



THE CONSCIOUS KITCHEN  
FOOD OF THE MONTH

**The Conscious Kitchen Food of the Month** started the first week of The Conscious Kitchen in 2013 when we made quinoa for breakfast. Having never seen quinoa in their lives, the children walked right by. The next week the TCK chef went classroom to classroom with Quinoa Muffins. From that moment on quinoa was a highlight of our Conscious Kitchen cuisine.

Each has a table tent that can be printed on card stock and placed on the dining hall tables along with a one page resource sheet for teachers to share with their children. TCK chef visits each classroom monthly with an item that has been prepared using that ingredient.

**Food of the Month**

January: Citrus

February: Lettuce

March: Collards

April: Broccoli

May: Strawberry

June: Stone Fruit

July: Garlic

August: Tomato

September: Melon

October: Beets

November: Brussels

December: Squash



# BROCCOLI

## **BROCCOLI HEALTH BENEFITS**

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- Research shows that eating broccoli reduces risk of developing cancer!
- Increases metabolism
- 100 gram serving of broccoli is more than 150% of your recommended vitamin C levels, which can help fight against the common cold
- Broccoli is rich in vitamin A, iron, vitamin K, zinc, and phyto-nutrients
- Phyto-nutrients can lower risk of developing diabetes, heart diseases, and certain cancers (according to USDA)
- Steam broccoli lightly - overcooking it will destroy the enzyme myrosinase which can reduce risk of developing cancer
- Eat broccoli raw to gain maximum benefit
- Broccoli can help prevent skin cancer if you apply it directly to the skin! Topical application of a broccoli extract can reduce damaging effects of UV radiation

## **BROCCOLI FUN FACTS**

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- 1 cup of chopped broccoli = entire day's needed intake of vitamin C
- Thomas Jefferson imported broccoli seeds from Italy because he loved it so much!
- California produces 90% of America's broccoli
- China is the world's largest producer of broccoli, producing over 8 million tons a year
- The average America eats over 4 pounds of broccoli a year



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# CARROTS

## WHY ORGANIC CARROTS ARE BETTER

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- Fewer levels of toxic pesticides
- Root crops (like carrots) absorb chemicals in the soil, so growing carrots at home (where you know there aren't pesticides) is better
- Look for carrots with deep orange to red coloring; contain more betacarotene

## PREPARING AND EATING CARROTS

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- Avoid peeling organic carrots; unnecessary and can remove vitamins
- Steam carrots rather than boil them. Boiling carrots can reduce beta-carotene and other essential nutrients

## MORE RESOURCES

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- WhatsOnMyFood.org from the Pesticide Action Network shows you pesticide residues on vegetables, and their health effects

<http://www.fullcircle.com/goodfoodlife/2012/05/29/organic--carrots--nutritional-->

<http://www.gracelinks.org/blog/3332/real--food--right--now--and--how--to--cook--it-->



# MOROCCAN COOKED CARROT SALAD



- 1 pound carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 to 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (to taste)
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced or pureed in a mortar and pestle
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, lightly toasted and ground
- 2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (to taste)
- 1/4 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- For garnish:
  - Imported black olives
  - 2 hard boiled eggs, cut in wedges (optional)

*Yield: Serves 4*

1. Place the carrots in a steamer above 1 inch of boiling water, cover and steam 5 to 8 minutes, until tender. Remove from the heat, rinse with cold water, and drain on paper towels.

2. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet and add the garlic and cumin. Cook, stirring, for about 30 seconds, until the garlic smells fragrant, and stir in the carrots, pepper, and salt to taste. Stir together for a few minutes, until the carrots are nicely seasoned. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, remaining olive oil, and the parsley. Taste and adjust salt and lemon juice as desired. Transfer to a platter, and decorate with olives and hardboiled eggs if desired. Serve at room temperature.

**Advance preparation:** You can make this several hours before serving. The dish, without the lemon juice and parsley, will keep for a couple of days in the refrigerator. Reheat gently on top of the stove and add the lemon juice and parsley.

