

# Big Red Cabbage Ball

Shopping at farmers markets under the COVID-19 restrictions means I'm pointing at vegetables I want from some distance. Conscious of the lengthening queue behind me I recently nodded approval to a whole head of red cabbage not realizing until I stashed it in the backpack that it was the size of a large medicine ball. Crickey, I thought, how am I going to deal with such a huge, imposing sphere for a household of two? Fortunately I love red cabbage and my go to recipe is one in Stephanie Alexander's *The Cooks Companion*. The shredded red cabbage is slowly cooked in a heavy pot on the stove with apple and brown sugar and then finished with some red wine vinegar and butter for a bit of bite and gloss. It's great with roast meats and grills but it hardly made a dent on that medicine ball, so I had to start being a bit more inventive. I then cooked a similar, spicier version without all the brown sugar and tossed through a shredded cooked smoked ham hock, creating a sort of red cabbage porky casserole any Eastern European grandmother would have been happy with. For an end of the week bangers and mash I fried some Italian pure pork sausages adding heaps of shredded red cabbage and red wine to the frypan. Despite these efforts every time I opened the fridge there it still sat like a giant puppy wanting some love. It was unavoidable. What to do next? Pivoting to Asia I made a simple cabbage pickle and had it with a raw salmon rice bowl. Using red instead of green cabbage worked surprisingly well but as with all things Japanese it hardly made any impression on reducing the size of my medicine ball. Two weeks later I still have just under half a red cabbage (good thing it keeps so well in the fridge), so I thought I needed to tackle it with greater determination and include some lunchtime meals of this cabbage. That's when I came up with my red cabbage, pumpkin and freekeh warm salad. I think it's delicious and while I kept it pretty simple you could easily

jazz it up with walnuts, pinenuts, more fresh herbs, caramelised onions, feta or goats cheese. I still have 750 grams left of that medicine ball but I reckon a couple more freekeh salads should finally make it disappear. Next time I will ask for a small one, half maybe.

## Red Cabbage, Pumpkin & Freekeh Salad

For Two

- 1 cup freekeh (Mount Zero or Greenwheat Freekeh brands are good)
- half a small red cabbage
- 500 g pumpkin, cut into small cubes
- extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- salt
- 2 tbs red wine vinegar
- 1 tbs pomegranate molasses
- handful chopped parsley

Rinse the freekeh, cover with water, bring to the boil and simmer for about 20-25 minutes, adding a little more water as needed. Drain through a sieve leaving it to drain well and cool. Cut the red cabbage into narrow wedges and place on a roasting pan with the pumpkin and cumin seeds. Drizzle liberally with olive oil and roast at 170°C for about 25 minutes or until tender. Add the cooked freekeh to the roasting pan and sprinkle with salt, vinegar, molasses and parsley and toss to coat the pumpkin and cabbage. Serve warm

or at room temperature.



I still have 750 grams to go towards the freekeh salads