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GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE

KALE

RECIPES



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History

Kale is a descendent of wild cabbage, native to Europe and Anatolia – the peninsula in westernmost Asia that constitutes the majority of modern-day Turkey. It was domesticated as early as 2000 BCE in the eastern Mediterranean. Before that, it's likely that ancestors of kale mostly were foraged for their oily seeds. It once was thought of as an undesirable vegetable mainly fed to cows.

Brassica oleracea, aka...

Though kale and collards are different cultivars or subspecies, they are so closely related that they share the same botanical name.

Both are part of the Acephala Group, a term from the Greek phrase for "without a head."

Around 1300, the word cale or cal appeared in Northern Middle English; Southern dialects used col. In Scotland, the word became kail or kale and was so central that it became a synonym for "food." Around 1902, "kale" became a slang term for money.

Around the World

In Scotland, kitchen gardens are called "kale yards," because so much kale is grown in them, and, to be "off one's kale" means to have a poor appetite. Kai-lan or Chinese kale is a cultivar often used in Chinese cuisine. In Portugal, the bumpy-leaved kale is mostly called "couve galega" (Galician kale or Portuguese cabbage). Sea kale (*Crambe maritima*), native to the seashores of England and Ireland and popular in Victorian England, once was grown as a substitute for asparagus.

Words for Kale

Latin: Caulis

Arabic: دجاج ل بن رك ل

Cantonese: 羽衣甘藍

French: Chou Frisé

Haitian Creole: Chou Frize

Hindi: केल

Italian: Cavolo

German: Grünkohl

Japanese: ケール

Kurdish: Kale

Persian: چى پ مل ك

Spanish: Col Rizada

Swahili: Kale

Ukrainian: листова капуста

Art & Literature

Billboard: "More sensational than Beyonce's surprise '7/11' music video drop in 2014 was the Kale sweatshirt fashion trend it inspired." Urban Outfitters, Nordstrom and Macy's sold out of the popular sweatshirt multiple times over."

Botany

Leaves grow from the central stem of kale plants. Leaf colors range from light green to green, blue-green, dark green, violet-green, and violet-brown, with textures from smooth to curly and or bumpy. Kale is a cool-weather biennial plant that can survive temperatures as low as -15F. Some varieties are tolerant of salt; in the early 1900s, specimens were used in Croatia (then part of the Austria-Hungary Empire) to desalinate soil.

Season's Best

The Garden State has a spring harvest of kale from mid-April through mid-June, and a fall harvest from September through November - though in home gardens, kale often can be harvested throughout the year. Like collards, kale leaves can become sweeter after a frost.



In the Garden

Plant kale in early spring (late March to April) for a summer harvest, or in mid-July to late August for a fall/winter harvest. Grow kale in full sun to part-shade, ideally rich in loamy, well-drained soil.

Companion/guild plantings: Garlic, onions, chives, leeks, beans and peas, radishes, dill, rosemary, sage, cilantro, marigolds, and nasturtiums.

Math & Money

The Garden State consistently ranks in the top 10, nationally, for kale production. In 2024, New Jersey harvested approximately 870 acres of kale, worth about \$3.9 million. Cumberland County is the fourth-largest kale growing county in the US; most other NJ kale is grown in southernmost counties of Salem, Gloucester, and Atlantic. Local farmers often consider it a "main crop" for community-supported agriculture and farmers' markets.

Ingredient Pairings

Kale often is an appreciated addition to salads, soups, pasta, grains, main dishes, and smoothies. For a simple side, blanch, then saute with onions and garlic; salt to taste and add a splash of red wine vinegar. Add chopped kale to almost any bean, legume, or meat stew.

In the Kitchen

To prepare, check both sides of each kale leaf individually and hold under running water. Move your fingers through each fold and crevice to remove any excess dirt or any caterpillar. Fold the two sides of the leaf together lengthwise, then cut the stem away from the leaf with a sharp knife. Save stems for juicing, pesto, sautéing or vegetable stock. If not blanching, finely chop before adding to stir-fry, pastas and soups.

