

Stem Sauté

by Sheila Essig

Reading my new favorite cooking book (not necessarily a cookbook) by Tamar Adler [*An Everlasting Meal*] last week, I learned that in Provence chard stems are prized and valued while the leaves are used as chicken feed or, occasionally, thrown into a soup. She was emphasizing the beauty of using the whole vegetable and, while I've always used stems, it made me think that maybe I've not been allowing them to shine as well as they might in a dish all their own. This crazy simple dish proved the stems of the CSA chard and kale extraordinary and has changed the way I will eat them in the future. The stems surely shine and it shows how vegetables can taste best in the most basic preparations.



Cut the stems of chard and kale into 1-2" pieces. Sauté onion on a low-medium heat in oil until translucent. I had fresh green garlic which I sautéed along with the onion but any alium(s) will do, so use whatever you have. Add damp stems, salt and pepper. Start tasting it 5-10 minutes later and stop when it's wilting and tasty. I prefer room temperature but my kids loved it as a cold salad. Make enough that it lasts you several incarnations. I had chickpeas going on a back burner so I added them but it'd be great with pasta, as a filling with eggs, potatoes, any grain. The choices are infinite.

