



## Celebrate St. Patrick's Day With Healthy Green Foods



Green foods can help fight disease, provide vitamins and minerals (calcium, folate, vitamin C, and beta-carotene), are high in fiber, support a healthy digestive system and offer a boatload of health benefits. Try adding some of the following healthy green foods into your diet.

**Avocados:** Avocados are a fruit, not a veggie, and provide close to 20 essential nutrients, including fiber, potassium, Vitamin E, Vitamin K, B vitamins, and folic acid. They contain a lot of fat but it's monounsaturated fat or "the good fat" that can help lower cholesterol. Avocados also boost absorption of fat-soluble nutrients in foods that are eaten with it. Try adding avocados to salads, salsa, dressings and sauces.

**Edamame:** Edamame are soybeans and have been used for thousands of years in East Asia as a main source of protein. Because they are a complete protein, edamame is an excellent staple for vegetarian diets. They are also a good source of fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin A and iron. Try adding shelled edamame to salads, any veggie dish, soups, stews or munch on their own. Edamame in the pods (like you find at Asian restaurants) are readily available and make a great snack.

**Kale:** Kale is a nutritional powerhouse and is packed with Vitamins A, K and C, as well as, calcium, fiber, B vitamins, magnesium and a hit of Omega-3 fatty acids. Kale is simple to prepare and cooking it for a short period of time will preserve its nutrients, color and texture. Toss into salads and pasta, top pizza, add to stews and soups, or try kale chips. Simply rinse kale, dry thoroughly, tear into bite sized pieces and place on even layer in baking sheet. Drizzle a little olive oil on top, sprinkle with salt, pepper and any of your favorite dried herbs and spices. Bake 10-15 minutes at 375 degrees.

**Kiwi:** Kiwi is a bright source of potassium, Vitamin E, folate and fiber full of vitamin C. Research has shown kiwi to protect the DNA in our cells, assist with eye health and support a healthy cardiovascular system. Enjoy them on their own peeled or not (skin is edible and packed with fiber). Kiwi gives a tropical twist to smoothies, salads, cold soups, chutneys, oatmeal, dips and desserts.

**Fresh herbs:** In addition to kicking up the flavor of dishes, fresh herbs get an A+ for nutrition. Just like any leafy green, fresh herbs contain lots of vitamins and minerals including A, K & C, iron, B vitamins, calcium and a nutritional bonus of essential oils and antioxidants. The star players of this powerhouse group are oregano, sage, basil, parsley, rosemary, mint and thyme. Each type of herb offers something a little different to good health so use a variety to reap the most benefit. Add them to salads, pastas, sauces, desserts or any dish.

**Asparagus:** Asparagus is one of the top sources of the B vitamin and folate, which is essential for heart and cellular health. It's also a great source of fiber, vitamins A, C and K and is a natural diuretic. You may come across asparagus in 3 different colors; green, white and purple and they are all delicious and nutritious. Toss in to pasta, eggs, soups, stir-fries, rice, salads or simply drizzle with a little olive oil, salt and pepper then place in even layer on baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes.

**Cabbage:** Finally, in spirit of St. Patrick's Day, cabbage. Cancer prevention is the top contender in health research for this veggie with results attributing it to lowering the risk of various forms of cancer. Cabbage is rich in vitamins A, K and C, calcium, fiber and B vitamins. There are numerous different types of cabbage grown around the world but the ones we see most are green, red, savoy, bok choy and Napa. Cabbage can be eaten raw, tossed in salads, stirred in soups and stews or use it in place of bread for sandwiches.