



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

I.V. Boys & Girls Club Director Jenna Larkin (right) introduces the club’s Youth of the Year Evalynn Guzman during the annual Taste of the I.V. at Rock’n R Ranch in O’Brien Friday, June 21.

# Wholesome Foods:

by Laura Mancuso

## Calling all Kale!

It’s that time of year when the sun is shining and I have kale growing in my garden. The Healthy U’s Mindful Eating support group was just talking about kale and most of us came to the conclusion that although we know kale is good for us, sometimes using it as the base of a salad can be difficult to swallow. As a result, I decided to share some of the most delicious ways to enjoy kale and tell you why you should keep it in mind when striving to eat a healthy diet.

Kale (*Brassica oleracea acephala*) is part of the cruciferous family along with cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. The three main types of kale are curly kale (bright green curly leaves best known as a garnish), black kale (flat blue-green crinkled leaves; includes Lacinatio and dinosaur kale), and red kale (frilly leaves with red or purple stems).

Kale has been found to help with the disease

prevention for diabetes, age-related macular degeneration, certain types of cancer and cardiovascular disease. It has also been found to help with autism and osteoporosis.

There is a reason kale is called a powerhouse food. **One cup of chopped kale packs in the following notable nutrients:**

- Calories: 34
- Vitamin A: 10302 IU {206% Daily Value (DV)}
- Vitamin C: 80 mg (134% DV)
- Vitamin K: 547 micrograms (684% DV)
- Copper: 0.2 mg (10 % DV)
- Manganese: 0.5 mg (26% DV)

One cup of cooked kale has over 1,000 percent more vitamin C than a cup of cooked spinach. Unlike spinach, kale is low in oxalate, so the calcium and iron it provides are more easily absorbed by the human digestive system.

Choose kale with the deepest green leaves, and avoid browned or yellowed leaves, which indicate tough, old, and less flavorful. Removes leaves and wash them under running water.

Pull the leaves off of the stem and save stems for other uses like pesto or stock. Washed kale will store up to a week in the refrigerator. Be sure to massage kale using your hands after adding a simple olive oil, lemon juice or vinegar, and salt – this makes it softer to eat and enjoy. If cooking, steaming kale will maintain the most nutrients.

You can also use raw kale in salads and smoothies or cooked in frittatas, soups, pastas; you could also make your own kale chips.

My favorite way to eat kale is to sauté it. And I have included a recipe below using this method of cooking.

### Baby Brussels and Kale Sauté

Ingredients:  
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 Tbsp unsalted butter  
1 cup leeks, cleaned, sliced

2 clove garlic, minced  
1 (10 oz.) package baby Brussels sprouts, rinsed, trimmed, halved

1 fresh yellow bell pepper, stem and seeds removed, sliced thin

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

3 cups (about 4 oz.) kale rinsed, stems removed  
1 fresh lemon

1. In a sauté pan over medium heat, heat the olive oil and melt the butter. Add the leeks and garlic and sauté for 3 minutes.

2. Next add the Brussels sprouts, bell pepper, and season with the salt and pepper. Sauté for 3-5 minutes or until slightly softened.

3. Add the kale and sauté until slightly wilted but still crisp, about 2-3 minutes.

4. Remove from the heat, cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice into the pan. Give the veggies a stir, check the seasoning and serve.

Makes 6 servings  
Nutrition information per serving: 127 calories, 8 grams (g) fat, 3 g saturated fat, 13 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 43 milligrams sodium, 2 g sugar.

*Environmental Nutrition*

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