Fuel for Learning & Powerful Play

Kale is a good source of protein, and is rich in vitamins A, C, and K, along with calcium, fiber, magnesium, folate, potassium, omega 3 fatty acids and carotenoids.

Climate Impact

Carbon emissions for growing brassicas are relatively low, if grown outdoors and in season and with organic practices. Conventionally grown kale is frequently cited for high pesticide residues, often ranking on the Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list. Electricity—primarily for LED lighting and climate control—is the largest contributor to emissions in indoor farms.

Resource Intensity

Kale has a high water content (90–91%) and a shallow root system, making it prone to drying out without consistent moisture.

The greatest emissions are caused by the conversion of land, the continued use of that land rather than reforestation, and by processes on the farm.

Kale Tasting

Begin with unseasoned raw/sauteed/massaged kale. Then season with a pinch of salt. After observing how seasoning changes the flavor, taste with a drizzle of vinaigrette. If available, compare and contrast different methods of cooking beyond roasting: Steamed, boiled, sauteed, and with relevant flavorings.

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Pomptonian and Zone 7

Kale Caesar Salad

This adaptation of a Pomptonian and Zone 7 recipe celebrates calcium-rich kale and Parmesan, and features a recipe for homemade dressing with a base of extra-virgin olive oil from Bon Appetit. Make croutons ahead: Cut stale bread into bite-size pieces. Scatter on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil; sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper and a generous amount of grated Parmesan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes, or until crisp.

Serves 6

Ingredients

For the Salad

- 4 cups chopped kale
- 2 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan
- ½ cup croutons, if desired

For the Caesar Dressing

- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 oil-packed anchovy fillets, chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, chopped
- ¾ teaspoon (or more) kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan

Preparation

1. Make dressing: Whisk egg yolk with lemon juice in a small saucepan. Cook over very low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture coats a metal spoon or reaches 160 degrees. Immediately place the pan in an ice-water bath and stir until cooled to room temperature.
2. Mound anchovies, garlic, and salt on a cutting board. Using the side of a chef's knife, mash and chop until well combined, then continue to work the mixture, holding the knife blade at an angle, until a smooth paste forms. (Or use a mortar and pestle or mini chopper to do this step.)
3. Whisk together the egg yolk, lemon juice, and Dijon mustard in a medium bowl. Place a kitchen towel in a medium saucepan, then place the bowl in pan. (This holds the bowl in place while you whisk with one hand and pour oil with the other.)
4. Adding drop by drop to start and whisking constantly, drizzle oil into yolk mixture.
5. Continue, going slowly, until the mixture looks slightly thickened and glossy. Continue to whisk, gradually adding remaining ¼ cup oil in a slow, steady stream until all oil has been used and mixture looks like mayonnaise. Add a dash of water and whisk, adjusting with more water if needed, until dressing is the consistency of heavy cream. Add anchovy mixture and grated Parmesan, and whisk until smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning with kosher salt, if needed.
6. Assemble salad: Toss together salad ingredients in a large bowl. Add croutons. Drizzle with dressing and sprinkle with Parmesan to taste.

<https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/easy-homemade-caesar-dressing>



Pomptonian, Zone 7, and Budget Byte\$

Garlicky Parmesan Kale Pasta

Beth Moncel of Budget Byte\$ writes: "Lace whole wheat pasta and kale with garlic, Parmesan, and a little butter, they take on a whole new personality. Add a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes if desired."

