



A newcomer on the vegetable shelves: chayote



Tipp von Esther Kern



As a veggie spotter, I always keep my eyes open for new varieties and types of vegetables. I've known about chayote for several years now, but over the last couple of years I've been coming across this squash with a cucumber-like flavour increasingly frequently. It looks like a cross between a pear and a pumpkin, is usually knobbly, but may also be prickly. The best thing about chayote is that it's a perennial vegetable in warm countries – although here it only thrives for a single summer.

Nevertheless, vegetable growers here and there are attempting to grow it. And amongst amateur gardeners, chayote has already proved its worth as an addition to the conventional range of vegetables. If you take a look around Asian shops, you can sometimes spot chayote on display.



How do you prepare it? You can either add it to a salad raw, ideally in really thin slices, or you can cook it. Since it can be eaten raw, all you need to do is quickly stir fry it, for example. In Brazil, there's a recipe called "chuchu frito", which involves frying cooked pieces of chayote in batter.

Incidentally, my favourite part of the chayote plant is its young green shoots. Vegetable farmer Marcel Foffa from Domleschg, who also supplies top chefs such as Andreas Caminada, gave me a handful of them last year. The shoots were all he could harvest, since he had planted out his chayote seedlings a bit too late and by October the fruits had still not formed. So he just picked the greenery instead, because it's used as a vegetable in many places. In Asia it's used in curries, and in South America it's used in soups. I just tossed the shoots briefly in some hot olive oil and a bit of garlic, then lightly sautéed them. Delicious!