



BAWANG GULAY

(Allium sativum)

**INDIGENOUS
VEGETABLES
OF THE
PHILIPPINES**

No. 4 / 2018

BAWANG GULAY

Allium sativum L.

English names:
Spring Garlic,
Garlic Greens

*Philippine
local names:*
Bawang Gulay,
Murang Bawang
(Tagalog)



GARLIC: THIS “WHITE GOLD” CAN BE “GREEN”

Garlic is a high-value crop that sits among the priority crops of the Philippines’ Department of Agriculture. After all, it is Ilocos’ “white gold”. However, let us also meet, greet and grow it as “Garlic Greens”.





Garlic is a vegetable when it is still in the vegetative stage at around 6 weeks from planting. At this stage, the whole plant, better known as Garlic Greens, is a favorite vegetable among the Ilocano in the northern Philippines where it is locally called Bawang Gulay.

The planting season for garlic coincides with the cool months, also known as the “ber” months. In the main garlic-producing provinces in the Philippines, farmers usually begin planting in October. Planting continues until December, with November as the most popular time to start. When the weather warms up after the months of gloomy weather, farmers start to harvest the mature bulbs. Harvest continues until May, peaking between February and March. Garlic Greens, however, are harvested earlier. In January, a sea of Garlic Greens flows into major markets in Metro Manila as push carts wheel in loads of Bawang Gulay, transported from the north, particularly from Ilocos.

Garlic thrives in an environment with a climate that has a wet season for half of the year, and a dry season in the other half. Sandy, silt and clay loam soils are the most suitable. For the best yields, the soil must be well-drained. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur are among the top five (5) garlic-producing provinces in the Philippines, along with Occidental Mindoro, Nueva Ecija and Quezon, where soil types are most favorable.





BAWANG GULAY (*Allium sativum*)

Garlic Greens are harvested at the vegetative stage or 35 days after planting – much earlier than the 100 days needed to produce mature garlic bulbs. Thus, farmers can grow two crops of Bawang Gulay during the garlic production period, and get a quick return on their investment.

A farmer must decide at planting whether to produce greens (vegetable) or mature bulbs (spice) because



cloves are planted closer together to produce Bawang Gulay.

The short production period of Bawang Gulay may reduce the farmer's exposure to environmental risks, but Bawang Gulay is highly perishable so that how much to produce must be estimated well. When the price of Garlic/Garlic Greens drops too low, farmers allow the plants to mature for 60 days more since mature bulbs have higher shelf life than the greens. However, yields will be much lower than when planted at the wider plant spacing required for growing mature Garlic bulbs. That's one of the risks a farmer faces. With time, the farmer studies trends in the market and in the environment. His decisions become more informed by experience.





A WOMAN MANS THIS BUSINESS

Bawang Gulay is a woman's business - mostly. It is both food for the household and a source of cash income. In the town of Sinait in Ilocos Sur, female labor dominates the planting and harvesting of Bawang Gulay, while men do the land preparation. They say, "men fish and grow corn, while women look after the Garlic", from farm to market. One cannot miss the inevitable women vegetable retailers, like seated figurines punctuating the carpet of indigenous vegetables laid out on market floors in the north. It is in January that Bawang Gulay becomes a prominent part of this market tapestry.





COOKING WITH BAWANG GULAY

Harvest time for garlic is also heralded by the presence of Garlic Greens on Ilocano dinner tables and among local *carinderia* (food stall) fare in Ilocandia. One may even chance upon a *carinderia* offering out-of-town guests their specialty of *Pakbet na Murang Bawang*, on the house.

Pakbet, which is probably the signature Ilocano dish of indigenous vegetables that has been adopted and adapted across the Philippines, has a version that is wholly Garlic – or rather, Garlic Greens. This dish of sautéed mixed vegetables shriveled (*pinakebet*) to Ilocano specifications and flavored with fish paste (or shrimp paste in the Visayas), has an unusual and little-known version made only of Bawang Gulay. Obviously, this dish does not need spices because the main vegetable – Bawang Gulay – stamps it with its distinct garlicky taste and scent. Mind you, locals strongly advise against mixing shallots or other spices in *Pakbet na Murang Bawang*. Garlic and shallots simply do not complement each other in this dish, says Mr. Elvis Pidut of Badoc in Ilocos Sur. He shares more trivia on *Pakbet na Murang Bawang*. Another version features another part of the Garlic plant – the scape or the flower stalk. Scapes emerge from amidst the plant's leaves like a curling stem. When it straightens out, the flower emerges at the tip, but the



stalk would have become too rigid by then. Before that happens, farmers cut some of the scapes when they are still curly to cook into *Pakbet na Murang Bawang*. Crunchy and tender at this stage, the scapes may also be cooked into *Tinorta*, a garlicky omelet. Although some specialty grocery shops may offer garlic scapes, they are not so commonly sold; but from farmers' fields, there's more than enough for sharing.