6 servings

Ingredients

½ pound washed, stemmed and chopped kale

½ pound whole wheat angel hair pasta

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons butter

2 cloves garlic minced

¼ cup grated Parmesan

Pinch salt and pepper

Pinch red pepper flakes, if desired

Preparation

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Break the pasta in half, add it to the boiling water, and cook until al dente (about 7 minutes, but please refer to the package instructions). Drain the pasta in a colander.
2. Meanwhile, add the olive oil, butter, and minced garlic to another large pot or skillet. Cook over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, or until the garlic is soft and fragrant. Add the kale and continue to sauté until the kale has wilted and has turned a deep green color (about 5-7 minutes). Turn the heat off.
3. Add the drained pasta to the pot with the sautéed kale. Toss the pasta and kale together. Allow them to cool to the point that steam is no longer rising from the pot.
4. Season the pasta and kale with salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste. Add grated Parmesan and toss to coat. Add red pepper flakes if desired.

<https://www.budgetbytes.com/garlic-parmesan-kale-pasta/>



The Garden of Eating & Pomptonian Curried Kale Cakes

Most cakes/patties can be fried in oil, but this is a no-fuss baked version. Just remember to chill shaped cakes on the baking sheet for at least 30 minutes to help them hold their shape during baking. Directions for frying in Step 5.

Serves 6

Ingredients

1½ large onions, minced
3 tablespoons olive oil
1½ bunches kale, ribbed and chopped
¾ cup grated parmesan
1 cup bread crumbs, or oat flour
4 eggs, beaten
¾ cup yogurt
2-3 tablespoons garam masala or curry powder
1½ tablespoons sea salt
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
Additional olive oil

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment or greased foil.
2. Heat olive oil in a large cast-iron skillet, then add minced onion and saute, stirring often until softened. Add kale and saute briefly to reduce moisture content. Transfer mixture to a medium-sized bowl.
3. Stir in grated cheese, bread crumbs or oat flour, eggs, yogurt, and spices and stir well to combine, adding more bread crumbs or oat flour until mixture can be shaped into patties. Chill the formed cakes for 30 minutes or more before baking.
4. Remove the baking pan from the refrigerator. Brush the tops of cakes with oil. Bake for 15–20 minutes, broiling for the last 2 minutes for a crisp exterior.
5. To fry, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large cast iron skillet over medium heat until it shimmers. Cook in batches. Add patties and cook, swirling pan occasionally, until well browned and crisp on the first side, about 5 minutes. Carefully flip and cook until the second side is browned, also about 5 minutes.

<https://www.thegardenofeating.org/2015/05/curried-kale-cakes.html>



The First Mess

Creamy White Bean Soup with Kale

Laura Wright of The First Mess writes: "Creamy white bean soup with kale, rosemary, and lemon is irresistibly cozy and soothing. It comes together in 40 minutes, with its short and nourishing ingredient list and straightforward prep."

Serves 6

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, small dice
1 medium carrot, small dice
1 stick celery, small dice
3 cloves garlic, minced
Red pepper flakes or aleppo pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves, minced
4 cups cooked navy beans, drained and rinsed
4 cups vegetable stock
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
salt and ground black pepper, to taste
3 cups chopped and packed lacinato kale (roughly 1 small bunch)
¼ cup flat leaf parsley leaves, chopped
Grated Parmesan to garnish

Preparation

1. Heat the oil in a medium-large soup pot over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, and celery to the pot and stir. Sauté the vegetables until lightly softened and translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. To the pot, add the garlic, chili flakes, and rosemary. Stir and cook until garlic is fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the navy beans to the pot and stir. Add the vegetable stock to the pot and stir once more. Bring the soup to a boil.
3. Once boiling, ladle half of the soup into an upright blender with vented lid. Add the lemon juice to the blender as well. Carefully bring the speed of the blender up to high and blend until this portion of the soup is totally liquefied. Pour this liquefied portion back into the pot. Season the soup with salt and pepper.
4. Add the kale to the pot and bring the soup to a boil. Once the kale is slightly wilted and bright green, season the soup once more with salt and pepper, if you find it necessary. Stir in the chopped parsley as well. Serve the soup hot, with grated Parmesan.

