

Winter Greens: Kale and Spinach

What a treat for New Englanders to find lively, fresh greens in the cold months! Kale and spinach grow best in cool weather, are frost hardy, and can be harvested in winter. Greens can be cultivated with season extending methods (greenhouses, hoop houses), but can also be found in the fields until snow covers the ground. These leaves are nutritionally dense, providing high amounts of potassium, vitamins A and C, and iron.

To store your greens, keep them in coldest part of refrigerator (use your crisp drawer), loosely wrapped in a plastic bag. They will keep 5 days to a week; they will wilt and become bitter when too old.

You may find several varieties of kale at the market. These include curly kale, ornamental kale, and dinosaur (or Lacinato or Tuscan) kale, all of which differ slightly in taste, texture, and appearance, but may be used interchangeably in recipes. Spinach and Swiss chard may also be used in recipes, taking care not to overcook the more delicate leaves.

Tips for preparing kale: Unlike spinach, kale leaves take awhile to cook to tenderness. The stems are often too tough to cook, depending on age and variety of kale. Remove tough stems by slicing a narrow "V" up each leaf to remove the entire stem from the leaf. Compost stems. Rinse kale leaves well in cold water, let drain in colander.

Tips for preparing spinach: When using bunches of spinach (including the stems), rinse in a colander set in a large bowl of cold water. Change water until it is free of grit. Spinach is tender enough to be eaten raw, and cooks quickly over medium heat.



Kale:
Brassica oleracea



Spinach:
Spinacea oleracea

Kate's Kale

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 large bunch of kale, rinsed & chopped into strips (stems are optional)
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

- Sauté the onion in olive oil on high heat.
 - Add the kale and cook on medium-high for about 5 minutes (until it turns bright green).
 - Remove from heat and toss with vinegar, parmesan, salt and pepper.
- You can also use this recipe with Swiss chard, collard greens, or spinach (but cook for less time with spinach and chard).

Kale (or Spinach) and Onion Frittata

1 medium onion, sliced thin
1 small bunch of kale or spinach, chopped (either in food processor or with knife)
9 eggs
3/4 cup milk
½ cup grated cheese (Parmesan or Romano) or crumbled goat cheese
1 Tbsp. Olive oil
1 Tbsp. butter
Salt and Pepper to taste

- Cook onions with butter and olive oil in a pan until translucent.
- Add chopped kale or spinach and continue cooking until onions are softened. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.
- In a bowl, whisk to combine eggs, milk, salt, pepper and cheese.
- Add kale mixture to egg mixture.
- Pour mixture into a pie plate or casserole dish and bake at 350 degrees F until knife inserted in the center comes out clean (about 20 minutes).