Bawang Gulay Salad

Ingredients: 1 cup Bawang Gulay, 3 medium tomatoes, *bagoong* (fish paste)

Procedure:

- Cut up Bawang Gulay into desired length and blanch.
- Drain excess water and toss with sliced tomatoes. Flavor with *bagoong* to desired taste.

Tinorta'ng Bawang Gulay

Ingredients: 1 cup Garlic scapes, 1 egg, seasoning, oil

Procedure:

- Cut Garlic scapes into short pieces.
- Beat egg, season and add scape pieces.
- Heat oil in a pan and drop enough of the mixture to form patties and cook until firm.

Pakbet na Murang Bawang

Ingredients: Bawang Gulay, lots of tomatoes, *bagoong* (fish paste)

Procedure (top to bottom, photos at right):

- Clean Bawang Gulay by removing dried leaf sheaths and leaf tips and by chopping off roots.
- Cut Bawang Gulay into sections of desired length.
- Add coarsely chopped ripe tomatoes and drizzle with *bagoong* to desired taste.
- In a covered pot, simmer until tomatoes are very tender. No need to stir.





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HAPPY STOMACH, HAPPY BODY



Garlic is not just good to the taste buds; it is also good for the body. The bulb is rich in calcium, phosphorus and potassium while the leaves contain healthy amounts of protein, Vitamin A and Vitamin C. In folk medicine, Garlic is believed to aid in the healing of wounds, toothache, epilepsy and skin diseases caused by fungal infection.

Crushed Garlic is a remedy for swelling joints caused by rheumatism or sprains when applied on the affected areas.

Garlic rub is also a traditional relief from insect bites, dog bites, scabies

and even headaches. A drop of Garlic juice in the ear can also relieve a terrible earache. Worse conditions such as high blood pressure, hypertension, high blood sugar and high cholesterol have also been known to be alleviated by Garlic. In an emergency, a hypertensive patient can be made to chew on Garlic cloves while waiting for medical attention. A jar of Garlic cloves soaked in vinegar would come in handy in such cases.





DID YOU KNOW?

THAT 100 GRAMS OF THE FOLLOWING GARLIC PARTS CONTAIN:

EDIBLE PORTION	%	GARLIC LEAVES & BULB		GARLIC LEAVES	
		Fresh ^a	Fresh ^b	Boiled ^c	
Water	g	67.00	87.00	100.00	
Energy	kcal	80.30	87.10	88.90	
Protein	g	79.00	50.00	45.00	
Fat	g	2.60	2.00	1.10	
Carbohydrate total	g	0.60	0.60	0.60	
Carbohydrate available	g	15.80	9.20	8.80	
Crude Fiber (Dietary Fiber)	g	10.80	6.20	6.20	
Ash	g	2.00	1.60	1.10	
Calcium	mg	0.70	1.10	0.60	
Phosphorus	mg	94.00	120.00	63.00	
Iron	mg	53.00	52.00	24.00	
Sodium	mg	2.20	1.10	1.20	
B-carotene	μg	31.00	4.00	3.00	
Total Vitamin A (RE)	μg	860.00	1145.00	870.00	
Thiamin, Vitamin B1	mg	143.00	191.00	145.00	
Riboflavin, Vitamin B2	mg	0.09	0.09	0.05	
Niacin	mg	0.10	0.14	0.08	
Ascorbic Acid	mg	0.80	0.70	0.40	
		33.00	35.00	15.00	

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^a <https://i.fnri.dost.gov.ph/fct/library/show/401>;

^b <https://i.fnri.dost.gov.ph/fct/library/show/399>

^c <https://i.fnri.dost.gov.ph/fct/library/show/400>;



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THE GARLIC THAT WE KNOW

Garlic is a short, upright herb that can grow up to 70 cm high. The bulbs can grow up to 7 cm in diameter and can have around 1 to 15 cloves each. Garlic has leaves that look like spring onions at first glance. A closer look will show that they are not the tubular leaves of spring onions. Instead, they look like flattened tubes with a fold along its length. Initially, they emerge from the planted cloves like green spikes coming out of the soil. Ilocos Red, Ilocos White, Batanes Red, Batanes White, Baccara and Pasuquin are common Garlic varieties in the Philippines.

Most Filipinos know Garlic as a spice - white, cream, pinkish or brownish cloves - that is a kitchen mainstay. Out of several local varieties of Garlic, the Ilocos White variety seems to be the most popular as it is the most common in commercial production areas.

Ilocos White fares well against pests and diseases, takes only a little less than four (4) months to mature with impressive yields and has a longer storage period. Thus, promotion of Ilocos White has displaced much of the native variety which has lower yields despite being hardier against local pests and diseases. However, the native variety is well known for its stronger garlicky taste so that many are still looking for these smaller and hardier bulbs.





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These small pamphlets are intended to spark renewed interest in the conservation, use, production and promotion of Philippine indigenous vegetables that have always been part of Filipino food culture and are key to household food and nutrition security.



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