Magiczny Kraków

Krakow Celtuce

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This is the favorite vegetable of Krakow inhabitants. Such information is provided by 19th-century sources. Apparently, its first description was made by Count Stanisław Wodzicki, a great lover of botany, who lived at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. About 170 years ago, another Krakow botanist, professor and rector of the Jagiellonian University, Florian Sawiczewsk,i focused on the careful observation of the Krakow celtuce (called *łoczyga* in Old Polish):

"The people of Krakow use the usual leavened, or pickled celtuces, which, especially in hot weather, are delicious, pleasantly sour, refreshing, cooling and easy to digest; That is why, in more wealthy manor houses, as well as in rural mud huts, they are almost everyday meals, especially since the leavened liquid, in which they are pickled, is a pleasant and refreshing drink."

Florian Sawiczewski, News about Łoczyga in General, and in Particular about the Krakow Łoczyga", Krakow 1840.

The celtuce requires fertile soil, which villages near Krakow have proven to have. At the beginning of the 20th century, increased cultivation of the celtuce was spread over the area of today's Krowodrza. It was traditionally eaten raw - sprinkled with vinegar and olive oil or pickled exactly as cucumbers are. Celtuce processed this way was the basis for a favorite soup. Once an important element of Krakow cuisine, it lost its popularity in the 1960s.

Forgotten for several dozen years, it made a comeback local gastronomy thanks to the Slow Food-CE project and the efforts of the city of Krakow. The first harvest of celtuce is over, esteemed Krakow chefs took part in it - the plant went to their kitchens, and the chefs themselves began to look for ways to prepare celtuce that would satisfy modern palates. Efforts are underway to bring it back as the culinary symbol of Krakow again.

Older residents of our city still remember this interesting vegetable, do you?

Everything you need to know about the Krakow celtuce:

An unusual and presently little-known variety of stem lettuce, also called Karol's lettuce. Juicy and crunchy. Both the leaves and stems, transforming into flower shoots, are edible raw and after being cooked. Research shows that the Krakow celtuce contains up to four times more vitamin C than "ordinary" lettuce! Problem-free scape is best sown in spring or autumn. It is important to cut it before flowering begins. Be sure to peel the shoots before eating, as their skin is slightly bitter in taste!