<https://thefirstmess.com/2018/01/03/creamy-white-bean-soup-vegan-recipe/>



The Kitchn

Sukuma Wiki (African Braised Kale with Tomatoes)

Faith Durand, of The Kitchn, writes: " 'Sukuma wiki' is a Swahili phrase meaning, depending on how you translate it, 'week-pusher,' 'push the week,' or 'stretch the week.' When I was in Kenya two years ago, I saw kale and collard greens growing in the dusty soil of nearly every home. Green frilly leaves dotted any patch of land that had enough water nearby to irrigate. Hearty greens are a staple of even the most frugal diet in the rural communities of Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, and other African nations. They are readily available, found in the most basic garden, and so they are used to 'stretch the week,' when other supplies have run out or meat is scarce."

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 pound kale
- 2 medium tomatoes, about ½ pound
- 1 large white onion, about 1 pound
- 1 tablespoon peanut oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon coriander
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1½ teaspoons kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lemon, juiced, about 3 tablespoons

Preparation

1. Chop the kale into rough 1-inch pieces, including the ribs. Roughly chop the tomatoes. (If desired, reserve about ¼ cup fresh tomato pieces for garnish.) Peel and dice the onion.
2. Heat the oil in a large, deep pot, or a large wok. When it is hot, add the onion and cook for about 8 minutes over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. When the onion is getting soft, stir in the cumin, coriander, and turmeric. Stir in the tomatoes and cook for about 2 minutes.
3. Add the greens one handful at a time, stirring constantly to coat them with the onions, oil, and spices. When they have all been added, sprinkle the salt and a generous amount of fresh pepper over them and stir.
4. Pour in 1 cup water. Cover the pot and turn the heat down to medium. Cook for 10 to 20 minutes, or until the greens are tender to your taste. (I like mine fairly toothsome, so I only cook them for about 10 minutes.)
5. Remove the lid, turn off the heat, and toss the greens with the lemon juice. Serve hot, garnished with extra tomato, if desired.

<https://www.thekitchn.com/recipe-sukuma-wiki-braised-kale-with-tomatoes-recipes-from-the-kitchn-176045>



Danielle Daem

Guatemalan Tipico Breakfast

Though this Danielle Daem recipe is presented as breakfast, it's nutritious and filling for any meal of the day. To speed the process, sauté the plantains ahead and store in the refrigerator, and do the same with the tomato-onion-kale recipe. Heat each in the microwave, then return the tomato mixture to the pan, and pick up at step 3 to complete the mixture, just as it's time to prepare the plates.

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 plantains (either green or black)
¼ cup avocado or coconut oil
8 eggs
2 teaspoons avocado or coconut oil
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
1 tomato, diced
½ yellow onion, diced
1 bunch kale, stemmed and chopped small
2 avocados, sliced
2 cups black beans, cooked, or refried beans
4 slices queso fresco or aged cheddar
8 corn tortillas

Preparation

1. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. While the oil heats, cut the plantains in half. Then slice each piece lengthwise again. You should have 16 long pieces. Work in batches. Once the oil is hot add plantains to the pan and cover with a lid or splatter screen. Fry for 5 minutes or until they have begun to caramelize, then turn. Once they are brown on both sides, transfer to a paper towel covered plate and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, in another medium frying pan, add the 2 teaspoons of oil and heat over medium-low. When the oil is hot, add the tomato and onion. Saute for 3-5 minutes. Add the chopped kale and saute, stirring frequently, until it has reduced its bulk and has transformed into a darker green.
3. In a small bowl, combine the eggs, a splash of water, salt, and pepper. Add them to the pan with the tomato, onion, and kale. Reduce heat to low and cook just until the eggs have set.
4. Meanwhile, place the beans in a small bowl and using a potato masher or your hands, mash the beans until half are soft and half are intact.
5. Push the eggs to one side of the pan and add the beans. Heat thoroughly and then turn off the pan. Place the tortillas on top of the pan to heat a little.
6. Place eggs, black beans, plantains, sliced avocado, cheese, and tortillas on each of four plates. Serve hot or warm.

