

Eat Kale!

Kale is a very handy ingredient for seasonal eaters as it is one of the few green vegetables that is more abundant and flavourful during the coldest months of the year. It can be substituted for cabbage or spinach and makes a fine side dish when blanched and sautéed with garlic (a little soy and a sprinkling of chopped, roasted nuts is a lovely addition). It also makes an excellent ingredient in hearty, warming soups, perhaps most magnificently demonstrated by the traditional Portuguese dish *Caldo Verde*.

HISTORY - Kale has been cultivated for over 2,000 years. In much of Europe it was the most widely eaten green vegetable until the Middle Ages when cabbages became more popular. Historically it has been particularly important in colder regions due to its resistance to frost. In nineteenth century Scotland *kail* was used as a generic term for 'dinner' and all kitchens featured a *kail-pot* for cooking.

BIOLOGY - A member of the same family as the cabbage - *Brassica oleracea* - most of the kale eaten in this country is curly leaved and belongs to the species *acephala*. Flat leaved kales are also grown but tend to be tougher and are now used mainly for animal feed.

NUTRITION - Kale is a nutritionally rich food containing:

- vitamins A, C and E
- a substantial mineral content including manganese, iron, calcium and potassium
- phytochemicals such as sulphoraphane (linked to cancer prevention)

BUYING - Kale should have a fresh green colour with moist, crisp, unwilted leaves. Young, small-leaved specimens are more tender; bigger leaves are well suited for use in soups.

STORING - Keep in a plastic bag in the fridge. Kale becomes increasingly bitter and strongly flavoured the longer it is kept and so is best eaten soon after buying.

COOKING - Scan the code below to view the recipe for '*Pepper ,spinach and coconut curry with crispy Kale*' on the seasonal recipes blog.



or visit: qmulsustainability.wordpress.com/recipes