**Approximate Nutritional Information (per Serving):** Calories: 187; Total Fat: 13.7g; Saturated Fat: 2.3g; Cholesterol: 93mg; Sodium: 189mg; Total Carbohydrates: 13.7g; Dietary Fiber: 3.8g; Sugars: 5.9g; Protein: 4.3g; Vitamin A 388 percent recommended daily allowance (RDA) based on a 2,000 calorie diet; Vitamin C 29 percent RDA; Calcium 7 percent RDA; Iron 10 percent

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## MORE RESOURCES

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## WHY ORGANIC CARROTS ARE BETTER

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# WINTER CITRUS

## HISTORY

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- The earliest references to oranges are to be found in ancient Chinese manuscripts and as far back as about 2200 B.C.
- Christopher Columbus brought the first citrus to the New World in 1493.
- Throughout the ages, the fruit of citrus trees has been a symbol of eternal love, happiness, and even holiness.

## NUTRITION

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- Citrus is a great source of vitamin C (one serving can provide 90% of the recommended daily value)
- Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, which prevents cell damage and boosts the immune system.
- The juice contains a high quantity of citric acid (an antioxidant) giving them their characteristic sharp flavor.
- Oranges also contain a compound called limonin, which laboratory tests have shown to fight cancer.
- Citrus fruits contain an impressive list of essential nutrients, including potassium, folate, calcium, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6 etc., no fat, sodium or cholesterol.

## CALIFORNIA + CITRUS

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- When the Gold Rush of 1849 hit, there was a huge demand for oranges in the gold country because fresh citrus was useful in combating scurvy," a vitamin-C deficiency
- The introduction of the navel orange (so called because the end of the fruit resembles a belly button) in the 1870s propelled the growth of California citrus, which fueled the economic and social development of California.
- California is No. 1 in fresh-market oranges, most notably the navel, but also produces a significant share of the nation's valencias, lemons, grapefruit and tangerines.

