

Cooked Greens Teaching Points Grades 5-6

Reasons to Eat Cooked Greens

- Most cooked green varieties are an excellent source of vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin K (bok choy, collards, kale, Swiss chard).
- Vitamin A is important for healthy vision, vitamin C helps fight sickness, vitamin K is needed for proper bone growth and helps our blood clot.
- Some cooked green varieties are also a good source of calcium which plays a key role in teeth and bone health (bok choy and collards).



Just the Facts

- In Chinese, bok choy means “white vegetable.”
- Collard, mustard, and turnip greens are commonly known as “Southern greens.”
- Although it looks like romaine lettuce or celery stalks, bok choy is actually a type of cabbage.
- Swiss chard is a type of beet grown for its edible leaves.
- Some types of kale have flowers and are grown for their white, red pink, purple, and blue ornamental leaves.

How Much Do I Need?

- A serving of ½ cup cooked greens is about the same as two cups of raw leafy greens, because as you cook them they shrink in size.
- The amount of fruits and vegetables you need depends on your age, gender and physical activity level.
- All forms of fruits and vegetables count towards your daily amount. Leafy greens are available fresh, frozen and canned and are just as nutritious when cooked.

Home Grown Facts

- California leads the nation in production of mustard greens and ranks second for collard greens.
- Monterey County is California’s leading grower of most leafy green varieties because they grow best in cooler weather.

A Leaf of Cooking Greens History

- Collards are the oldest leafy green within the cabbage family and were grown by the ancient Greeks and Romans.
- Like collards, kale descended from wild cabbage in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia.
- Bok choy is a descendant of Chinese cabbage that originated in China about 6,000 years ago.
- Swiss chard was first grown in Sicily (Italy), but a Swiss scientist was the first to name it.

Extension Ideas for Educators

Activities:

1. Thinking Map®: adapt to your students
2. Cooking in class:

Simmered Greens

Ingredients:

(Makes 32 tastes at 1/2 cup each)

- ½ cup olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced

- 4 onions, chopped
- 2 cups chopped green onion

- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 cups tomato juice
- 4 pounds greens (mixture of kale, mustard, collard, and turnip greens)
- Salt and pepper
- Small paper cups and forks

In large pot, sauté garlic and onions in oil. Add broth and juice. Bring to a boil. Add greens and seasonings. Cover and cook on low heat for 35 minutes or until tender. Serve warm.

Source: *Network for a Healthy California*, 2009

3. Physical Activity:

- Walking is one of the best ways to be active every day. Physical activity can improve student's learning. Encourage students to walk more—especially outside of school.
- Participate in any school activities celebrating International Walk to School Month in October.
- Have students make a pledge to walk a certain number of steps each day (e.g., 10,000 steps).

4. Cafeteria Connection:

- Suggest using local growers to supply greens for the salad bar- spinach, romaine lettuce, and cabbage.

5. School Garden:

- Visit your school or neighborhood garden to study the parts of the plant.
- Choose a leafy green vegetable plant. Identify the parts.
- Fall is a great time to plant leafy greens like kale, collards, and spinach. Refer to *How Do Cooking Greens Grow?* (page 2 of Educator newsletter) for growing information.
For more ideas, visit: www.csgn.org.

6. Student Advocates

- Encourage students and parents to get involved with International Walk to School month (October) and in assessing your community's needs for improved walking routes.
For more information, visit: www.saferoutesinfo.org.

7. Other Websites/Resources:

- For free nutrition education programs aligned to the California State Standards, visit www.dairycouncilofca.org For third and fourth grades, order the five lesson unit, "Nutrition Pathfinders."
- For a variety of nutritious recipes and Harvest of the Month materials, visit www.harvestofthemonth.com or <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov>.
- For more ideas on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity and food security and for more healthy recipes, visit www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net or www.cachampionsforchange.net.
- For additional classroom resources and materials, visit www.tcoe.org/nutrition and click on "Harvest of the Month."
- For information on the USDA's Food Guidance System (food pyramid), visit www.mypyramid.gov
- For more free/downloadable classroom materials, visit the Team Nutrition Resource Library at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/>

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