

## KALE

**Common name:** Kale

**Botanical/scientific name:** *Brassica oleracea var. acephala*

**In season:** Kale is best grown in the winter months, but can be grown year-round in cooler regions.

**Varieties:** We tend to think of kale as being a green vegetable with curly leaves, but there are dozens of varieties available. Red-leaf kale is popular, as is Tuscan kale, which is also known as cavolo nero or "dinosaur kale".

Kale is certainly good for us to eat. For one, it's a member of the cruciferous family, the nutrient-rich group of vegetables that also includes broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. Kale is high in vitamin A, vitamin K, vitamin C and fibre. Like other cruciferous vegetables, kale also contains high levels of antioxidants.

Kale is a versatile ingredient. You can use raw leaves in salads, smoothies or cook it in soups, stews and risottos.

Good kale has an earthy flavour and tight, textured leaves. When shopping for kale, look for a firm bunch and avoid floppy leaves, which is a sign of age.

One of the great things about kale is that it tends to stay fresh for a little longer than other leafy green vegetables. For best results, store it in an airtight container to keep the moisture in.



When it comes to varieties, common Green or Curly Kale (left), with its curly leaves, is great for kale chips, salads and stews.

The more rustic Tuscan Kale (right) has a flatter and rougher leaf, and be used in Italian soups or in a delicious one-pot pasta.



### Kale Pesto

Kale - 3 large leaves  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 cloves garlic  
1/2 cup oil  
1/2 cup parmesan cheese  
Black pepper to taste

Toast dry walnuts on an oven tray lined with baking paper (don't burn).  
Bring a pot of water to the boil add salt and kale, cook until tender.  
Add all ingredients to a blender except oil and cheese.  
Pour oil in a gentle stream till blended.  
Put into a bowl and stir in cheese.  
NB. Recipe can be frozen.

### Kale Chips

Cut leaves into small squares, toss with olive oil, chilli flakes and salt flakes, then roast at 180°C for 10 minutes until crisp but still green.  
Delicious but don't go overboard on the salt flakes. Remember to preheat the oven before putting the kale tray into the oven.

### Kale Tortilla

90g kale leaves  
6 free range eggs  
Salt, to season  
2 tablespoons coconut oil, or oil or fat of your choice  
100g sweet potato peeled and cut into 8mm dice  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped  
40g sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds, toasted

Wash the kale leaves well to remove any grit, drain well, pat dry and set aside.  
Using a fork, lightly beat the eggs in a bowl and season with salt and freshly cracked pepper.  
Heat the oil or fat in a 24 centimetre non-stick pan over medium heat.  
Add the sweet potato and cook for 3 minutes, then decrease the heat, add the garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes until softened.  
Increase the heat to medium, add the kale and cook for one minute, stirring constantly.  
Spread out the kale and sweet potato into a single layer.  
Pour the beaten egg mixture into the pan and swirl around.  
Reduce the heat to low and cook, without stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until almost cooked through.  
Take off the heat, cover with lid and leave covered for 3 minutes to allow the residual heat in the pan to finish cooking the tortilla.  
Cut tortilla in half, slide onto warmed plates, sprinkle with seeds and a light squeeze of lemon.