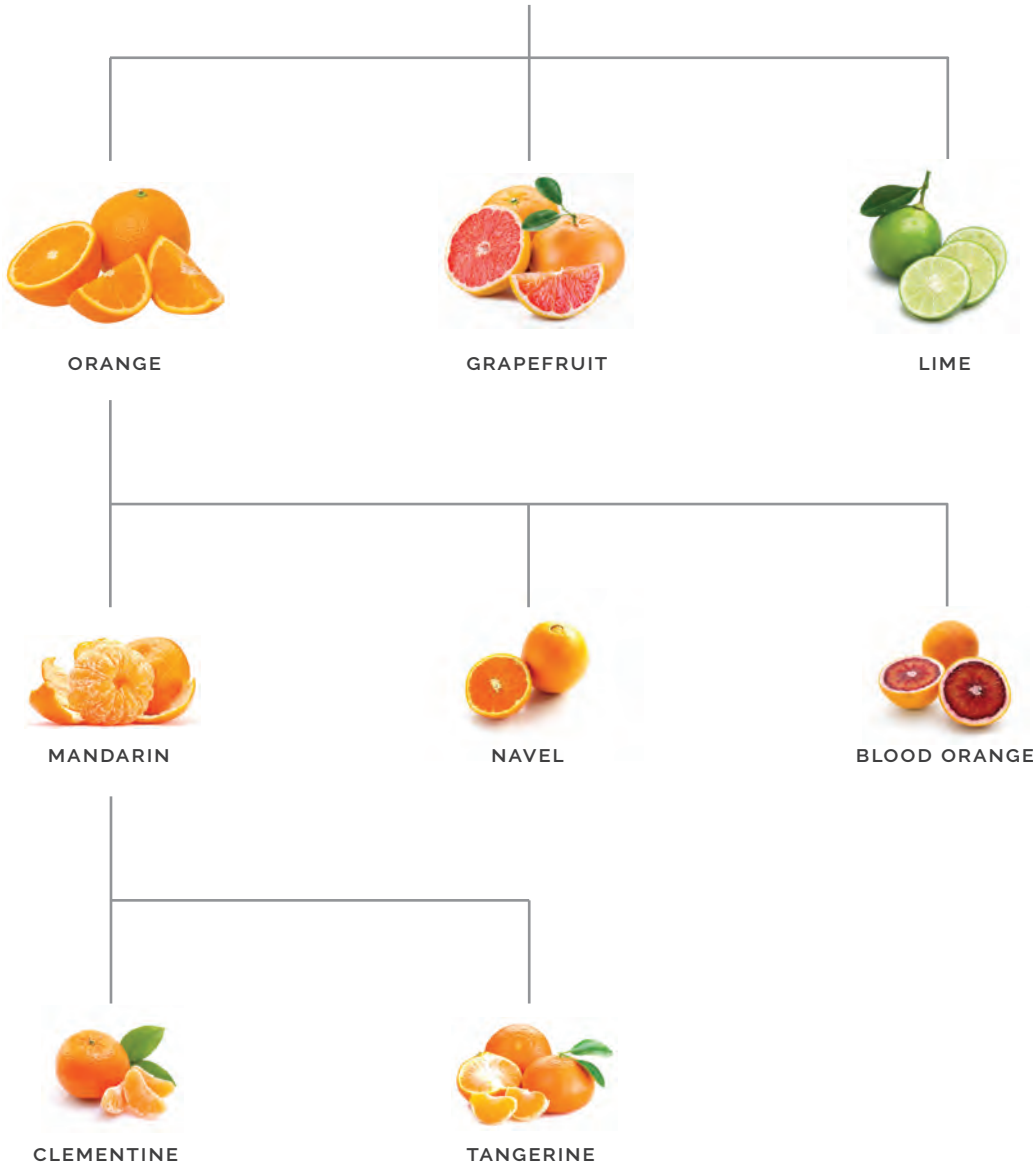
## ECO IMPACT

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- Orange trees require a lot of water and oranges are shipped everywhere, so unless you're in California or Florida, the orange produces a large environmental footprint
- The citrus industry uses a lot of chemicals, so try to buy citrus organic!



CITRUS



## CITRUS FAMILY

- The precise number of citrus species is unclear since many citrus species are hybrids, cloned through seeds, possibly derived from as few as four ancestral species. Natural and cultivated origin hybrids include oranges, grapefruit, lemons, some limes, and some tangerines.
- Many species are cultivated for their fruit, which is eaten fresh, pressed for juice, or preserved in marmalades and pickles.

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## CITRUS FAMILY



### HISTORY

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### NUTRITION

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### CALIFORNIA + CITRUS

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### ECO IMPACT

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# COLLARD GREENS

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## ORIGIN

- Large leafy green - part of the cruciferous family of vegetables
- Related to cabbage-y foods: brussel sprouts, kale, broccoli, cauliflower
- Collard greens date back to prehistoric times, and are one of the oldest members of the cabbage family.

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## FACTS

- Greens are any sort of cabbage in which the green leaves do not form a compact head; kale, collards, turnip, spinach, and mustard greens.
- According to folklore, collards served on New Year's Day promise a year of good luck and financial reward, hanging a fresh leaf over your door will ward off evil spirits, and a fresh leaf placed on the forehead promises to cure a headache.
- The slaves of the plantations were given leftover food from the plantation kitchen, like tops of turnips and other greens. Ham hocks and pig's feet were also given to the slaves. Forced to create meals from these leftovers, they created the famous southern greens. The slave diet began to evolve and spread when slaves entered the plantation houses as cooks and evolved into present-day Southern cooking.

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## SEASONALITY

- They are grown all year round, but their best harvest is during winter and spring.
- They will start to produce before any other greens and are found to be maintenance free.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- Collards can easily be grown locally no matter where you are, because they can sustain all seasons, which reduces their carbon footprint.
- Most leafy greens, that aren't organic, are sprayed with organophosphate, which is highly toxic and carcinogenic, even in low dosages. It reacts as a chemical closely related to that of ADHD, affecting the nervous system, so best to buy organic collards.



## REASONS TO EAT COLLARDS

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- help prevent cancer by supporting our detox and anti-inflammatory systems
- provide an enormous amount of nutrition and huge source of fiber and Vitamin C
- one serving contains more than your daily allotment of Vitamin K (anti inflammatory) and A (strengthens bones, teeth, skin, and hair) and 10% of the recommended daily dosage of calcium, per cup
- Filling and nutritious, without any saturated fat or cholesterol.
- The cholesterol-lowering ability of collard greens may be the greatest of all commonly eaten cruciferous vegetables.
- Strengthens immune system

## WHY GROW COLLARDS

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- Collards can survive the harsh weather of winter, plus frost makes them sweeter.
- They will start to produce before any other greens and are found to be maintenance free.

