

RAYO KO SAAG (Stir-Fried Mustard Greens)

Recipe courtesy of Rachana Rimal and the League of Kitchens

Some sort of stir-fried greens appear at almost every Nepali meal. Here, the spicy bite of the mustard greens is enhanced by the mustard oil. The manner in which Rachana tears the greens into the pan produces a flavor she prefers over chopping them.

2 ½ teaspoons mustard oil (see Cook's Notes)
½ pound mustard greens, well-washed and dried
1 teaspoon ajwain seeds (see Cook's Notes)
½-inch coin peeled fresh ginger, grated (about ½ teaspoon)
¼ teaspoon fine salt

Heat the oil in a flat-bottomed wok or large skillet over medium-high heat until it starts to smoke, about 1 minute. Add the ajwain and immediately turn off the heat. Tear the mustard leaves from the top down into large pieces, halving any thick stems as you get lower on the leaf, and add to the pan. Turn the heat to medium-high and stir to coat with the oil. Add the ginger and salt and let it sit, don't stir, for 1 minute. Then cover for 1 minute. Then uncover and stir-fry until wilted, tender, and the liquid evaporates, about 3 minutes.

Makes 4 servings

Prep: 10 minutes

Cook: 5 minutes

Cook's Notes: Mustard oil is a key ingredient in many Asian cuisines. There's controversy in the United States about its toxicity and its effects on health, and as a result it has been banned for consumption. It has been proven safe in small doses, but is often sold at South Asian markets in the US labeled as massage oil.

Ajwain seeds, popular in Indian cuisine, are slightly bitter and very aromatic, especially when bloomed in hot oil or ghee.

About the League of Kitchens:

The League of Kitchens is a unique cooking school in NYC where immigrants teach intimate cooking workshops in their homes, and participants encounter a new culture, cuisine, and neighborhood with every experience. Each experience offers opportunities for meaningful connection and social interaction, cultural engagement and exchange, culinary learning and discovery, and exceptional eating and drinking. Through this experience, we seek to build cross-cultural connection and understanding, and to increase access to traditional cooking knowledge.

The League of Kitchens has been featured in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, the Chew, Tasting Table, Saveur, The Splendid Table, Eater, and Time Out New York, among others. Conde Nast Traveler called the League of Kitchens "quite possibly the coolest foodie thing to do in NYC whether you're a visitor or local."