



An equal opportunity/access/affirmative action/  
Pro-disabled and veteran employer  
Funder in part by the USDA

**Contact:** Denise Sullivan  
Nutrition & Health Education Specialist  
MU Extension-Jackson County  
816-482-5850  
[sullivanand@missouri.edu](mailto:sullivanand@missouri.edu)

**Date** January 8, 2020

## **Plants on Your Plate – Kale**

Kale...it often shows up after the new year in smoothie recipes and baked as a crispy chip as healthier alternative to snack chips. While I personally enjoy both of those preparation methods, I prefer kale mixed into a salad...either with other salad greens or in a hearty grain and green salad.

Though kale is available all year round, as a hearty cold-weather plant, it is more prevalent in the winter months since it can withstand snowy conditions. Kale is cruciferous vegetable and a 'cousin' to Brussels sprouts and cabbage.

Kale is one of the best sources of vitamin K, and also a good source of calcium, magnesium, vitamin A, folate and of course, fiber. Calcium, magnesium and vitamin K are important in bone health, while vitamin A is important to eye health. Folate is beneficial to heart health and is important for pregnant women in the prevention of neural tube defects. Kale has both soluble and insoluble fiber, which benefits both heart health and digestive health. People taking blood thinners should talk to their health care provider regarding high vitamin K vegetables.

Just as there are many varieties of lettuce, there are multiple varieties of kale available, so you want to choose the one most appropriate for your preparation method. *Curly kale* is the most common to find bundled in the produce aisle. The sturdy leaves are best separated from

the tough stem before sautéing or baking into a crispy chip. Curly kale can be used fresh in a salad, but needs to be massaged with oil and/or vinegar to soften the leaves and make them more palatable. *Tuscan kale*-also known as dinosaur kale-is similar in appearance to curly kale, but not as course and tough, making it more versatile for both cooked and raw preparations. Tuscan kale is a very popular last minute ingredient in soups and pasta dishes. *Red (or scarlet) kale* is similar in appearance to curly kale except for color and can be prepared similarly. Depending on specific variety, soil conditions and time of harvest, red kale may have vivid red stems and leaves or ruddy colored stems and grayish green leaves. *Baby kale* is a younger, more delicate variety, making it perfect for use in tossed green salads. Baby kale is my personal preference for smoothies, since it breaks down and blends in more completely.

If you haven't experimented with kale, I recommend that you start with baby kale as a baby step. You might even look for a prepared salad mix that contains baby kale and Brussels sprouts, because I have tried some tasty ones. Then, when you a feeling a little more adventurous, try the recipe below. It makes a great hearty lunch salad that packs well for school or work.

### **Kale and Wheat Berry Salad**

(serves 6)

#### *Ingredients*

- ½ cup dried wheat berries
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 tablespoons raspberry balsamic vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 5 cups chopped kale (try a mixture of Tuscan and red kale)
- ½ cup diced red onion
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese

#### *Preparation*

Rinse wheat berries. Combine with 4 cups water in a medium pot and bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to simmer. Cook, covered, until wheat berries are tender, 30 to 35 minutes. Stir in cranberries during the last minute of cooking. Drain and rinse with cold water. In large plastic bag, combine 1 tablespoon olive oil with kale and massage bag to soften kale leaves. Whisk remaining oil with vinegar, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in wheat-berry

mixture, kale, and onion. Sprinkle with crumbled cheese and serve immediately. Keeps well, refrigerated, up to 1 day.

**Nutrition information:** Calories: 198, Total Fat: 11g, Saturated Fat: 2g, Sodium: 192mg, Carbohydrates: 21g, Fiber: 3.5g, Protein: 5g

Recipe from personal files, analyzed by [verywellfit.com](http://verywellfit.com)



*MU Extension is a partnership of the University of Missouri campuses, Lincoln University, the people of Missouri through county extension councils, and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Visit our website at: <https://extension2.missouri.edu/>*

##