



EAT GREENS FIRST!

Score more nutrition points at every meal!
It's easy when you eat the green stuff on your plate first.
Is it really that easy? Yes! (Generations of nagging moms can't be wrong.)



WHY GO GREEN? Green vegetables—especially dark, leafy greens like kale, collards and spinach—are **nutrient-dense** foods, which means each serving is low in calories while also serving as a rich source of **vitamins** and **minerals** for your body. Other nutrient-dense green veggies include:



Kale



Collards



Spinach



Bok Choy



Brussels Sprouts



Swiss Chard



Arugula



Watercress



EAT A SALAD EVERY DAY!

- This is a super easy way to **eat greens first** and **eat a rainbow** of fruits and veggies, which helps you cover all the nutrition bases (Read *Better Bites: Eat a Rainbow* for more info.)
- Salads are **affordable**, especially when you use **what's in season** and **what's on sale**.
- **No cooking and no recipe needed!** Salads are **never boring** because you can invent endless variations and customize them to suit individual tastes.

Learn about
Salad Bar Nation.
SaladBarNation.org



GO A STEP FURTHER

Learn to love leafy greens!

- **Start with milder, sweeter greens** like spinach or bok choy, or if you like peppery flavors, try arugula and watercress. Then move on to kale, collards and brussels sprouts.
- **Dress up raw or cooked greens** with fresh herbs, garlic, a squeeze of lemon, hot sauce, spicy peppers, vinegar, fruits or other bold, bright, acidic and sweet flavors that balance the slight bitterness of greens.
- **Start with baby bites.** Because greens are nutrient dense, every bite brings benefits, so just eat as much as you can while developing a taste for them.
- **Don't give up!** If green veggies have never been part of your routine, it may take time to get used to them. In as little as 30 days your taste buds will change and you'll actually start to crave them.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Get the green light for greens by sneaking them in gradually.

- **Serve leafy greens at breakfast** to ensure everyone gets some. Add them to scrambled eggs or fruit smoothies (Read *Better Bites: Smoothie Solutions* for ideas.)
- **Set up a salad bar at home.** Kids love choosing and assembling their own colorful salads (This approach works to get kids to eat more veggies at school, too!)
- **Use dark, leafy greens in place of iceberg lettuce** on sandwiches or burgers and in recipes.
- **Use large, green leaves in place of tortillas** as a wrap for tacos or other fillings.
- **Add greens to a favorite family recipe.** Toss shredded leafy greens into pasta sauces, casseroles, soups and stews, or purée them before adding so they'll go unnoticed.
- **Blend leafy greens into dips** like hummus or salsa.
- **Hide them in baked goods,** such as muffins and quick breads, or even brownies!

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY Taste Bud Experiment



How do you perceive different tastes? Each person perceives the four basic tastes—bitter, sweet, salty and sour—differently through taste receptors, a.k.a. taste buds, on the tongue. Leafy greens tend to have a bitter flavor, so some people enjoy them more when the flavor is balanced by eating something else sweet or sour at the same time.

What you'll need:

cotton swabs, salt, sugar, lemon juice, a kale or spinach leaf, a glass of water, paper, pencil

Step 1, Experiment Setup: Place about a teaspoon each of sugar, salt and lemon juice in separate bowls.

Step 2, Tasting time! Take a bite out of the kale/spinach leaf, chew for a moment and notice how it tastes. Next, dip a clean cotton swab into the glass of water, then into the salt and dab a tiny amount of salt onto your tongue. Try it on different areas of the tongue to see if your perception of saltiness changes. Take notes! Take a few sips of water, then repeat this same taste test with the sugar and lemon juice.

Step 3, Observations: After tasting the salty, sweet and sour ingredients, taste the green leaf again. Does it taste different? Try tasting the ingredients again in different order. Does a certain order improve the tastes? What happens if you taste one or more of the ingredients together with the green leaf?

Step 4, Conclusions: What did you learn about your taste preferences? Based on this experiment, can you think of new ways to enjoy leafy greens?

RECIPES

Let kids help with the simple steps in **bold!**



BREAKFAST

Quick Spinach Frittata

Feel free to add other chopped fresh veggies to this quick recipe.

2 large eggs

2–3 cups baby spinach

crushed red pepper flakes
(optional)

1 teaspoon olive oil

1–2 tablespoons grated parmesan
salt and pepper to taste

Step 1: Whisk eggs until fluffy. Step 2: Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, add the spinach (sprinkle with red pepper flakes if using) and sauté about 1 minute until wilted. Step 3: Pour eggs over spinach and stir to mix. Cook until eggs begin to set. **Step 4: Sprinkle on parmesan.** Cook 1–2 more minutes, covered, until egg is set and parmesan slightly melted. Step 5: Use a spatula to cut into triangles like a pizza and serve.

LUNCH

Mediterranean Whole Wheat Pasta Salad

This quick pasta salad can be made ahead at the beginning of the week, stored in the fridge and used for lunches.

1 bunch kale, rinsed and leaves
removed from stalks

2 cups carrots, grated

½ avocado, peeled and pitted

2 tablespoons lemon or lime juice

½ teaspoon soy sauce

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

(optional)

Step 1: Tear kale leaves into bite-size pieces and toss all ingredients together in a bowl. Step 2: Use your hands or the back of a spoon to thoroughly mash avocado into kale. Step 3: Set aside at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving so the kale can soften.

SNACK

Kale Chips

Crunchy, easy kale chips make an awesome afternoon snack.

1 bunch kale

1 teaspoon olive oil

seasoning of your choice

salt to taste

Step 1: Preheat oven to 400° and **rinse and dry kale thoroughly (drier kale = crunchier chips).** **Step 2:** Remove leaves from stems and tear into pieces a little larger than a typical potato chip (they will shrink during cooking.) **Step 3:** Toss kale in a bowl with olive oil and massage until it is lightly coated. **Step 4:** Place leaves on a baking sheet in a single layer (no overlapping!) **Step 5:** Sprinkle them with salt and your favorite spices (ideas: garlic powder, lemon pepper, taco seasoning, Cajun seasoning). **Step 6:** Cook for 4–8 minutes, checking frequently, until leaves are crisp.

DINNER

Spinach Pesto

Toss this pesto sauce with hot pasta, spread it on sandwiches or spoon it onto grilled chicken.

2 cups baby spinach leaves

½ cup fresh basil leaves

¼ cup walnuts or pine nuts

1 clove garlic

2 tablespoons lemon juice

⅓ cup parmesan

2–4 tablespoons olive oil

salt and pepper

Step 1: Place all ingredients except olive oil in a blender or food processor and pulse until well combined, scraping the sides with a spatula as needed. **Step 2:** Add 1 tablespoon olive oil, then turn the blender on medium and gradually drizzle in more olive oil until pesto reaches desired consistency (you may not need all of it). **Step 3:** Stir in salt and pepper to taste.