

Celosia

a taste of Africa on the Floridian table

Celosia is an edible ornamental plant that is also referred to as ‘cockscomb’ due to the vibrantly colored flower plumes. The nutritious foliage originated in Africa, and it is consumed as a staple green throughout West Africa and Southeast Asia. Celosia has been a common ornamental in Southern American landscapes for decades, yet its nutritious, delicious, and drought-tolerant qualities are gaining popularity among home gardeners throughout Florida today.

Cockscomb, wool flower, or quail grass (English), 鸡冠花 (jī guān huā, Mandarin), mfungu (Swahili), soko yokoto (Nigeria)



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Beautiful *Celosia cristata* flower with green leaves blooming in a garden



EFO RIRO (NIGERIAN GREENS)

60
MINUTES
TOTAL

4
TOTAL
SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
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| 2 pounds fresh and washed celosia leaves | 1/4 to 1 fresh hot pepper Scotch bonnet or habanero pepper, stemmed, seeded (if desired), and finely chopped |
| 2 medium red onions | salt and pepper to taste |
| 2 large tomatoes | preferred cooked protein |
| 2 red bell peppers | |
| 1/3 cup oil or butter | |

DIRECTIONS

1. Chop one onion and slice the other, chop one tomato and slice the other. Chop bell peppers and finely chop hot pepper.
2. Bring water to boil in medium or large pot and cook celosia until tender (1-2 minutes).
3. Strain celosia and immediately transfer to ice water until cool. Strain again and finely chop. Set aside.
4. In blender, combine chopped onions, tomatoes and peppers and puree. Set aside.
5. Heat oil in wok or large skillet and add sliced onions with a pinch of salt and stir.
6. Add sliced tomatoes when onions are soft, and add finely chopped hot pepper when tomatoes are soft. Stir 2-3 minutes, add puree and raise to high heat and continue stirring 2-3 more minutes.
7. Stir in chopped celosia greens and add salt and pepper to taste. Add preferred cooked protein (beef, chicken or tofu) and let stand at least ten minutes before serving.



FACTS

There are many different ornate varieties of Celosia, yet *Celosia argentea* is used as a leafy green vegetable similar to spinach throughout Africa, India, and Indonesia. In Nigeria, Celosia leaves are stewed in a red sauce with crayfish and meats referred to as 'Efo riro.' It is also well-known in the East African highlands, where it is referred to as 'mfungu' in Swahili.

Celosia leaves are rich in protein, calcium, phosphorus, and iron.

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