



The Kale Crusader Speaks

By Mahalia Freed, ND

Sunshine! Blossoms! Longer days! What do our bodies need, as we move gratefully into Spring & Summer and increased outward activity? Part of any naturopathic treatment plan is optimizing nutrition. Just as in a garden you prepare and enrich the soil before you plant, so food choices nourish your body, so that you may flourish and achieve your health goals. Whether your current concern is increasing energy or enhancing fertility, ensuring that your foundational nutrients are as strong as possible is a priority. And, it is something you can do for yourself and for those with whom you share meals.

Emerald green, nutrient-dense, fibre-rich and oh so satisfying, Kale is a powerhouse vegetable. I, as a Kale Crusader, am here to tell you some of the reasons why you should get to know this green, and add it to your vegetable roster!

Kale is a member of the cancer-fighting *Brassica* family, along with broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and bok choy. *Brassic*as contain *indole-3-carbinol*, a phytochemical that promotes healthy estrogen metabolism, making kale beneficial for all hormone-dependent conditions, from PMS to colon cancer. *Brassic*as are also rich in sulfur compounds, essential for healthy phase II liver detoxification as well as being protective against cancer. At 92 mg per cup of cooked greens, Kale is an excellent nondairy source of calcium. And with 2.6 g of fibre per cup of cooked greens, patients tell me kale is their secret to regular bowel movements!

While technically a “winter crop”, Kale grows well here in the summer and fall (plant some in your garden!) and is easy to find in your local market. Kale is classically delicious sautéed with garlic, and seasoned with lemon juice and tamari, but in honor of the season, I present a different green idea below. Do you have healthy & tasty recipes you would like to share? Send them in!

Here is a fantastic summer salad that I have enjoyed as a compliment to a meal of grilled veggies and organic sausages and veggie burgers. The strong flavour of toasted sesame and the subtle sweetness underlying the intensely salty sour of the vinegar balance out the kale quite beautifully.

Ishwar and Sheila’s Emerald Salad

Ingredients

1 bunch organic Green/Leafy Kale – washed, and very finely chopped, stems removed
1 bunch organic Black/Lacinato Kale – washed, and very finely chopped, stems removed
1 bunch organic Spinach – washed and very finely chopped, stems removed
1/2 -1 English Cucumber, chopped
1 Red Pepper, sliced
2-3 Carrots, grated
1/4 cup Toasted Sesame Seeds (optional)

Dressing:

1/4 cup Toasted Sesame Oil
1/4 cup Umeboshi Vinegar
Lemon Juice – about 1/2 a lemon
1/4 cup Olive Oil
1-3 cloves Garlic, Chopped or Pressed
* please note that all dressing quantities are approximations – chefs do things by taste ☺

Wash and chop veggies, and combine in a large salad bowl. Toast sesame seeds (if using) in a dry pan over medium heat, stirring constantly, until they brown and get fragrant, then remove from pan and set aside. Combine dressing ingredients in a jar and shake to blend thoroughly. Taste, and adjust seasonings as necessary. This should be a very strongly flavoured dressing. Pour dressing over greens, toss, and serve. Note that this salad gets easier to digest if the dressing sits on it for a bit, so go ahead and toss in advance of serving if you like!