



GREENS

Health Benefits

Dark leafy greens are rich in minerals, vitamins and phytonutrients, making them one of the most concentrated sources of nutrition of any food.

Fresh collards, kale and mustard greens have about the same amount of calcium as whole milk, ounce for ounce; dandelion and turnip greens have more.

The darker, outer leaves are most nutritious, containing much more beta carotene, vitamin C and calcium than inner leaves.

For those on a low sodium diet, note that greens can be relatively high in sodium.

Different Kinds of Greens

O = Contains Oxalic Acid

Oxalic acid is a chemical that can interfere with the body's absorption of iron and calcium by binding together with these minerals.

Some researchers say that cooking diminishes the oxalic acid's binding properties. If this is true, eating these greens lightly steamed or sautéed is most beneficial.

B = Brassicas

All Brassica-genus vegetables contain a group of compounds that have anti-cancer, antioxidant properties. They also contain the highest level of disease-fighting substances per serving.

DARK LEAFY GREENS

In the Sacramento region, greens are in season during the fall, winter and spring. Please see other side for cooking suggestions.

Beet Greens

Don't toss those tasty green tops of your beets. Young and tender leaves may be eaten raw in salads. The older greens will have tougher stems and are easier to eat when cooked. Mild taste, similar to Swiss chard. **O**

Swiss Chard

Mild, earthy sweet flavor, similar in taste and texture to spinach. Young leaves and stalks are good in salads. Fleshy, wide, flat stalks are eaten as well, particularly in soups. **O**

Collards

This cruciferous green has an assertive, earthy flavor between cabbage and kale. Excellent source of calcium, iron, and vitamins A & C. Small, tender leaves are mildest. **B**

Mustard Greens

With a strong biting taste, the young, tender leaves add zest to a salad. Older leaves may be sautéed lightly with garlic. Good cleansing food and an excellent tonic. **B**

Dandelion Greens

This nutrient-packed common lawn weed is mildly bitter with a salty edge. It has high amounts of vitamins A, C and K, potassium, calcium and protein. Cooked dandelion is also high in iron, phosphorous and the B-vitamin complex. Its bitter quality is excellent for digestion and liver function. Choose young, small leaves for mildest flavor. Dress a raw dandelion salad with citrus juice, ginger and tamari.

Kale

This hearty green is best during winter months and has a cabbage-like flavor with an added sharpness. Add baby kale to a salad. Cooked kale is excellent stir-fried with ginger and garlic or sautéed with olive oil, garlic, onion, and caraway or fennel seeds. Kale is particularly beneficial to the nervous and digestive systems; it also builds calcium content in the body. **B**

Turnip Greens

Sharp tasting, these greens are best when young and tender. Too tough and bitter for eating raw, especially when leaves are older and larger. They are exceptionally high in calcium. **B**

Buy certified organically-grown greens whenever possible.

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Nutrients in a 3½ ounce serving of raw greens (2 to 3 cups)					
Type	Calories	Beta Carotene (mg)	Vit C (mg)	Calcium (mg)	Iron (mg)
Beet Greens	19	4	30	119	3
Collards	19	2	23	117	0.6
Dandelion	45	8	35	187	3
Kale	50	5	120	135	2
Mustard Greens	26	3	70	103	1
Swiss Chard	19	2	30	51	2
Turnip Greens	27	5	60	190	1



GREENS

COOKING SUGGESTIONS

One pound of raw greens yields about 1/2 cup cooked greens. Season cooked greens with sea salt, gomasio, tamari, lemon juice, brown rice or umeboshi plum vinegar. Garnish with toasted pumpkin or sunflower seeds.

Boiling

Wash and chop greens. Boil 1 qt. water for each 1/2 lb. greens. Add 1/4 t. sea salt, if desired. Boil stems first. After 30 seconds, add leaves. Boil, uncovered until tender. Drain. Save water for stock.

Simmering

For sturdy greens such as collards and kale, simmer washed and chopped greens in stock, covered, until tender, about 10-30 minutes.

Steaming

For tender greens, add freshly washed greens to a pan and cover. Using only the water left on leaves from washing, steam greens until just wilted. For sturdier greens, steam greens in 1/2-inch of water in covered pan until tender. When using a vegetable steamer basket, cook greens in basket over boiling water, covered, for 2 to 15 minutes, until tender.

Stir-Frying

Best for young and tender greens. Over medium heat, add 2 t.-1T. oil in sauté pan or wok. Add 2-3 cloves of slivered garlic and 1 large bunch (approx. 2 lbs.) trimmed greens (stems should be chopped fine or removed from stalk). Cooking times: Beet greens and spinach, 2-3 mins.; chard and broccoli rabe, 3-4 mins.; mustard greens and kale, 5-8 mins.; collards, 10 mins.; Optional: Add fresh, chopped herbs or diced tomatoes during the last 30 seconds of cooking.

LETTUCES

92%-95% water, lettuce is a good healing food. Lettuce (except Iceberg) is high in nutrients, especially vitamin E and silicon. The darker the leaves, the more nutritious the lettuce.

Butter

Including Boston and Bibb, this lettuce has a soft, "buttery" texture with a sweet, mild flavor.

Iceberg

Also known as Crisphead, this lettuce is mild, crisp, and low in nutrients.

Loose Leaf

Red leaf, green leaf, red oak leaf and green oak leaf varieties have a mild, delicate flavor. Crisper than butter lettuce but less crisp than Romaine.

Romaine

Also known as Cos, this lettuce with long deep green leaves is the strongest (not bitter) tasting lettuce and has a crisp texture. Used for Caesar salad.

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SALAD GREENS

Although they are mostly used in salads, these greens can also be lightly cooked.

Arugula

Also known as Rocket, this green has a peppery flavor. Smaller leaves have a mild definite bite. Older leaves are sharp and hot. Dress with vinaigrettes using olive oil, walnut or hazelnut oil and an assertive red wine or sherry vinegar, or lemon juice. **B** (see key on other side)

Belgian Endive

Also known as French endive, this chicory family member has a pleasantly bitter taste.

Chicory

Also known as curly endive, chicory is especially rich in minerals with a bitter taste and a crisp texture.

Curly Cress

Also known as garden cress, this peppery green is very nutritious, with vitamins A & C, iron and calcium.

Escarole

This green is sturdy and crisp with fleshy leaves and a slightly sharp flavor.

Mache

Also known as Lamb's lettuce, mache is firm, slightly chewy and has a sweet, nutty or green-flavor. Soft, young leaves are best.

Radicchio

Also known as red chicory, the firm and crisp radicchio adds a beautiful accent to salads with its magenta color and its sweet, yet slightly peppery and bitter flavor.

Sorrel

Sorrel's lemony, sour taste makes a great accent for salads or a flavorful purée for vegetable dishes. Stems are tough and should be removed. **O** (see key on other side)

Spinach

Spinach is a light and tasty green, delicious with nuts and a sweet dressing. Best during mild winter months, it is high in iron, vitamin A and chlorophyll as well as the mineral folacin. **O** (see key on other side)

Watercress

This water plant has a peppery taste that adds zest to salads as well as sandwiches, omelets, mashed potatoes, stuffings and soups. It is abundant in iodine and is a blood purifier.

Sources: *The Complete Vegetarian Cuisine* by Rose Elliot, *The Essential Vegetarian Cookbook*, *Recipes from an Ecological Kitchen* by Lorna Sass, *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison, *The Wellness Encyclopedia* by the UCB Wellness Letter Editors, and *Whole Foods Companion* by Dianne Onstad.