

NUTRIGRAM

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Community Dining
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Benefits to Eating Green Foods

In honor of March and St. Patrick's Day, let's discuss the benefits of benefits and nutritional contents of different green foods. And no, dying potatoes and beer with green food coloring does not make them healthy!

Spinach

Spinach is absolutely loaded with Vitamin A and K; one cup of spinach provides more than half your RDI (recommended daily intake) of vitamin A and your full allotment of vitamin K. When cooked, spinach is a good source of calcium as well. Spinach is also a source of iron, vitamin C and folate.



To incorporate more spinach in your diet, try building your salads with this leafy green rather than iceberg or romaine lettuce.

Kale

If you are not familiar with **kale**, it is another green leafy vegetable, akin to spinach.

However, there is a reason this vegetable is referred to as a superfood: one cup of kale contains more than 100% RDI of vitamins A, C and K. Kale is also a good source of manganese and is a plant-based source of calcium, copper and iron.

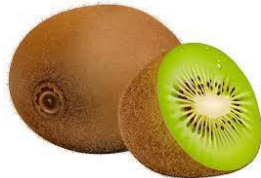


As with spinach, you can, and should build your salads with this green over lettuce. Or add a handful of kale to your fruit smoothie to provide a super-boost of vitamins!

Kiwi

Something I just recently learned about **kiwis** is that they were originally called Chinese gooseberries.

Kiwis are an excellent source of vitamin C as well as vitamin K. One medium kiwi will provide over 100% of your RDI for vitamin C and almost half your RDI for vitamin K.



Another fun-fact I recently learned of kiwis is that the skin is edible! So next time you grab a kiwi from the store, wash it first, then bite right on in. The skin will provide you more fiber and an interesting texture.

Limes

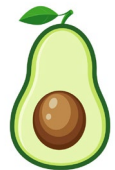
Limes are probably one of the most widely known green fruits. They are part of the citrus family, along with oranges, grapefruits and lemons. As with the other citrus fruits, limes are a good source of vitamin C.



Limes, as with lemons, are edible, but due to their tartness most of us generally do not eat this fruit whole. They can be great flavor enhancers though! Use fresh lime juice (not concentrated) to marinate meat or seafood. Squeeze a lime over the top of roasted vegetables or add lime zest to dips or sauces for a zing of flavor!

Avocado

Also known as alligator pears or butter fruit, **avocados** are technically considered a large berry. This "berry" is one of the few fruits that contain a significant amount of fat, primarily unsaturated fats (healthy fats). There is evidence that suggest unsaturated fats positively affect blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels.



Avocados are also a considered a superfood due to their healthy fat content as well as being a good source of vitamins C and K, folate and a plethora of different B vitamins. Avocados are also a source of potassium, manganese, magnesium, copper and iron. There are other ways to consume avocados besides mashing them up into guacamole, albeit one of the most delicious dishes to enjoy. Avocados can be used as a sandwich spread; a healthier replacement to mayo, which is high, is saturated fat. Avocados can be added to a slice of whole-wheat toast in the morning for breakfast, either mashed or sliced. You can also add sliced avocados to smoothies!

Green Bell Pepper

These peppers are not of the spicy variety. **Bell peppers** are also referred to as sweet peppers and come in a variety of colors.

These peppers are rich in vitamin C, with one cup having more vitamin C than an orange! They are also a source of vitamin K and B6. Try adding bell peppers to your salad, or just dipping them in hummus as a snack!

*Vitamin K can interfere with certain medications. Discuss with your doctor about increasing vitamin K in your diet if you are on blood thinners.