

# Greens

Arkansas Fresh

## History

Greens, or the edible leaves of certain plants, have been cultivated for thousands of years. Kale was eaten in the Middle East over 2,000 years ago and has been popular in Europe for centuries. Collard is one of the oldest and most primitive members of the cabbage family. The Greeks and Romans cultivated spinach even before the Christian era. Spinach was brought to the Americas by the Spaniards. Turnips originated in southern Europe where, during the earliest times, they were grown for medicinal purposes as well as for food.

## Storage Tips

- For best nutritional value, use within 1 to 2 days of purchase.
- Store unwashed greens in plastic bags in the coldest part of the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days.
- Store washed greens in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days. Vitamin C may be lost if stored for more than several days.

## Preparation Tips

- To wash greens, dip in salted water (1 to 2 teaspoons salt per gallon of water) and lift from water. Rinse well and shake off excess water. If storing, spread on paper towels to dry.
- Tough stems, veins and discolored leaves should be removed before cooking.
- Greens that are to be cooked before being added to a recipe can be steamed in a covered pot with only the water clinging to leaves. A scant  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water can be added if necessary. Cook only until wilted.
- Save cooking liquid for use in soups. It keeps best if frozen.

## Purchasing Tips

- All greens are best when very young and tender.
- Kale's thick, ruffled leaves should be crisp, green and clean.
- Collard greens have broad, flat, dark green leaves.
- Spinach has dark green, spade-shaped leaves which can be either smooth or curled. It should have no signs of decay, yellowing, wilting or slime.
- Mustard and turnip greens should be fresh, tender, crisp and of good green color. Choose smaller leaves, 6 to 12 inches long.
- The presence of seed stems signals toughness.

## Nutrition Information

Edible greens are rich sources of certain vitamins and minerals, though the content differs according to the type of greens. The greens mentioned in this leaflet provide 21% (collards, mustard) to 74% (spinach) of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for vitamin A and from 15% (spinach) to 45% (kale) of the RDI for vitamin C. Spinach, kale, collard and turnip greens are also fair sources of calcium, though it may not be absorbed as well as calcium from dairy products.

## $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked mixed greens

Calories: 18

% calories from:

fat: 9% (0.2 g)

protein: 30% (1.4 g)

carbohydrate: 61% (2.8 g)

Sodium: 26 mg

Potassium: 188 mg

Vitamin A: 41% RDI

Vitamin C: 28% RDI

Calcium: 8% RDI

The logo for the University of Arkansas, featuring the letters 'U of A' in a stylized, serif font.

**DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE  
RESEARCH & EXTENSION**

University of Arkansas System

Edible greens are rich sources of certain vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium.

# Recipes

## Savory Kale

- 2 pounds fresh kale
- 2 teaspoons chopped onion
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup water
- ½ teaspoon marjoram
- Pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (optional)

Wash kale and cut off tough stems. Place in saucepan with water, onions, marjoram, sugar and pepper. Cover and cook for 10 minutes or until tender. Add oil, mix well and serve. Serves 6.

## Seasoned Collard Greens

- 2 quarts water
- 2 pounds collard greens
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 ounces turkey ham cut into ½-inch cubes (about one cup)

Wash greens thoroughly, discarding stems and yellow leaves. Tear into small pieces. Combine the first five ingredients in a large pot; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add turkey ham and simmer another 30 minutes. Serves 4.

## Turnip Greens With Cornmeal Dumplings

- 2 pounds turnip greens
- 1 pound turnips
- 4 ounces lean ham or smoked turkey, diced
- 6-8 cups water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ cups cornmeal
- ½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 egg, beaten

Wash greens and remove stems. Peel and dice turnips. In a large kettle, bring water to a boil. Add ham or turkey, greens, turnips and salt. Cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Remove 1 cup broth. For dumplings: Stir together cornmeal, flour, baking powder and sugar. Stir in oil and 1 cup broth. Stir in beaten egg. Spoon rounded tablespoons of batter into simmering greens to make 12 dumplings. Cover and simmer 20 to 25 minutes. Serves 6.

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