## COOKING COLLARDS

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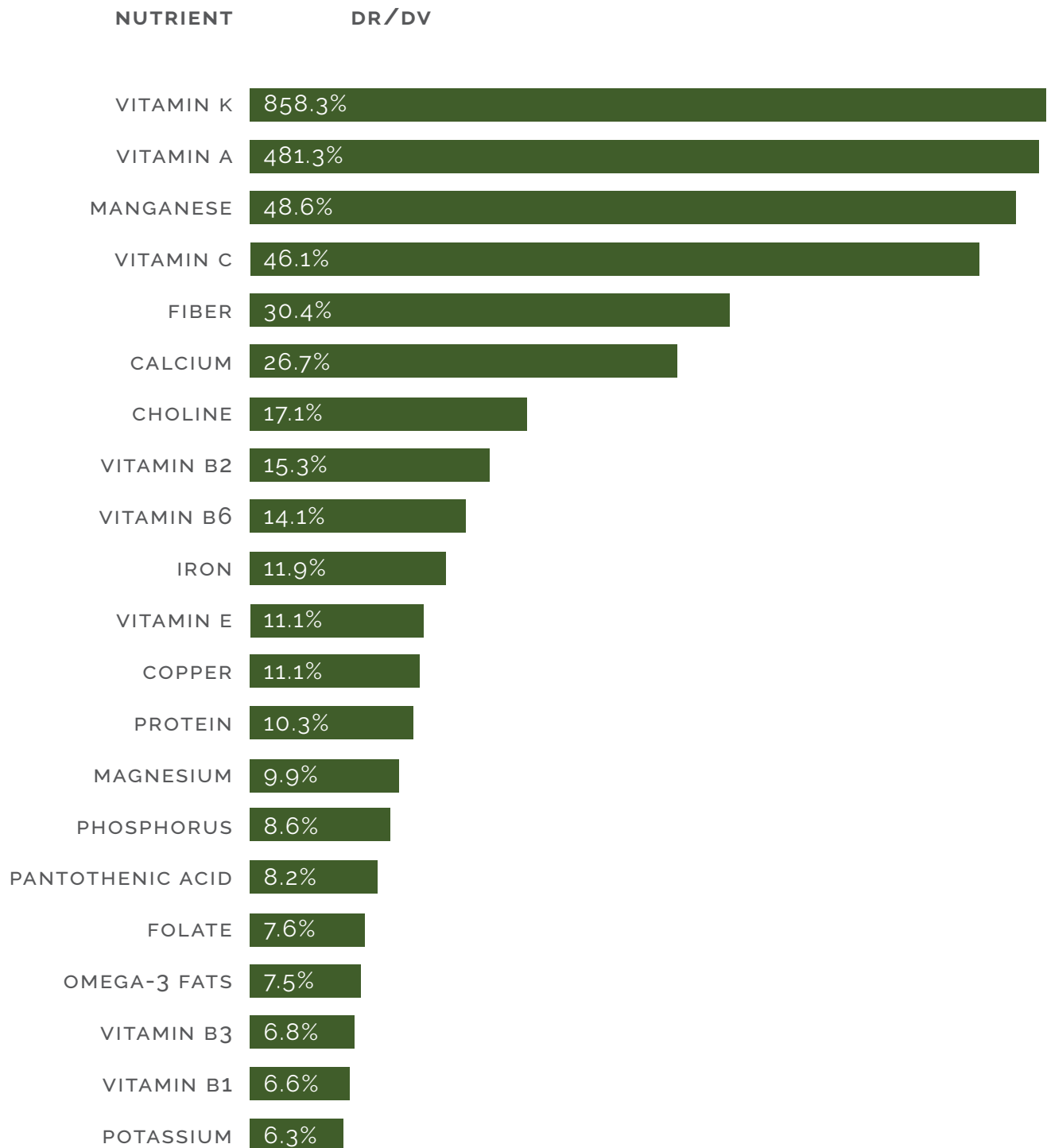
- There are about 1,000 recipes for cooking Collard Greens.
- One of the best features of Collard Greens is that you can cook them up ahead of time, toss them in the freezer, and pull them out at a later date for quick reheating.

