

Kale

Harvest of the Month

Eat More Alaska Grown Kale

Kale is a descendant of wild cabbage from eastern Europe and parts of Asia. Alaskans have found these greens grow best outside in the summertime and can be grown year-round inside classrooms, houses, or heated greenhouses. Young plants have small, tender leaves and a mild or sweet flavor. As the plants get older, most varieties of kale taste sweeter after a frost.

Why Eat More Kale?

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup, chopped (67 g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 33

% Daily Value

Total Fat 0.6g 0%

Saturated Fat 0.1g 0%

Sodium 25mg 1%

Total Carbohydrate 6g 2%

Dietary Fiber 1.3g 5%

Sugar 0.4g

Protein 2.9g 5%

Vitamin A 133% Vitamin C 134%

Calcium 10% Iron 5%

One cup of raw (or 1/2 cup cooked) kale provides:

- An excellent source of vitamins A, C, and K.
- A low-calorie, fat-free vegetable.
- An excellent source of folate (or folic acid) that helps our bodies make DNA and other genetic material as well as to help cells divide.
- A good source of manganese needed for normal brain and nerve activity.

How Much Do We Need?

Kale varieties are categorized according to the leaf types and lengths. The colors of kale leaves can range from light green to green, to dark green, and violet-green, to violet-brown.

Types of kale are curly-leaf, bumpy-leaf, plain-leaf, rape kale, and leaf and spear. All types of kale grow very well throughout Alaska; it is usually considered a fall or winter crop in the Lower 48 states.

To gain the benefits of Alaska Grown kale, you and your family need one cup of raw kale which converts to 1/2 cup of cooked kale. As with most fruits and vegetables, kale is nutritious as long as you don't make it swim in lots of high-calorie sauces or bury it in salt.

How to Choose, Store and Prepare Kale

Choose: When buying kale, make sure it looks very fresh. Look for vibrant dark green leaves that are crisp and full, not wilted or yellowish. Kale is a hardier green and are often fresher in the store, and keep in the refrigerator better.

Store: After buying your kale, keep it refrigerated in a plastic bag (unless already packaged). If the kale isn't in a plastic bag, it will dehydrate quickly and become limp.

Prepare: It is best to use cold running water to wash your kale before eating it. Be sure to adequately dry any remaining portions before storing the kale to keep it from harboring bacteria and maintain freshness.

Plant and Grow Kale

Kale is grown year-round inside, but since kale seeds germinate and grow best at lower temperatures and can even withstand a moderate freeze, the peak harvest season is May through October (if the hard frost keeps away long enough). Kale seeds are sown thinly in rows or in wide-row bands about 18 inches to two feet apart to utilize garden space.

Kale and Roasted Cauliflower Recipe

- On a rimmed baking sheet, toss 1 lb cauliflower florets with 2 Tbsp. olive oil and 1/8 tsp each salt and pepper. Roast in 450°F oven for 25 minutes.
- In a large bowl, whisk 1/4 cup lemon juice, 3 Tbsp. olive oil, and 1/2 tsp salt. Toss one bunch chopped kale with dressing. Let stand at least 5 minutes.
- To kale, add cauliflower, 1/4 cup thin sliced red onion, 1/3 cup feta cheese, 1/3 cup golden raisins, and 1/3 cup toasted almonds. Toss until combined. Enjoy!

Choose Locally Grown

Kale is very versatile and has been successfully grown both indoors and outside in Alaska.

Here is the massive weight of a kale plant entered at the Alaska State Fair in 2007:

- 105.9 lbs kale plant
(world record that year)

How many bowls of kale chips could that one kale plant make? LOTS!!

Learning Activity

Kale is similar to many other “greens” that have played an important role in traditional recipes.

- Research three different Alaskan cultures and how they collected and used greens.
- Find the nutritional facts about these traditional greens and compare them to three types of kale and their nutritional facts.
- Share a traditional greens recipe with the class.



For more information, visit the Alaska Farm to School website at:

<https://www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/harvestofthemonth/>