

Cooked Greens Teaching Points Grades K-2

Reasons to Eat Greens

- Most cooked green varieties are an excellent source of vitamin A and vitamin C (bok choy, collards, kale, Swiss chard).
- Vitamin A helps our eyes to see in low light and helps keep our skin healthy.
- Vitamin C helps keep us from getting sick.
- Some cooked green varieties are a good source of calcium (bok choy and collards).
- Calcium helps keep our teeth and bones healthy.



Just the Facts

- Collard, mustard and turnip greens are commonly known as “Southern greens”.
- In Chinese, bok choy means “white vegetable”.
- Even though it looks like celery stalks, bok choy is actually a type of cabbage.
- Swiss chard is a type of beet grown for its edible leaves.

How Much Do I Need?

- A ½ cup of cooked greens is about the same amount 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 how old you are, whether you are a boy or a girl, and how much physical activity you get each day.
- You can get leafy greens fresh, frozen, and canned and are just as nutritious when cooked.

Home Grown Facts

- California is #1 in growing mustard greens in America.
- Most leafy green varieties are grown in Monterey County because they grow best in cooler weather.

A Leaf of Cooking Greens History

- Swiss chard was first grown in Sicily (Italy), but the first person to name it was actually a Swiss scientist.
- The ancient Greeks and Romans grew collards many years ago. Collards are the oldest leafy green in the cabbage family.
- Bok choy came from Chinese cabbage. Chinese cabbage was a leafy green that grew in China about 6,000 years ago.
- Kale came from wild cabbage. Wild cabbage grew in Eastern Europe and some parts of Asia many years ago.

Extension Ideas for Educators

Activities:

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

Simmered Greens

Ingredients:

(Makes 32 tastes at ¼ 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 students' learning. Encourage students to walk more, especially outside of school.
- Participate in any school activities celebrating International Walk to School Month in October (visit: www.walktoschool.org for more information).

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.
- Fall is a great time to plant leafy greens like kale, collards and spinach.
For more ideas, visit: www.csgn.org.

6. Other Websites/Resources:

- For free nutrition education programs aligned to the California State Standards, visit www.dairycouncilofca.org For first and second grades, order the ten lesson unit "Healthy Choices, Healthy Me!"
- 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 more 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>.

This material was created and approved as an extension to Harvest of the Month produced by the California Department of Public Health, *Network for a Healthy California*, with funding from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. In California, food stamps provide assistance to low-income households, and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For food stamp information in Tulare County, call 1-800-834-7121. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.