

KALE



KALE is a member of the Brassica family, along with cabbage, collards, and broccoli. Kale can have different flavors depending on what time of year it is harvested. The leaves are mild in the spring and early summer, then begin to develop a bitter flavor as the weather warms. Kale is most delicious and sweet after a frost. Some of the varieties grown in the Northeast are Purple Curly, Tooth-edged Red Russian, and Black Dinosaur kale, as well as the familiar dark green variety. Kale is very hearty and is available almost throughout the entire Northeast growing season. Peak harvest times are in the early summer and in the fall and winter months.



STORAGE

- ◆ **Wash and wrap in a damp towel** and store in the refrigerator drawer. Kale will keep about one week stored this way.
- ◆ **To freeze**, wash and de-stem the leaves. Blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain and rinse immediately with cold water to stop the cooking process. Store in freezer bags.

PREPARATION

- ◆ Wash leaves well, keeping an eye out for garden critters. Remove any yellowed leaves as well as tough stems and large ribs (fold leaves in half and cut or tear out the ribs). Cut the leaves into small strips.
- ◆ Unlike other greens, kale **retains much of its volume when cooked**. 1 pound of raw kale yields roughly 2 cups cooked.
- ◆ Kale is delicious **steamed or sautéed** (4 to 5 minutes), or added to **soups**, especially hearty ones like lentil or bean soup.
- ◆ Try it simply **sautéed with olive oil** and lots of garlic. Add salt and pepper and Parmesan cheese and serve with pasta for a simple nutritious meal.

Nutritional Information

Kale is extremely high in vitamins A, C and K. Vitamin A is important in vision, growth and development, skin health, immune function and reproduction. Vitamin C is important in immune response, wound healing, and allergic reactions. Vitamin C also helps with iron absorption. Vitamin K is involved in blood clotting.

Kale Recipes

Braised Kale, Potatoes and Mushrooms

- 1 cup diced, uncooked red potatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 3 medium shallots
- 2 cloves garlic
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 lb kale, washed, stemmed and torn into large pieces
- 1/4 cup water



Put potatoes in a medium saucepan of salted water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until tender, about 7-10 minutes. Drain and set aside. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium heat (you can also use wine, broth or water for the sauté). Add mushrooms, shallots, and garlic and cook, stirring often until shallots are soft and mushrooms are tender, about 5 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste. Add kale to mushrooms and cook stirring often, 1 minute. Add water and cooked potatoes. Cover and cook until kale is dark and tender.

Recipe adapted from www.fatfree.com, courtesy of John Wallace, 1998.

Kale and Potato Casserole

- 1 bunch of kale (about 1 pound), washed and tough stems removed
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 5 baking potatoes, washed, peeled and quartered
- 6 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 eggs
- 2 cloves garlic, minced



In a saucepan, over medium high heat, cook kale with a couple teaspoons of water, covered, until it is wilted (3-5 minutes). Drain the kale in a colander. Pat it dry with paper towels and chop it finely (you can use a food processor if you have one.) Place the chopped kale in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a loaf pan and set aside. Put the potatoes in a pot and cover them with salted water. Simmer for 20 minutes or until they are fork tender, drain and return to the pot. In large bowl, mash potatoes with butter, eggs and garlic. Transfer half of potato mixture to bowl with the kale and mix until smooth. Spread this mixture into the bottom of greased loaf pan. Spread remaining mashed potatoes on top. Place the loaf pan inside a larger baking pan and pour enough hot water into the baking pan to reach halfway up the sides of the loaf pan. Bake for 40 minutes or until a thick knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve casserole sliced.

Recipe contributed by Kirsten Sauer, Just Food volunteer, 2001.

Stir-fried Kale

- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon minced fresh ginger root
- 1/2 pound kale, washed and chopped coarsely
- Chili pepper flakes (optional)
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds



In a medium-sized pan, heat oil over a medium heat. Add ginger root and cook 1 minute. Add kale and chili flakes, (if you desire) raise heat to medium-high. Add the soy sauce and water and stir fry until the kale is wilted but not mushy (about 2 minutes). Sprinkle with sesame seeds and serve over rice.

Recipe contributed by Kirsten Sauer, Just Food volunteer, 2001