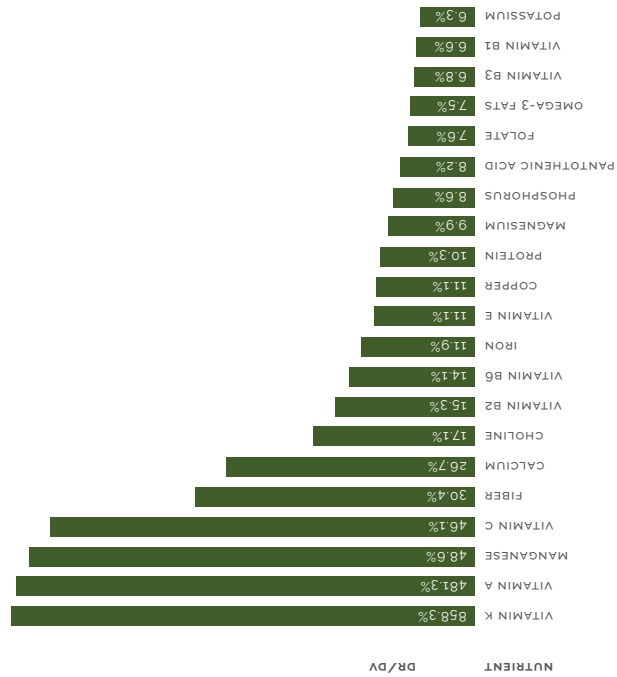
# COLLARD GREENS, CHOPPED, COOKED

1 CUP (190 GRAMS)

63 CALORIES

GI: VERY LOW





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- Related to cabbage-y foods: brussel sprouts, kale, broccoli, cauliflower
- Collard greens date back to prehistoric times, and are one of the oldest members of the cabbage family.

## SEASONALITY

- They are grown all year round, but their best harvest is during winter and spring. Environmental Impact

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# LETTUCE

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## HOW DO SALAD GREENS GROW?

•Lettuce is grown year-round, but since lettuce seeds germinate and grow best at lower temperatures, and can even withstand a moderate freeze, the peak harvest season is January through May.

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## NUTRITION

- 1 cup of salad greens provides:
- A significant amount of vitamin K, vitamin A, folate, and vitamin C
- Vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin that helps stop cuts and scrapes from bleeding too much and starts the healing process.
- Together with calcium, vitamin K helps build strong bones and keeps blood vessels healthy.
- Darker leaves with greater pigmentation contain more antioxidants and nutrients.

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## HISTORY

- Wild forms of lettuce in Egyptian tomb paintings and written accounts of lettuce that date back to 79 A.D. This supports evidence that salad greens are one of the oldest known vegetables.
- Lettuce was among the first vegetables brought to the New World by Christopher Columbus.
- The early western shipping industry relied mostly on New York lettuce cultivars. However, a disorder called "brown blight" destroyed numerous early plantings prompted the USDA to assign a plant breeder, I.C. Jagger, to Southern California to develop disease-resistant cultivars.
- Jagger used healthy plants and some that he found in the affected New York lettuce fields. He eventually released three cultivars under the name "Imperial," which remained popular until the late 1940s, when T.W. Whitaker developed the first true iceberg lettuce.

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## CALIFORNIA + SALAD GREENS

- California leads the nation in production of leaf lettuce, head lettuce, and romaine lettuce\*.
- The counties of Monterey, Imperial, Fresno, San Benito, and Santa Barbara account for the highest percentage of California's lettuce production.

## VARIETIES

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- Salad greens consist of hundreds of varieties of different lettuce, which is a temperate annual plant of the family Asteraceae, or sunflower family.
- In addition to the four main varieties (butterhead, romaine, red and green leaf), other California grown varieties include bibb lettuce, endive, escarole, iceberg lettuce, and radicchio.

