) or simmer in a pot until beans are fully softened (about two hours). Add 180 g of sugar and 100-ml water to the cooked beans, bring to a boil, and simmer until beans become mushy.
6. Bring water to boil in another pot. Add the sticky rice balls, cook until they float, then slowly add adzuki bean soup. Boil and stir well for one minute; serve hot as a perfect winter dessert.

Variations
Drumstick shoots can be replaced with dandelion leaves, chard leaves, nightshade leaves, cowpea leaves, tropical violet shoots, ivy gourd shoots, etc.
Healthy Jelly

Makes 20-25 jellies
Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 20 minutes

Ingredients
Ashitaba (*Angelica keiskei*) leaves, 70 g
Apple, half (about 200 g)
Agar powder or plain pectin, 1 1/2 teaspoons
Sugar, 70 g
Water, 600 ml

Preparation
1. Rinse ashitaba leaves, cut into small pieces, and blend with water in a blender until smooth.
2. Add sugar to the ashitaba puree.
3. In a pot, bring the mixture to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly with a long-handled wooden spoon. Pour in the agar all at once and stir. Return mixture to a full rolling boil; boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Rinse apple, peel and cut into 1-cm pieces, set aside.
5. Pour the ashitaba mixture into jelly molds, place 3-4 pieces of apple in each mold, and let the jelly cool.
6. Chill jellies. Serve cold jellies with cream poured over the top.

Variations
Ashitaba leaves can be replaced with sesbania flower buds with their pistils and styles removed.