

## ASK THE NUTE GURU

### THE NUTE (NUTRITION) GURU IMPARTS WISDOM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL, WHOLE-FOODS NUTRITION FOR MIND/BODY WELLNESS.

Q

I keep hearing Kale being referred to as a “Superfood,” but truth be told, I don’t even know how to approach this green. Nute Guru, could you give me a rundown on Kale and how to go about using it?

A

Ahhh, Kale. Indeed it is a Superfood and completely worthy of that name. Many people find kale a very tough green to chew, but with a few simple tips and some trivia, you’ll find out why kale has exploded in popularity!

Popeye was only half-right with the whole spinach thing. But then again, he didn’t have some very trendy New York City chefs insisting kale is spinach’s better half. Whether raw, lightly cooked, or stewed for hours, here’s why we love the sturdy green that is kale in all its delicious forms.

#### Beaming Green – What It Is

This cruciferous vegetable, related to broccoli and Brussels sprouts (though it doesn’t taste at all similar!), is known to have the largest amount of antioxidants of any other fruit or veggie. At only 36 calories per cup (boiled), kale is a great low-calorie source of fiber, calcium, and iron. It’s also packed with vitamins K, A, and C, plus carotenoids, flavonoids, and isothiocyanates, which have been found to decrease cancer risk.

#### All Hail Kale! – What It Means to You

Kale can be found in many different varieties, all of which can be used in the same way. Most popular is the curly version with silvery green leaves. Dinosaur kale (sometimes called Lacinato, cavolo negro, or Tuscan kale) is also a mainstay at farmers markets and some grocery stores. Kale distinguishes itself from other greens by its particularly tough leaves, which is why many people prefer cooking it to break down its fibrous nature. The most common ways to cook kale are to blanch and then pan-fry in some olive oil, salt, and pepper, or to simmer on the stove-top until wilted. While other greens turn mushy and lose flavor from overcooking, kale holds its shape and takes on a mildly sweet flavor. If you cook it in a pot with water or broth, the vitamins leak out into the cooking liquid, creating a delicious and nutritious broth that is great as a base for soups or to sip as is. And while raw kale takes a dinosaur-strength jaw to chew (maybe that’s where dinosaur kale got its name?), massaging thin strips of the green with coarse salt or dressing breaks down the fibers enough to use as the base for a rich and super-healthy salad. If using the salt method, rub the greens with a handful of the coarse stuff and then rinse to remove the excess. When using oil and vinegar, just use enough to dress the salad. This wonder-green may seem too good to be true. However, be warned that like all greens, kale contains a small amount of oxalates, which can interfere with the absorption of calcium. So, avoid eating it with calcium-rich foods. But this is a minor negative, as some of its relatives, such as spinach, have many more oxalates. Ideally, the best option is to rotate green leaves. Most people stick to one green or another, not realizing that the most important aspect of eating greens is to tune into the variety they offer. So maybe we should cut Popeye some slack. He got the memo to eat his greens, but no one told him to mix it up a little and eat more than one.

<http://greatist.com/health/superfood-kale>

PROJECT: PFC