



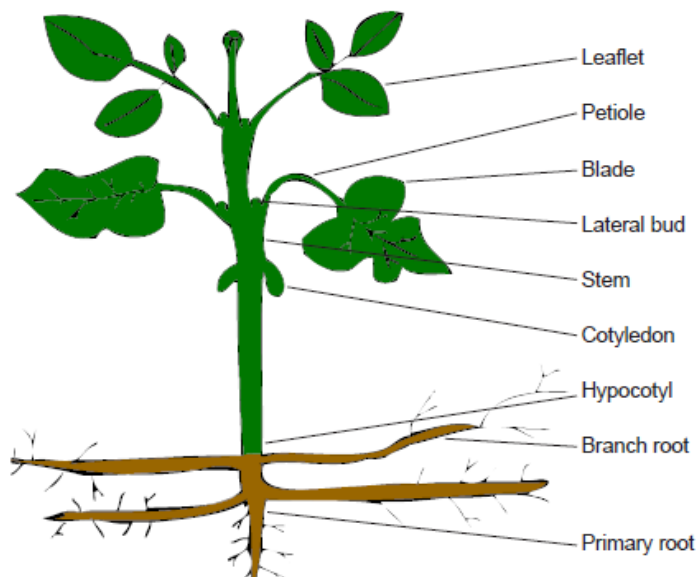
COOKED GREENS TALKING POINTS

2. A leaf of history about Cooked Greens

- Collard greens date back to prehistoric times, and are one of the oldest members of the cabbage family. Collards are also known as tree cabbage or non-heading cabbage, are a cool-season vegetable and extremely nutritious -- rich in vitamins and minerals that help prevent and fight disease.
- Greens originated in the eastern Mediterranean**, but it wasn't until the first Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in the early 1600s that America got its first taste of the dark green leafy vegetable. Greens were just one of a few select vegetables African-Americans were allowed to grow and harvest for themselves and their families throughout times of slavery, and so over the years cooked greens developed into a traditional food. Even after the Africans were emancipated in the late 1800s, their love of greens continued, and they kept handing down their well-developed repertoire of greens recipes from one generation to the next.
- Though greens did not originate in Africa, the habit of eating greens that have been cooked down into a low gravy, and drinking the juices from the greens is of African origin.

3. & 4. How do Greens Grow?

- Cooking greens are known as cool-season crops**, but can be grown and harvested almost year-round. They are commonly used as fall and winter vegetables, as they grow best in cooler weather and can survive an occasional frost. Some varieties, like kale and collards, taste sweeter after a frost. These varieties, along with Swiss chard, also grow well in warmer, more humid climates and in poor soil. Well-drained, loam soil is ideal for most cooking greens.



- Cooking greens are leafy green vegetables, which are among the most widely grown vegetables. They are also known as *potherbs* and most varieties can be used either fresh or cooked. The term “leafy greens” refers to vegetables like lettuce, cabbage, endive, escarole, spinach, broccoli, collards, turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, Swiss chard, and bok choy. **They are grown for their leaves and stems**, though sometimes the stems are inedible.
- Most varieties – like collards, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, and bok choy – are part of the cabbage family (Brassicaceae). Other varieties, like Swiss chard, are related to the spinach family (Amaranthaceae). Young plants have small, tender leaves and a mild or

sweet flavor (collards, Swiss chard, bok choy, kale). Mature plants have tougher leaves and a stronger flavor (mustard greens, turnip greens).

5. Why should we eat cooked greens?

- An **excellent** source of a nutrient must provide at least 20% of the Daily Value and a **good** source must provide between 10-19% of the Daily Value.
 - Bok choy provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C.
 - Collard greens provide excellent sources of vitamins A and C and a good source of fiber and calcium.
 - Kale provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C.
 - Swiss chard provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C and a good source of iron.
- Functions in the body:
 - Vitamin A: a central component of vision health.
 - Vitamin C: helps the body to fight off illness and keep the immune system healthy; is essential for metabolism; promotes healing of gums and tissues; and may also help to prevent heart disease.
 - Calcium: needed for healthy, strong bones and teeth, blood clotting, and nervous system functions
 - Fiber: helps maintain steady blood sugar levels, promote bowel regularity, and may help to prevent cancer.
 - Iron: an essential mineral for maintaining the delivery of oxygen throughout the body.



How Much Do I Need?

- A ½ cup of cooked greens is about the size of one cupped handful.

6. How do you pick good Greens?

Produce Tips

- Choose leafy greens with fresh, full leaves.
- Avoid greens that have brown, yellow, spotted, wilted, or slimy leaves.
- Store greens in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for two to five days.

- Wash greens thoroughly before use.
- Cut stems from leafy greens immediately before cooking.
- The best way to store greens is to keep them slightly wet in an open or perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. Stored properly, greens should keep about 3 days.

