

Kale is leafy green often used as a garnish but is actually a nutritious and delicious vegetable, with properties similar to broccoli and cabbage. Kale is a main ingredient in many traditional dishes, including Dutch stamppot, Irish colcannon, Portuguese caldo verde, African ugali, and Scandinavian langkål. Kale can generally be found all year round, but is best available locally in the late fall and early winter when freezing temperatures sweeten the taste.

NUTRITION

Kale is extremely nutrient rich, high in vitamins A, C, K, B6 and E, potassium, calcium, iron, fibre and omega-3 fatty acids. These and other kale nutrients combine to provide antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties. Kale can lower cholesterol and aid in the body's cell detoxification process. Pound for pound, kale is one of the most nutritious vegetables with the fewest calories.

HOW TO SELECT

Look for moist and firm stems with vibrant leaves. Avoid wilted, yellowing or blemished leaves. Young kale stalks are most tender, and kale harvested after the first fall frost is most flavourful. Warm storage temperatures and long storage periods will make kale flavor bitter.

HOW TO PREPARE

RAW: Kale can be enjoyed raw, most often in juices and smoothies. Kale's tough and fibrous stalks are generally not well-suited as raw snacks. Be sure to wash kale thoroughly and buy organic when possible as it is one of the vegetables on the 'dirty dozen' list – a list of foods most likely to have the high pesticide residues.

COOKED: Many of the nutrients in kale are more readily available once cooked. Kale can be steamed to make a quick stand-alone dish, sautéed in stir fries, boiled in soups, baked as a pizza topping, or cooked in countless other ways.

SIMPLE KALE RECIPE

KALE CHIPS: KALE, OIL, SALT AND PEPPER, SEASONING

1. Wash kale and separate leaves from stems.
2. Tear leaves in 2-3 inch pieces.
3. Add oil, salt and pepper to the bottom of a mixing bowl and add seasoning of your choice
4. Seasoning options: garlic, parmesan, paprika, chili powder, brown sugar, vinegar, etc
5. Toss the kale leaves in the oil mixture and spread out on a baking sheet
6. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 15 minutes.
7. Enjoy this snack as a healthy alternative to potato chips