

Early Care & Education  
at Home

# Kale



## Did You Know

- Celebrate National Kale Day this October! For more information visit [nationalkaleday.org](http://nationalkaleday.org).
- There are over 50 varieties of kale. Lacinato kale is also called dinosaur kale for its bumpy leaves. Please pass the dino salad! There are also ornamental varieties in many colors including white, pink, and purple.
- Kale becomes sweeter after experiencing a light frost.
- Kale has been grown for more than 6,000 years and is in the brassica family along with bok choy, collards, and broccoli.
- Kale is packed full of nutrients. One cup of raw kale contains 684% of the recommended daily value of vitamin K, an essential nutrient that helps blood clotting. Kale is also an excellent source for vitamins A and C and provides calcium and iron. Calcium is necessary for building strong bones.

## Buying Tips

Buy kale with firm, bright leaves. Baby kale should have small, tender leaves with few stems. Kale stems can be bitter. Remove larger stems or use baby kale. "Mature" kale will be 12-16 inches in length with stems and relatively small leaves. Store in perforated plastic bag in refrigerator up to 5-10 days.

## Cooking

Steam kale for a quick side of greens to add to any meal. Remove dried or thick stems. Place kale in a pan with a small amount of water and low-sodium seasonings such as garlic powder, pepper, or herbs. Cook on medium heat for 2-4 minutes, depending on size and age of greens, until desired tenderness. Add raw kale with stems removed and roughly chopped to soups and stews right before serving.

## Conversation Starters

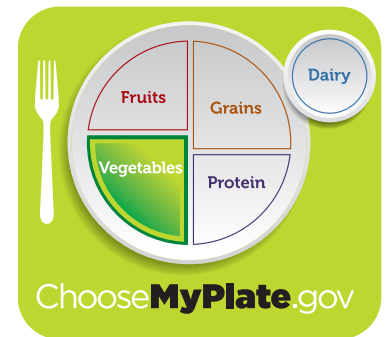
- Kale jokes:
  - What do you call a movie about vegetables?  
*A fairy kale.*
  - Why is kale never lonely? *Because it comes in bunches.*
- What other vegetable does kale remind you of?
- How do you think kale grows?

## Cold Weather Greens

Kale is a fantastic addition to any Montana garden. A hardy vegetable, kale thrives in our climate and even becomes sweeter after a light frost. Plant seeds directly in garden or container five weeks before last frost to two weeks after last frost. For fall plantings, plant 6-8 weeks before forecasted first frost. Most varieties will do well in containers at least 8 inches wide and 8 inches deep.

## Dig Deeper

For sources and photo credits along with more recipes, lessons, quick activities, resources, and guides, visit: [www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth](http://www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth).



Green Curly Kale



Red Curly Kale



Dinosaur Kale



Hungry Gal



Red Russian

## Kale Chips

Servings

6

Ingredients



1 bunch of kale



2 Tbsp of olive oil



1/2 tsp of salt

Tools



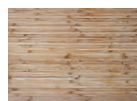
Oven



Baking Sheet



Knife



Cutting Board

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 225°F.
2. Remove large stems from leaves leaving the kale in "chip-size" pieces.
3. In single layer on baking sheet, place leaves face up.
4. Lightly spray with olive oil, and lightly season the kale with the salt.
5. Bake for 40-60 minutes, or until the kale is completely dehydrated and will easily release from the pan when you shake the pan back and forth. Using a low oven temperature ensures that you will not burn the chips.
6. Let them cool. Eat and enjoy!



## 2 Montana Harvest of the Month: Kale



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. This program is a collaboration between the Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, and FoodCorps Montana. More information and resources are available at: [www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth](http://www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth).

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