# GUIDE TO LETTUCE



ENDIVE



GREEN LEAF



ROMAINE



BUTTERHEAD



ICEBURG



RED LEAF



BIBB



ESCAROLE



RED LEAF



ICEBURG



ESCAROLE



BIBB



BUTTERHEAD



ROMAINE



GREEN LEAF



ENDIVE



## FUN FACTS

- Lettuce is grown year-round, but since lettuce seeds germinate and grow best at lower temperatures, and can even with stand a moderate freeze, the peak harvest season is January through May.
- Salad greens are an excellent source of vitamin K, vitamin A, folate, and vitamin C.
- Wild forms of lettuce in Egyptian tomb paintings and written accounts of lettuce that date back to 79 A.D. This supports evidence that salad greens are one of the oldest known vegetables.
- The average American eats about 30 pounds of lettuce per year. That's about fivetimes more than in the early 1900s.





# SQUASH

## HOW DOES SQUASH GROW?

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- Winter squash are warm-weather plants requiring pollination for fruit development. Until recently, squash plants were grown exclusively on vines. Today, more growers are using a hybridized, compact "bush" variety that allows for more plants per acre.

## NUTRITION

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A cup of cooked winter squash provides:

- An excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, magnesium, and iron
- Iron is a mineral that helps move oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. It also helps keep red blood cells healthy and helps the body fight infections.
- Iron carries oxygen throughout your body so cells can produce energy. When iron levels are low, you may feel fatigued, weak, and have difficulty tolerating extreme temperatures.
- Iron in food exists as two types, heme and non-heme. Animal foods such as meat, fish, and poultry provide heme. Your body uses this type of iron most effectively. Non-heme is found in plant foods like spinach and beans and isn't as well absorbed by the body.

## HISTORY

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- Squash are one of the oldest cultivated crops in the Western Hemisphere. Seeds found in Mexico have been dated as 10,000 years old.
- Squash were originally cultivated for their seeds, as early varieties did not contain much flesh and were very bitter.
- Squash were one of the "Three Sisters" planted by the Iroquois. The Iroquois myth describes three sisters that were inseparable. These plants - squash, maize (corn), and beans - were staples of nearly every Native American tribe.
- Winter squash became a staple food of early colonists and eventually traveled West with Americans, producing better crops in warmer states like California

## CALIFORNIA + WINTER SQUASH

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- California leads the nation in total squash production!
- Squash production takes place mostly in central San Joaquin Valley, with summer squash accounting for more acreage than winter squash

## FUN FACTS

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- Referred to as a vegetable in cooking, squash are actually fruits of vines of the Cucurbita genus
- Native Americans believed squash seeds increased fertility and called squash "the apple of God"
- The word "squash" is derived from the Native American askutasquash meaning "food eaten raw." but winter squash are almost never eaten raw
- Besides the fruit, other edible parts of squash plants include the seeds (eaten whole, toasted, ground into paste, or pressed for oil); shoots, leaves, and tendrils (eaten as greens); and blossoms (used for cooking and decoration)

## VARIETIES

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- There are two main squash varieties: winter and summer
- Winter squash are not grown or harvested in winter, but picked when fully ripe and feature a hard shell (rind) with thick, inedible skin and hollow seed cavity with fully developed seeds. The thick shell allows it to be stored for several months.
- Summer squash are picked immature and have a soft shell
- Varieties of winter squash grown in the U.S.: Acorn, Butternut, Buttercup, Hubbard, Pumpkin, Spaghetti

# GUIDE TO WINTER SQUASH



AMBERCUP



DELICATA



SWEET DUMPLING



BUTTERNUT



ACORN



SPAGHETTI



BUTTERCUP

SPAGHETTI



BUTTERNUT



BUTTERCUP



DELICATA



AMBERCUP



SWEET DUMPLING



ACORN



## GUIDE TO WINTER SQUASH



### FUN FACTS

- Seeds of winter squash make great snacks. They're super easy to prepare! Just scoop out the squash seeds, spread them out on a cookie sheet, and lightly roast them at 160-170°F in the oven for 15-20 minutes.
- Make sure to buy organic winter squash. When winter squash is being grown in the soil, it tends to absorb all of the contaminants and nutrients in the area. This means that all the pesticides and hazardous chemicals in the soil will be absorbed into the squash itself!
- One of the best ways to cook squash is to steam it. Steam for about 7 minutes; overcooking will cause squash to lose its nutrients.
- Seeds of squash are rich in healthy nutrients. Two great vitamins include linoleic acid (the polyunsaturated omega-6 fatty acid) and oleic acid (the monounsaturated fatty acid in olive oil)
- Squash is high in fiber, B-vitamins, and beta-carotene and helps fight cancer, heart disease, and obesity



