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Kale

Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Carolyn Washburn, Extension Assistant Professor

Utah Local Fresh Season: Kale is a hardy plant that enjoys cool weather. It can be planted when temperatures reach over 45 degrees. It turns bitter in the hot summer, but can be replanted in early fall. Kale is also used as an ornamental plant and grows year round in some warmer Utah climates.

Availability: You can purchase kale all year round.

Eating: Kale is a dark green vegetable that has good savory flavor. It is similar to a mild cabbage. It is an excellent compliment for rice, potatoes, and other foods.

Selecting: Choose kale in the refrigerated section of the produce department. Purchase kale that has a deep green color. Avoid kale that has wilted, yellow or insect damaged leaves. Smaller bunches will be more tender.

Cleaning and Preparing: Wash kale in a vegetable wash or vinegar and water. Dry kale with a paper towel and fold in half for cutting. The spine of the kale is often tough so it is best removed before preparing.

Storing: Use kale within 5 days. The longer you store kale, the stronger and bitterer its flavor becomes. Wrap unwashed kale in damp paper towels in a plastic bag and store in the vegetable crisper.

Cooking: You can steam, sauté, roast or boil this leafy green vegetable. It becomes a savory side

dish, or a great addition to a soup. Steam kale, then season with lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Kale is easy to add to your sir fry recipes, pastas, sautéed vegetables and soup.

Nutrition Highlights: Kale is rich in nutrients. Kale contains Vitamins A, C and K, calcium, iron and is a good source of fiber.

Preserving Kale: Drying Kale is the best way to preserve it for future use. *Home Drying of Foods* http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/fN-330.pdf

References:

Center for Disease Control: http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/gree ns.html

Nutrition Action – Healthletter (July 1, 2007)

Wardlaw G., Smith A. *Contemporary Nutrition* (2008). McGraw Hill Company.

Additional Editors: Heidi LeBlanc, Marie Stosich, Gayla Johnson, and Eileen Milligan.

Kale Italian Soup

1 pound ground Italian sausage

1½ teaspoons crushed red peppers

1 large diced white onion

4 tablespoons bacon pieces (6 slices)

2 teaspoons garlic puree

10 cups water

5 cubes of chicken bouillon

1 cup evaporated milk

1 pound sliced Russet potatoes, or about 3 large potatoes (sliced)

¹/₄ of a bunch of kale (2 cups)

Brown sausage in large pan. Drain. Add onions, crushed peppers, and bacon. Cook over medium heat until onions are almost clear. Add garlic, chicken bouillon, water and potatoes. Cook until tender. Add kale and evaporated milk. Cook on low heat for a few minutes until kale is tender.

Kale Salad

12 cups chopped kale (about 3 bunches)

2 tablespoons walnuts, chopped

1½ tablespoons oil

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1/4 cup water

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

2 tablespoons raisins, chopped

Pile several leaves together and slice into ribbons about 1 inch wide. Heat a large, dry skillet and toast chopped nuts for 3-5 minutes. Set aside to cool. Heat oil in same skillet and sauté garlic for 1 minute until soft; do not brown. Add kale ribbons and ¼ cup water and cover. Cook over medium heat until soft-10 to 15 minutes, adding more water if necessary. Add salt, pepper, nuts and raisins and stir to combine. Allow time to evaporate extra water.

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Baked Kale Crisps

These are a low calorie nutritious snack.

1 bunch kale

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon of seasoned salt

Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F. Pre-treat a cookie sheet.

Carefully remove the leaves of the kale from the thick stems and tear into bite size pieces (scissors or a knife will work for this). Wash and thoroughly dry kale with a salad spinner or carefully with paper towels.

Put leaves in a bag and drizzle kale with olive oil and sprinkle with seasoning salt. Shake the bag to distribute the oil and salt. Spread leaves on cookie sheet and bake until the edges are brown (not burnt), about 10 minutes.

Baked kale chips can be snacked on, eaten with meals or added to salads. These crispy chips keep bagged in the fridge for a week or two.