

Cooked Greens

- 1. Examine the four Nutrition Facts labels for bok choy, collard greens, kale, and Swiss chard. Make a list for each variety of the excellent and good nutrient sources. Which varieties have similar excellent sources? Which have similar good sources? Which have different good or excellent sources? Describe each nutrient's function in the body and how it connects to health.**

An excellent source of a nutrient must provide at least 20% of the Daily Value and a good source must provide between 10-19% of the Daily Value.

- Bok choy provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C.
- Collard greens provide excellent sources of vitamins A and C and a good source of fiber and calcium.
- Kale provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C.
- Swiss chard provides excellent sources of vitamins A and C and a good source of iron.

Functions in the body:

- Vitamin A: a central component of vision health.
- Vitamin C: helps the body to fight off illness and keep the immune system healthy; is essential for metabolism; promotes healing of gums and tissues; and may also help to prevent heart disease.
- Calcium: needed for healthy bones and teeth, blood clotting, and nervous system functions
- Fiber: helps maintain steady blood sugar levels, promote bowel regularity, and may help to prevent cancer.
- Iron: an essential mineral for maintaining the delivery of oxygen throughout the body.

- 2. Select one leafy green variety. Find the nutrition information for raw and cooked. (Hint: use similar measurements.) Make a chart comparing nutrient values for both forms. What happens to the nutrients when cooked? Make a hypothesis why there are differences between the raw and cooked forms. Why do leafy greens shrink when cooked? On average, by how much do leafy greens shrink (use percentages or ratios)?**

Cooking leafy greens results in some nutrient loss (loss of water soluble vitamins but not the fat soluble). Greens shrink when cooked due to loss of moisture. They may shrink up to half of their original volume. Rapid cooking, such as in the microwave, with minimum water or by steaming, is best to minimize nutrient loss.

- 3. Research several cultures and describe how “greens” have played a role in traditional recipes. Where in the United States are cooked greens most commonly eaten? Interview family members or neighbors to find out which cooked greens they eat. Bring a recipe to share with class featuring your favorite cooked greens and key nutrient facts.**

Collard greens have been cooked and used for centuries. The Southern style of cooking greens came with the arrival of African slaves to the Southern colonies. As a time-honored tradition in Southern kitchens, greens have held an important place on the table. Greens are any sort of cabbage in which the green leaves do not form a compact head. These include broccoli rabe, collards, kale, mustard greens, Swiss chard, and turnip greens.

Sources:

www.ars.usda.gov/Services/docs.htm?docid=7783

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/month/greens.html

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