How to Prepare and Cook Greens

- First you need to prepare the greens. Remove large stems or break off small ones. Fill a sink with cold water and submerge the leaves. With herbs, leave the stems and hold on to them as you give the leaves a dunk. If there is sediment in the water, drain the sink and repeat. If you plan to put the greens in a salad, spin them dry. Leaves destined for cooking can have excess water shaken off and be placed on a towel or chopping board.
- The issue at hand is how to cook the greens so they lose as little nutritional value as possible while shedding their bitter flavors. There are three recommended cooking techniques: quick-boiling, simmering, and sautéing.
- To quick-boil greens, bring two quarts of water to a boil. Do not chop the leaves, but submerge them whole into the boiling water. Use a wooden spoon to move them from top to bottom. To tell when they are done, use your senses. The leaves should begin to lose their perkiness and wilt slightly, but the bright green color will still be present. At this point, bring a leaf up with your spoon, tear off a piece, and chew it. If the flavor is bitter, let them cook more. The greens are just right when chewing a piece releases sweet juices in your mouth. If the color is gone or there is no flavor left when you chew it, they've cooked too long. The amount of time depends on the maturity of the green and the amount of leaves you're cooking. For something like tender mustard greens, it should be a thirty- to sixty-second dip, while mature collard greens can take about five minutes. Once you test the green and get a sweet flavor, pour the contents of the pot into a colander. Save the water to this nutrient-filled broth and use in another recipe, or to water plants. Gently run cool water over the greens to halt cooking. Once they are cool enough to touch, gather them into a ball and gently squeeze out the excess water. Chop them on the cutting board and they are ready to dress and serve.
- To simmer greens, bring about one inch of liquid (water, broth, wine . . .) to simmer in a large skillet. Chop the washed greens into strips. Place the strips in the simmering liquid and keep them moving with a wooden spoon. You are looking for the same results as described above: a bright green color and a sweet flavor; but since the greens have been chopped, the cooking time will be shorter.
- When sautéing greens, it is good to work with just-washed greens. The water helps with wilting and releasing bitterness. Heat 1-2 Tablespoons of oil in a skillet. Add a minced clove of garlic if desired. The garlic will tell you if you have the heat right. Too hot and the garlic will burn, too cool and the garlic will just sit there. Chop the greens you are using into bite-sized pieces. Place cut leaves in the skillet and keep them moving. Stay with the process and test every minute or so for doneness. When the leaves are still full of color and tasting proves not bitter, but sweet, they're ready!

Healthy Serving Ideas

- Cook collards, Swiss chard, bok choy, and spinach for a mild or sweeter flavor.
- Cook arugula, kale, and mustard greens for a peppery flavor.

- Sauté collard greens with garlic, onions, tomatoes, and olive oil.
- Simmer greens in low-sodium chicken broth until greens are tender and wilted.
- Stir-fry bok choy with carrots, corn, and red peppers for a colorful side dish.
- Use wilted Collard, Country Greens or Chard when making a vegetarian Lasagna.
- Mix wilted Greens with cooked couscous, chick peas, lemon juice and garlic, for a bright, tasty side dish.
- Use wilted Chard on top of homemade pizza with olives and goat or feta cheese.

Why aren't people eating cooked greens?

- Everyone wants to look good, feel better, and have more energy. Billions of dollars are spent buying supplements each year toward this end. Yet we often overlook simple dietary changes that can provide our bodies with the nutrients they need to achieve the goals we want.
- Some of the most nutrient-dense foods available on the planet are dark leafy greens—the superheroes of the vegetable world. Eating a helping of delicious, dark leafy greens each day can help keep you in tip-top shape. Popeye was right. So why isn't everybody putting greens on their must-have lists for the grocery store?
- Lots of people are unfamiliar with how to prepare them, especially how to cook the more mature greens, like collards and kale, so they are not bitter. Once the basics of cooking greens are demystified and you see the results of including them in your diet, you'll want them to make a regular appearance at your dining table.

Dressing Up Your Greens

- Once you have a heap of cooked greens in front of you, there are limitless possibilities. Cooked greens can be added to soups, grain dishes, and salads to add color, flavor, and nutrients.
- You can prepare a heavenly peanut sauce to drizzle over greens, or toss them with toasted sesame oil and toasted sesame seeds for an Asian flavor. A squeeze of lemon is fine, but how about a little orange juice with garlic and a touch of chipotle sauce? Serve it over slices of polenta and it's fit for company.

Just the Facts

1. Collards were grown by the ancient Greeks and Romans. They are the oldest leafy green within the cabbage family.
2. Like collards, kale descended from wild cabbage in eastern Europe and parts of Asia.
3. Bok choy is a descendant of Chinese cabbage that originated in China about 6,000 years ago.
4. Swiss chard was first grown in Sicily (Italy), but a Swiss scientist was the first to name it.
5. Collard, mustard, and turnip greens are commonly known as "Southern greens."
6. In Chinese, bok choy means "white vegetable."
7. Although it looks like romaine lettuce or celery stalks, bok choy is actually a type of cabbage.
8. Swiss chard is a type of beet grown for its edible leaves.
9. Some kale varieties are "flowering" and grown for their white, red, pink, purple, and blue ornamental leaves.

<http://www.epicurious.com/archive/seasonalcooking/farmtotable/visualguidecookinggreens>