

Eat and Drink Your Greens and Weeds!

By Jane Cundiff

ALL of our food plants were once wild. Most of our cultivated plants are more mild and thus have fewer vitamins and minerals than wild plants. Many of the weeds we spend so much time trying to get rid of are more nutritious than the greens we grow. Most of our garden weeds are edible, medicinal or toxic and knowing the difference is important. Greens are easy to grow in spring, even in part shade.

Late spring and early summer is the height of green harvesting time. When the leaves are still tender and before the plants go to seed. My favorite wild greens are

Lamb's quarters,

violet leaves,

plantain



and Galinsoga.



Mixing wild greens with cultivated ones is the best balance.
Eat ½+ cup cooked or 2-3 cups fresh EVERY DAY.

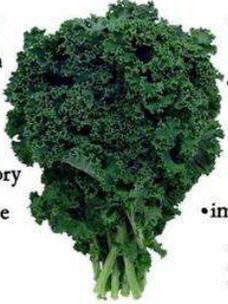
It was common for our ancient ancestors to eat up to six pounds of leaves per day. An intestinal DNA analysis of one ancient hunter-gatherer found over 40 different plant types present.

Greens every day will keep the doctor away far

better than any other food. Dark green leafy vegetables are, calorie for calorie, the most concentrated source of nutrition & fiber of any food. They are a rich source of minerals (including iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium) and vitamins, including vitamins K, C, E, and many of the B vitamins. They also provide a variety of antioxidants and phytonutrients including beta-carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin, which protect our cells from damage and our eyes from age-related problems, improves the skin, and many other effects. **A little olive oil** with your greens improves absorption of some of the vitamins. A half cup of most cooked greens provides about five times the minimum recommended intake of Vitamin K. Recent research has provided evidence that this vitamin may be much more important than we once thought (the current minimum may not be optimal), and many people do not get enough of it. Vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin, so make sure to dash olive oil on your salad, or cook your greens with oil. **In studies of healthy centenarians, diets high in leafy greens & fresh fruit was a common factor** (along with vigorous daily walks and eating more beans and nuts than meat and dairy). An excellent source of folate, which can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and memory loss. And since folate contributes to the production of serotonin, it **may help ward off depression and improve mood.** **Greens are anti-inflammatory** which is known to improve joints, mental and physical health. But don't overdo it. Excessive wild greens are too much of a good thing and can cause kidney problems.

Using wild weeds and herbs to **make tea** is another way to get some of your daily green boost of nutrition. Any edible plant can be used to add nutrients and stronger herbs like mint or medicinal herbs are good to add for taste or health. (See my other paper on making garden tea)

health benefits of kale



- weight loss aid
- antioxidant rich
- helps keep skin healthy and strong
- anti-inflammatory
- helps to activate detoxifying enzymes in the liver
- high in fiber, protein, thiamin, riboflavin, folic acid, iron, magnesium, phosphorous, calcium, potassium, copper and manganese, vitamins A, C, K, and B6

- metabolism boost
- high in protein
- protects against macular degeneration
- immune boosting
- packed with phytonutrients

Recipes at [The Earth Diet.com](http://TheEarthDiet.com)

- **Greens help protect bones from osteoporosis BETTER THAN DAIRY.** High dairy has been shown to INCREASE osteoporosis and cancer. **Greens & Vitamin D from sunshine work better than dairy to protect bones.**
- Help prevent **heart disease.** Reduces restless leg
- Help **protect us from inflammatory diseases including arthritis, headaches, dementia**
- Help **prevent colds and flu & even diabetes**
- **High in natural FIBER – known to be a number one factor of weight control**
- **Greens, sun, exercise & friends SLOW MENTAL DECLINE**

Storing greens. Freezing is easiest. I harvest buckets of mixed wild and cultivated greens, remove really tough stems and bad leaves, cook till wilted in the microwave, food process and freeze flat in zip-lock bags. Keep the layer thin enough so the frozen block can be easily broken to use as you need.

SIMPLE GREEN RECIPES:

Salads - a BIG salad every day for lunch is a terrific habit. 2-3 cups of mild lettuce and dark greens; nuts, seeds or beans for protein, and any other fruit or veggie or leftovers + Olive oil or grapeseed oil

Chopped greens - cooked with olive oil, onions or garlic, or squash – add nuts or beans for a main dish

Eggs & greens. – Chop the greens fine and cook them with just a touch of water & olive oil in a pan. Or used chopped frozen greens. Either scramble in the eggs or push the greens to the edge and cook the eggs next to the greens.

Beans & greens – Any kind of beans & olive oil & chopped greens mix (cooked or raw)– eat by themselves or wrapped in a burrito with other veggies – hot or cold, for breakfast or any meal!

Quick, Cheap Soup – Ramen soup + ½ can of beans + 1-2 c chopped fresh or frozen greens

Garden Tea – mint, lemon balm, blackberry leaves, anise hyssop, & any edible green. Drink hot or cold – great for health and no factories, transport or disposable containers involved! (see handout to make tea)

Green Veggie Squares 9x13 pan – 2/3c oat bran, 1/2c cornmeal, ½ c good flour, 1T baking powder, season salt, dash cayenne pepper – mix dry ingredients. 4-6 eggs, 2/3 c water, ½ c olive oil, 2-3c chopped lightly cooked or frozen greens (include herbs like basil or dill or rosemary, or pureed squash or other pre-cooked veggies). Mix everything, adding water until the consistency is like cake mix, let sit 30minutes, sprinkle with paprika, sunflower seed & bake at 375 till done – about 30 – 40 minutes?

- Freeze squares for a quick meal any time of day with some carrots & fresh fruit.
- These can also be made in the microwave. Other veggies can be used or added – chopped fine.



For a Healthy Life
Eat your Greens & Beans, Fruit & Nuts
Walk in the sun, Enjoy Nature, Garden, and Play with Friends!!

