

SPRING NUTRITION SPOTLIGHT

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING
SNAP-ED NEW YORK



SPRING PRODUCE

Springtime is often celebrated in many cultures as a time of renewal. As the first vegetables start to poke out after the frosts, it allows us to add fresh, lighter and brighter items to our recipes. Spring vegetables in the NYC region include: asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, herbs, lettuce, parsnip, radish, rhubarb, scallions, spinach, zucchini, and turnip greens.

Vegetables are an excellent source of fiber, vitamins, antioxidants, and potassium all known to help reduce our risk of chronic diseases.

Having trouble incorporating more veggies into your everyday routine? Try a snack board with mini cucumbers, snap peas, radish, carrots and your favorite dip. Tzatziki, hummus, black bean dip, and tahini are all excellent accompaniments to your favorite veggies.

Most vegetables can also be tossed with olive oil, salt, and pepper or whatever seasoning you prefer and roasted. Try changing up the method of preparation for vegetables to achieve different textures. Have you ever roasted cabbage or scallions in the oven? At high temperatures they develop a nice char while remaining tender and delicious!

DEBUNKING 4 NUTRITION MYTHS

MYTH: Fresh produce is always better than canned or frozen.

A lot of fresh produce is imported from far away states and even different countries. When this happens, that produce is picked prematurely before it's ready for consumption and is left to ripen on the back of a truck. Since fruits and vegetables get their nutrients from the plant, soil and sun, once it's picked its nutrient value starts to decline. Frozen produce is peaked at its peak, immediately washed chopped and flash frozen. This allows it to retain almost all of its nutrients. For anyone living alone who might not need so much of one fruit or vegetable, or someone with arthritis who may not be able to chop vegetables, frozen is a great option. Canned produce loses some vitamins in the canning process and may have added sodium. Rinsing the canned goods under cold running water helps remove it.

MYTH: White potatoes are not healthy.

Potatoes can get a bad reputation because of their starch content. Our body is able to quickly breakdown and digest the sugars in potatoes which can lead to a spike in our blood sugar levels. But the truth is, small portions, cooked healthily can be a beneficial source of vitamin C, potassium and fiber—especially when eaten with the skin. The healthier methods of preparation are roasting, baking, boiling and air frying. Watch out for potatoes in the form of french fries, and loaded mashed potatoes with cream, butter and gravy.



MYTH: Organic produce is always healthier.

Organic refers to the farming practices of the produce. Organic fruits and vegetables usually have less pesticide exposure, but nutritionally they are about the same as conventional produce. Organic produce will be more expensive since farmers are limited in which pesticides they are allowed to use, and how much. Pick what is right for you, and just be sure to give it a good rinse under water before eating.

MYTH: Eggs will raise my cholesterol.

This is a myth that has been around since the 1950's, Research has shown that most of the cholesterol in our body is made by our liver. It does not come from cholesterol we eat. What actually raises our cholesterol is saturated and trans fats. So the bacon, sausage and ham often eaten alongside our eggs is more likely to raise our cholesterol. Eggs contains healthy antioxidants for eye health, choline for brain and nerve health, vitamins A, B, and D. Eggs are a low calorie, low cost food with a lot of nutritional value. So eat the egg, and eat the whole egg!

BAKED KALE FRITTATA

INGREDIENTS (6 servings)

- Olive oil cooking spray
- 1 bunch of kale leaves (3 cups chopped)
- 1 large onion (1 cup chopped)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup grated low-fat cheddar cheese
- 5 eggs
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Coat 9-inch round baking pan with vegetable cooking spray.
2. Wash and chop kale. Chop onion.
3. Heat oil in large frying pan on medium-high. Add onion. Sauté 3 to 5 minutes, until soft and brown.
4. Stir in kale and water. Cover and cook 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat and allow mixture to cool.
5. In large bowl, combine eggs, milk, cheese, salt, and pepper. Blend in kale mixture.
6. Pour mixture into baking pan. Bake 20 min.
7. Remove from oven and let set for 2 to 3 minutes. Slice into 6 wedges.

*Not a fan of kale? Try mushrooms, spinach, or peppers instead.

Recipe and photo from: <https://snapedny.org/recipes/baked-kale-frittata/>

Look out for our quarterly nutrition newsletters for more nutrition tips and recipes!

