

## Killer Collards

Serves 6 to 8

Everyone has a mom or aunty who knows “the best” way to make collards, so I knew we’d have controversy when I skipped the ham hock or salt pork and made them lush with a lot of spiced butter. I love it! That kind of argument makes for the liveliest dinner table conversation.

1 cup (8 ounces) Spiced Butter (recipe below)  
1 onion, chopped  
2 Thai bird chiles, minced, or ½ teaspoon hot red pepper flakes  
2 pounds collard greens, stemmed and chopped  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
2 tablespoons brown sugar  
Coarse kosher salt

Melt the spiced butter in a large stockpot over medium- high heat. Add the onion and chiles and sauté until the onion has softened, about 5 minutes. Add the collards and stir in the vinegar, brown sugar, and salt to taste and bring to a simmer. Turn the heat down to low, cover, and simmer until the greens are very tender, about 1½ hours.  
Serve hot or warm.

### Spiced Butter

We use this butter as a flavor enhancer—you find it in a lot of recipes in the book. It has a hint of funk, like the funk of fermented foods, the new wave of flavor to follow umami. There are a lot of versions of spiced butter in Ethiopia. My version is true to that made by my wife Maya’s tribe, the Gurage.

Melt 8 sticks (2 pounds) unsalted butter in a saucepan over low heat. Add 2 minced garlic cloves, 2 minced shallots, a 2-inch piece ginger (peeled, sliced, and smashed), 1½ tablespoons coriander seeds, 1 tablespoon cumin seeds, 1½ teaspoons fenugreek, 1½ teaspoons ajwain\*, 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon, and ½ teaspoon ground turmeric. Simmer very gently for 30 minutes to infuse the flavors. Keep an eye on this; you don’t want the milk solids to brown.

Skim off all the foam and any floating seeds and let the butter sit for about 10 minutes for the milk solids to settle on the bottom.

Carefully pour the spiced butter through a sieve lined with a few layers of cheesecloth into a container, leaving the solids behind. Let it cool, then cover and refrigerate. It will keep for months.

This makes about 3 cups.

\*Ajwain. Common in Indian cooking, this tiny pod has a complex, bitter flavor and smells like thyme. You can find it in Indian markets (or online from [kalustyans.com](http://kalustyans.com), [penzeys.com](http://penzeys.com), and [thespicehouse.com](http://thespicehouse.com)).

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