

Glorious Greens

Green vegetables are the foods most missing in modern diets. Learning to cook and eat greens is essential to creating health. When you nourish yourself with greens, you will naturally crowd out the foods that make you sick. Greens help build your internal rainforest and strengthen the blood and respiratory system. They are especially good for city people who rarely see fields of green in open countryside. Green is associated with spring, the time of renewal, refreshment and vital energy. In Asian medicine, green is related to the liver, emotional stability and creativity.

Nutritionally, greens are very high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, zinc and vitamins A, C, E and K. They are crammed with fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll and many other micronutrients and phytochemicals. Whenever possible, choose organic. But eating non-organic greens is much better than not eating any greens at all!

Some of the benefits of eating dark leafy greens are:

- Blood purification
- Cancer prevention
- Improved circulation
- Strengthened immune system
- Promotion of healthy intestinal flora
- Promotion of subtle, light and flexible energy
- Lifted spirit and elimination of depression
- Improved liver, gall bladder and kidney function
- Cleared congestion, especially in lungs by reducing mucus

There are so many greens to choose from. Find greens that you love and eat them often. When you get bored with your favorites, be adventurous and try greens that you've never heard of before. **Broccoli** is very popular among adults and children. Each stem is like a tree trunk, giving you strong, grounding energy. Rotate between **bok choy, napa cabbage, kale, collards, watercress, mustard greens, broccoli rabe, dandelion** and other leafy greens. **Green cabbage** is great cooked or raw, or in the form of sauerkraut. **Arugula, endive, chicory, lettuce, mesclun** and **wild greens** are generally eaten raw, but can be consumed in any creative way you enjoy. **Spinach, Swiss chard** and **beet greens** are best eaten in moderation because they are high in oxalic acid, which depletes calcium from bones and teeth, and may lead to osteoporosis. Cook these vegetables with something rich like tofu, seeds, nuts, beans, butter, animal products or oil. This will help balance the effect of the oxalic acid.

Cooking Greens

Try a variety of methods like steaming, boiling, sautéing in oil, water sautéing, waterless cooking or lightly pickling, as in a pressed salad. Boiling makes greens plump and relaxed. Boil for under a minute so that the nutrients in the greens do not get lost in the water. You can also drink the cooking water as a health-giving broth or tea if you're using organic greens. Steaming makes greens fibrous and tight, which is great for people who are trying to lose weight. Raw salad is also a wonderful preparation for greens. It's refreshing, cooling and supplies live enzymes.

When some people hear "leafy green vegetables," they often think of iceberg lettuce, but the ordinary, pale lettuce in restaurant salads doesn't have the power-packed goodness of other greens. Get into the habit of adding these dark, leafy green vegetables to your daily diet. Try it out for a month and see how you feel.



JESSICA McCANNON MICHELI

COME TO THE TABLE