

GREEN COLOR YOUR FOOD



Amazing Heart Farm

- ❖ Green is color of life! When it comes to the nutrient density of foods, green vegetables win out *every time*.

The green color of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds comes from a pigment called *chlorophyll*. Chlorophyll is the most abundant plant pigment in nature.

- ❖ The word *chlorophyll* comes from the Greek words *chloros*, meaning ‘green’, and *phyllon*, meaning ‘plant’.
- ❖ Chlorophyll provides the green color found in grasses, leaves, and many of the foods we eat. It is vital to photosynthesis, allowing plants to concert carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates and oxygen.
- ❖ On its own, chlorophyll is not a phytochemical linked to human health, yet it plays a vital role in the production of the many other thousands of phytochemicals and antioxidants that are.

Chlorophyll overpowers all the other pigments in plants, masking the other colors that would be present if there was no chlorophyll.

- ❖ While different plant pigments do denote the presence of variety of healthful nutrients, when we eat green leafy vegetables, we are in fact eating *all* the colors, and all the phytochemicals associated with them.
- ❖ In fact, the reason plants produce antioxidants like anthocyanins and carotenoids is to protect themselves against the unstable free radicals that are generated when sunlight strikes the chlorophyll. Therefore, the darker the green vegetable, the more chlorophyll it contains and the greater its need for antioxidant protection. The antioxidants exist to protect the plant’s cells; in turn, when we consume them, they protect our cells.
- ❖ Calorie for calorie, dark green leafy vegetables are the most concentrated source of nutrients of any food. They contain the vitamins (including vitamins K, C, E, and many of the B vitamins) and minerals (including iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium) we need most to thrive. They are great sources of fiber and folate, low in fat, and high in proteins.
- ❖ There are more than 1,000 species of plants with edible leaves! And most greens are interchangeable in recipes, so be creative and adventurous! The options are bountiful.

Tofu Kale Lasagna

reprinted from *The Vegan Table* (2009) by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau, p. 193

Ingredients:

- 1 lb box whole wheat lasagna noodles
- 1 large bunch kale (or any greens), chopped
- 1 package firm tofu
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar (optional)
- ¼ cup non-dairy milk (rice, oat, soy, etc.)
- 2 garlic cloves
- Juice from ½ lemon
- 2 tbsp minced fresh basil
- 1 tsp salt (or to taste)
- 4 to 6 cups tomato or pasta sauce

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Cook lasagna noodles according to package directions; drain and set aside
3. Boil kale until it turns bright green (about 3 minutes); drain and set aside
4. Place tofu, sugar, milk, garlic, lemon juice, basil, and salt in a food processor and blend until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in kale. Add salt to taste.
5. Cover the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish with a thin layer of tomato sauce, then a layer of noodles. Follow with half the tofu filling. Continue in the same order with half of the remaining tomato sauce and noodles and all remaining tofu. End with remaining noodles topped with sauce. Bake for 40-45 minutes, until hot and bubbling.

Kale Chips (p. 117)

- 1 large bunch curly kale
- 1-2 tsp olive oil
- pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)
- ½ tsp chili powder (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Tear kale leaves into large pieces, and toss in a bowl with oil, salt, and spices. Fully coat the leaves and spread out on a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake until crisp, about 10 minutes, checking often!

Glorious GREEN Foods! (and how to eat them):

- Green apples
- Artichokes
- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Green beans
- Beet greens
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Celery
- Collard greens
- Cucumbers
- Dandelion greens
- Edamame
- Fennel
- Fresh herbs
- Honeydew melon
- Kale
- Kiwi
- Lettuce
- Lima beans
- Limes
- Mustard greens
- Green grapes
- Okra
- Green olives
- Green onions
- Snow or snap peas
- Green pepper
- Pistachios
- Pumpkin seeds
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Turnip greens
- Zucchini

- Try adding artichoke hearts, asparagus, brussels sprouts, okra, or greens to your next stir-fry
- For a quick side dish, steam greens with roasted garlic or add peas or edamame to rice
- Use large collard greens as a roll-up instead of a tortilla; fill with veggies and hummus!
- Eat a big salad with a mixture of whatever greens and veggies are available and in season
- Snack on apples or celery with peanut butter, or dip broccoli, peppers, or beans in hummus
- Blend a green smoothie with any kind of dark leafy greens. Experiment with different combinations by adding ground flaxseed, ginger, frozen fruits, and/or fruit juices

