

Eight super-healthy leafy greens—and why you should eat them

November 14 2023, by Swrajit Sarkar



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Leafy greens are a great way to improve your health as they possess many vital nutrients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. As a nutritionist, I would highly recommend getting more of the following

salad leaves in your diet.

Spinach

Spinach is easy to get all year round, and is chock full of [iron, calcium, potassium and vitamins B6, C and K](#). It is also a good source of antioxidants, which can reduce the risk of many diseases, including heart disease and certain cancers.

It's best eaten uncooked, as part of a salad, as cooking tends to destroy the naturally occurring polyphenols and flavanols in the leaves. Certain [polyphenols and flavonoids](#) may reduce the chance of developing certain cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease.

Kale

Kale has a unique taste that can vary somewhat depending on its variety and how it's prepared. If you can handle [bitter taste](#), kale is packed with important micronutrients such as calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, copper, manganese and selenium. It is also a [good source of vitamins](#), including vitamins A, B, E, C and K.

Avoid blanching and boiling kale as it can reduce the amount of [water-soluble minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals](#) in the leaves. Kale can be eaten uncooked in salads.

A cup of uncooked kale (21g) is just [nine calories](#).

Swiss chard

My third choice is [Swiss chard](#), which has a slightly sweet flavor, and has

good amounts of [vitamins A and C](#). And even a small amount of Swiss chard (around 175 grams) can fulfill your daily requirement of vitamin K—which is important for [blood clotting](#) and healthy bones.

Swiss chard, which comes in a variety of colors, also has essential minerals such as [iron, copper, potassium and calcium](#).

Collard greens

Collard greens are a good source of [lutein](#), which is important for eye health. They are full of vitamins A and C and minerals such as [calcium, iron, zinc, copper and selenium](#), and are a good source of fiber. As with spinach, you can get this all year round.

Rocket

If you're in the mood for a leafy green with a fresh, tangy, slightly bitter and peppery taste, consider adding rocket to your plate. It's been consumed by humans since at least [Roman times](#), and is a popular topping on pizzas.

Rocket, also known as arugula and eruca, is packed with nitrates—which studies have shown can [boost performance in sports](#). Rocket is also rich in [vitamins K and C, and calcium and polyphenols](#).

Romaine lettuce

The crunchy and mild-tasting [romaine lettuce](#) is full of [nutrient-rich goodies](#). It is a good source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A, K, C and folate (a B [vitamin](#) that is especially important during pregnancy). These nutrients are essential for maintaining overall health and supporting a healthy immune system.

Romaine, also known as cos lettuce, is a source of fiber too, which is known to [reduce your risk](#) of [heart disease](#), stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer.

Watercress

If you enjoy a bit of spice and want to incorporate a leafy green with a distinct flavor into your meals, watercress is a great choice. It not only adds a burst of taste but also provides a rich source of [vitamins A and C and antioxidants](#). Research suggests that watercress could be a [therapeutic agent in oral cancer](#).

Bok choy

If you're looking for a leafy green with a gentle flavor and satisfying texture, bok choy is a great choice. This variety of Chinese white cabbage can be used in stir-fries, soups, salads or simply sautéed as a side dish.

It is rich in fiber as well as various [vitamins, minerals and antioxidants](#). This leafy green [can help maintain](#) bone health, immunity, vision, heart health, blood pressure and possibly prevent certain types of cancer.

I prefer to have a [balanced diet](#) and adding these [leafy greens](#) can help me stay healthy, improve my immunity, and reduce the risk of various chronic diseases. They are also low in calories, making them a good choice for those who want to manage their weight. So enjoy them in salads, smoothies, soups or as a side dish with your favorite meals.

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by The Conversation

Citation: Eight super-healthy leafy greens—and why you should eat them (2023, November 14) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-super-healthy-leafy-greensand.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.