# TOMATOES



## ABOUT

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- The tomato is a berry of the nightshade family, which includes potatoes, eggplants, and peppers.
- The word "tomato" is derived from the Nahuatl (Aztec language) word, tomatl, meaning "something round and plump."
- Popular and versatile, come in over a thousand different varieties, vary in shape, size, and color
- Warm-weather perennial, sensitive to frost at any stage of growth

## NUTRITION

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- Specific varieties provide different health benefits:

Example: 1/2 cup tomatoes =

- Good source of Vitamin's C, A & K and potassium
- Rich in lycopene, a type of phytonutrient called a carotenoid
- Carotenoid = an antioxidant that may decrease the risk of certain cancers and heart disease and help keep immune system healthy

## HISTORY

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- 700 A.D. Incas and Aztecs began cultivating tomato plants
- First tomatoes can be traced back to the Andes in Peru, where they grew wild as cherry-sized berries
- Mid-1500s: Spanish conquistadors carried tomato seeds back to Europe
- 1781: Thomas Jefferson one of first Americans to grow tomatoes at his Virginia home
- 1812: tomatoes were gaining in popularity among Louisiana Creoles who used them in jambalayas and gumbos
- George Washington Carver believed tomatoes had "medicinal virtues."

## CALIFORNIA + THE TOMATO

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- California: nation's tomato capital. 95% of processing tomatoes and 75 % of all tomatoes are grown in California. (China is the largest producer of tomatoes in the world)
- 90 % of California grown tomatoes are harvested in nine counties

## ECO IMPACT

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- Tomatoes are "water hogs" meaning that they require large amounts of water in order to thrive and have a large environmental footprint so, try to buy local.

## VARIETIES

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- Choose deep reds, vibrant orange and tangerine, yellow and rich purple tomatoes, all colors have outstanding nutrients.
- Cherry: sweet tomatoes, usually eaten whole in salads
- Plum: pear-shaped, more meaty, ideal for tomato products, also called Italian or Roma
- Slicing: round or globe-shaped, mainly for commerce and processed products
- Beefsteak: round, juicy, used mainly for sandwiches



## CAPRESE SALAD



2 MEDIUM RED TOMATOES, CUT INTO WEDGES

2 MEDIUM YELLOW TOMATOES, CUT INTO WEDGES

$\frac{3}{4}$  CUP DICED FRESH MOZZARELLA CHEESE

$\frac{1}{4}$  CUP CHOPPED FRESH PARSLEY

2 TABLESPOONS CHOPPED FRESH BASIL

$\frac{1}{4}$  TEASPOON SALT

FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER, TO TASTE

1. Gently toss tomatoes, mozzarella, parsley, basil and salt together in a large bowl.
2. Season with pepper.

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## BAKED PARMESAN TOMATOES



4 TOMATOES, HALVED HORIZONTALLY

$\frac{1}{4}$  CUP FRESHLY GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE

1 TEASPOON CHOPPED FRESH OREGANO

$\frac{1}{4}$  TEASPOON SALT

FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER, TO TASTE

4 TEASPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Place tomatoes cut-side up on a baking sheet. Top with parmesan, oregano, salt and pepper. Drizzle with oil and bake until tomatoes are tender, about 15 minutes

• Tomatoes are popular and versatile, come in over a thousand different varieties, vary in shape, size, and color

## FUN FACT

• California is the nation's tomato capital. About 75 percent of all tomatoes are grown in California.

## CALIFORNIA + TOMATOES

- High fructose corn syrup
- Tomato concentrate—tomatoes are cooked over and over to remove skins and seeds which removes the vitamins!
- Contains GMO's (genetically modified organisms)

## CONVENTIONAL KETCHUP CONTAINS



## WHY TOMATOES ROCK

- Tomatoes contain lycopene, a nutrient that significantly reduces the risk of cancer and heart disease
- Tomatoes are good for the eyes, because lycopene helps prevent blindness.
- Tomatoes are high in Vitamins A, C, K, Calcium and Potassium.
- Tomatoes can speed up metabolism.
- Research shows that tomatoes can act as "internal sunscreen" to block UV rays and protect the skin

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