<https://danielledaem.com/guatemalan-tipico-breakfast/>



BBC Good Food

Garlicky Kale with Oyster Sauce

This adaptation of a BBC Good Food recipe works as a side dish or, if made in a flat skillet, could become a savory nest for poached eggs. Once the kale is done, use a large spoon to create four egg-shaped divots, then pour an egg into each. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan, checking frequently, until eggs are desired consistency.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 6 cups stemmed and chopped kale
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 large garlic cloves, sliced
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds, if desired

Preparation

1. Blanch kale: Heat a large pot of water with 1 tablespoon of salt to boiling. Submerge kale in the boiling water for about a minute, then plunge it into cold water to halt cooking. Drain and lay out on a sheet pan to dry (use a kitchen towel to remove most moisture to reduce spattering later.).
2. Heat the oil in a large wok or frying pan, then tip in the garlic and cook for a few seconds. Throw in the kale and toss around the pan to coat in the garlicky oil.
3. Add about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water. Cook for about 3-4 minutes more, until kale is cooked through.
4. Stir in the soy and oyster sauces; garnish with sesame seed if desired. Heat through before serving.

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/chinese-style-kale>



Carly Knowles

Loaded Sweet Potatoes with Sauteed Kale & Onions

In *"The Nutritionist's Kitchen"*, Carly Knowles writes: *Eat the skin for additional fiber, iron, protein and vitamins. Other possible toppings: chopped scallions, black beans, cheddar cheese, salsa, guacamole and cilantro, or chick-peas, sauteed red onions, spinach, tahini, and lime*

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 large sweet potatoes, washed well
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Toppings

1 tablespoon olive oil, or more if desired
1 medium onion, sliced in half, then sliced into thin half-moons
Sea salt
1½ bunches kale, washed, stems stripped, and cut into ribbons
1 cup cooked black beans, drained and rinsed
3 tablespoons chopped chives
¼ cup plain whole milk yogurt or plants-based alternative

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Line a baking sheet with foil. Pierce each sweet potato with the tip of a sharp knife to release steam while baking.
3. Rub each potato with olive oil; place on baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Roast for 60-90 minutes, or until easily pierced with a fork. Remove from oven and let cool for about 10 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, prepare toppings. Saute onion with olive oil and salt for 7-9 minutes, or until translucent. Add kale and saute until it has softened and reduced in bulk. Add a couple of tablespoons of water while sauteeing to further tenderize the kale if needed. Remove from heat and set aside.
6. Using a sharp knife, cut a slit down the center of each potato and squeeze the ends together, forcing the sweet potato flesh up. Add toppings; serve hot or warm.

"The Nutritionist's Kitchen," by Carly Knowles (Roost Books, 2020)



Love and Lemons

Spanish Chickpeas with Kale

In this adaptation of a Love and Lemons recipe featured on Food 52, kale takes the lead, with chickpeas playing a supporting albeit necessary role. Serve over warm whole grains for a main dish.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 1 to 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon saffron
- 1½ cups chickpeas, cooked, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2-3 teaspoons sherry vinegar
- 1 bunch kale, stemmed and chopped
- 1 pinch salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (optional)
- ¼ cup toasted pine nuts (optional)

Preparation

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the shallot, a pinch of salt, and cook until translucent, about 2 minutes.
2. Add the garlic, paprika, and saffron. Stir, and cook until just aromatic, about 30 seconds, being careful not to let it burn.
3. Add the chickpeas and a bit more salt. Stir to incorporate. Turn the heat of the burner up a bit, and let the chickpeas cook until they begin to turn golden brown, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the sherry vinegar and tomato paste, then the chopped kale. Continue to cook for a few minutes until the kale is just wilted. Remove from the heat. Taste and adjust the seasonings, adding a little lemon juice if desired.

<https://food52.com/recipes/22150-spanish-chickpeas-with-kale>

