

# Veggie of the Month

- *March* -

## Leafy Greens



### About

---

Leafy greens, the broad category of over 1,000 species of plants with edible leaves, can be used for much more than salads. While spinach, lettuce, arugula, kale, chard, dandelion and mustard are standards in salads and sandwiches around the world, they can also be prepared as side dishes, breakfasts, snacks and entrees in a variety of ways. As a group they are **incredibly nutritious** and pack a wallop of vitamins and minerals. Most have mild flavors and textures, but flavors are often enhanced when cooked properly. Dark leafy vegetables like collard greens and pokeweed are a staple of southern U.S. cuisine, but leafy greens can be found year-round in most parts of the country.

### Did You Know?

---

Just **half a cup of raw spinach** counts as 1 of the 5 servings of fruits and vegetables you should eat a day.

Arugula is also known as salad rocket and garden rocket, because of its rocket-fast growth speed.

Kale has **more vitamin C than an orange!**



## Shopper's Tips



Select the best leafy greens for you and your family! If you're only used to buying lettuce, try **spinach** for a more nutritious and versatile green that is still mild in flavor. From there, try more **flavorful** greens like kale, Swiss chard, beet greens, collards, and arugula.

Buy deeply colored greens that look fresh and sturdy, not wilted. Store in the crisper and make sure to wash well before using.

## Nutrition Highlights

- Leafy greens are widely considered some of the most nutritious vegetables that can be incorporated into every diet.
- Leafy greens are low in calories and fat and high in protein per calorie, dietary fiber, and vitamins C and K.

## Try This!

- Combine fresh leafy greens, frozen fruit, water and a protein like chia, hemp, or peanut butter in a blender for a tasty green breakfast smoothie.
- Blend spinach, basil, olive oil and pistachio or pine nuts in a food processor to make a leafy green pesto for sandwiches or pasta.
- Kale chips are an easy way to get kids to try the trendy veggie--adults love them as an alternative to potato chips, too.
- Add chopped greens like bok choy, chard, kale or cabbage to stir-fry or pasta dishes.
- Use large, flat-leaf greens like romaine lettuce or steamed collards as you would a tortilla to create healthier wraps.



[somerville.k12.ma.us/food-nutrition-services](http://somerville.k12.ma.us/food-nutrition-services)