

All Hail Kale! Camerota's Cupboard January 2013

Happy New Year! The first column of 2013 showcases 3 recipes featuring kale, "the queen of greens," a nutritional powerhouse. Alison Lewis of the MindBodyGreen website lists the benefits of adding more kale to your diet:

Top 9 Health Benefits of Eating Kale

1. Kale is low in calories, high in fiber and has zero fat. One cup of kale has only 36 calories, 5 grams of fiber and 0 grams of fat. It is great for aiding in digestion and elimination with its great fiber content. It's also filled with many nutrients, vitamins, folate and magnesium as well as those listed below.

2. Kale is high in iron. Per calorie, kale has more iron than beef. Iron is essential for good health, such as the formation of hemoglobin and enzymes, transporting oxygen to various parts of the body, cell growth, proper liver function and more.

3. Kale is high in Vitamin K. Eating a diet high in Vitamin K can help protect against various cancers. It is also necessary for a wide variety of bodily functions including normal bone health and the prevention of blood clots. Also increased levels of vitamin K may help people suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

4. Kale contains powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants, such as carotenoids and flavonoids may help protect against some cancers.

5. Kale is a great anti-inflammatory food. One cup of kale is filled with 10% of the RDA of omega-3 fatty acids, which help fight against arthritis, asthma and autoimmune disorders.

6. Kale is great for cardiovascular support. Eating more kale can help lower cholesterol levels.

7. Kale is high in Vitamin A. Vitamin A is good for your vision and your skin and may help to prevent lung and oral cavity cancers

8. Kale is high in Vitamin C. This is helpful for your immune system, your metabolism and your hydration.

9. Kale is high in calcium. Per calorie, kale has more calcium than milk. Calcium aids in preventing bone loss, preventing osteoporosis and maintaining a healthy metabolism. Vitamin C also helps to maintain cartilage and joint flexibility.

Nutrition information per ½ cup serving of cooked kale: 20 calories; 0g fat; 0g cholesterol; 1mg sodium; 4g carbohydrates; 1g fiber; 1g sugar; 1g protein.

Sesame Kale

(from The Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati's *More Nutritious Still Delicious*)

According to the dietitians at Cincinnati's Nutrition Council, "Kale is a very nutrient dense food. One half cup of cooked kale provides 100% of your vitamin A and 45% of your vitamin C daily requirements. It also gives you a week's worth of vitamin K in additions to plenty of calcium, iron, potassium and magnesium. All for only 25 calories!"

2 cups water

6 cups kale, washed, stemmed, and chopped

2 teaspoons olive oil

1 teaspoon sesame or canola oil

2 teaspoons minced garlic

½ cup chopped green onion

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

- In a large skillet, bring 2 cups water to a boil. Add chopped kale; cook covered until kale is tender, about 5 minutes; stir occasionally.
- Drain cooked kale. Return skillet to medium heat, add olive oil and sesame or canola oil; heat for about 1 minute.

- Add garlic and green onion; sauté for another minute. Add cooked kale; salt to taste. Cover; cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
- To serve, sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds.

Makes 4 servings (3/4 cup per serving)

Nutrition information per serving: 117 calories; 4g protein; 12g carbohydrate; 3g dietary fiber; 6g fat; 1g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 53mg sodium

Lemony Kale Salad

(adapted from the August, 2012, issue of *Cooking Light*)

Yes, kale can be delicious raw in a salad. Try this easy recipe as is or create your own variations by adding apples and walnuts.

Juice of ½ fresh lemon

1 tablespoon olive oil

¼ teaspoon sugar

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

¼ teaspoon, preferably Kosher salt

4 cups torn kale leaves, toughest stems/ribs discarded

2 cups torn Swiss chard leaves

(Tossing the kale and chard with the oil mixture will soften the stems and ribs so more of the greens will be edible. See below.)

4 teaspoons unsalted pumpkinseed kernels

¼ cup sliced green onions (about 2)

1 ounce shaved pecorino Romano cheese

- Combine first 5 ingredients, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add kale and chard; toss. Let stand 10 to 15 minutes.
- Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add kernels; cook 5 minutes or until brown, stirring frequently.
- Add kernels, onions, and cheese to greens; toss again.

Makes 6 servings (1 cup per serving)

Approximate nutrition information per serving: 65 calories; 4g fat (0.8g saturated, 2g monounsaturated, 0.8g polyunsaturated); 2.6g protein; 6.3g carbohydrate; 1.4g fiber; 2mg cholesterol; 1.4mg iron; 234mg sodium; 87mg calcium

Kale Tabbouleh

(adapted from Melissa Clark's column, "A Good Appetite," in *The New York Times*, November, 7, 2012)

Unlike most dressed green salads, kale tabbouleh can be made up to 24 hours ahead and will still retain its appealing character.

2/3 cup medium bulgur
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
1 shallot, finely chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, more as needed
1 bunch kale, stems removed, leaves finely chopped (5 cups)
2 large ripe tomatoes, diced (about 2 cups)
1/2 cup torn fresh mint leaves
1/2 cup diced radish
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

- Cook bulgur according to package instructions. Cool.
- In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, shallot, cumin and salt. Whisk in olive oil.
- In a large bowl, toss together bulgur, kale tomatoes, mint and radish. Toss in dressing. Season with black pepper and more salt if needed, and drizzle with additional oil if desired.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.