

The Green Stuff

With St. Patrick's Day upon us, try these creative and healthy green dishes your family will be sure to love.

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My wife Debbie brought my boys to see the new Dr. Seuss movie. I always loved them! My favorite is Green Eggs & Ham, and with March being Dr. Seuss's birthday, and St. Patrick's day approaching, I would like to simply feature my favorite "green foods" which are healthy, complex, "super foods".

The most complete food on the planet is green food. They have a wealth of anti aging nutrients. It can be said that these foods have all the nutrients the human body needs to happily survive. Lack of green fruits and vegetables in your diet contributes to a deficiency of needed vitamins and minerals. Green foods pack more nutritional punch per ounce than any other foods on the planet and help in warding off dangerous intruders to the body. Green colored fruits and veggies contain a wide variety of vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals - plant compounds that help fight many diseases. While green food coloring is always available to color pretty much anything, why not simply opt for naturally occurring green foods?

These 10 fruits and vegetables are a part of the daily foods that you should learn to love if you don't already. They are certainly some of my favorites.

Artichokes - packed with vitamin C, folate and potassium. According to the USDA's top 100 antioxidant-filled foods, cooked artichokes ranked seventh! These are just delicious steamed with drawn butter or topped with herbed buttery breadcrumbs as a great appetizer.

Asparagus - an excellent source of thiamin & folate and a good source of fiber, iron, vitamin C and beta-carotene. I love these steamed, grilled, roasted or just about any way you can prepare them. For a refreshing and textured salad, combine asparagus with cucumbers, scallions, crumbled feta cheese and a tangy Dijon dressing.

Avocados - these fruits packed with heart-loving monounsaturated fat, contains a lot of healthy stuff including vitamin C, vitamin K, folate and potassium. These are high in calorie, so be careful not to binge on too much guacamole. If you like to start your day with a power shake, blend a green concoction of silken tofu, avocado, honey, and pear juice. Sounds a bit eccentric, but absolutely delicious!

Broccoli - part of the cabbage family and a close relative to cauliflower, kale, collard greens and Brussels sprouts. Veggies from this family contain plant compounds that have been shown to help fight cancer. One of the few vegetables that my kids will actually eat (of course topped with butter or some melted cheese). I love to prepare broccoli roasted until crispy, combined with fresh basil, thyme, and parmesan cheese to create a delicious side to any entrée.

Brussels sprouts - is a great source of vitamins A & C and has a fair amount of iron. Toss with a bit of fragrant olive oil, any fresh green herbs, salt and pepper and roast them until browned approximately 45 minutes.

Honeydew Melon - this sweet and juicy melon is perfect in smoothies, chilled soups and salads. It's a great source of antioxidants & vitamin C, which helps with healthy skin and hair. Serve with some fresh lime and mint, making one of the most refreshing breakfasts you can have.

Kale - known to be a "super food" is one of my favorite vegetables that we serve. Packed with vitamin A & C along with iron, calcium and folic acid, we use green and purple kale in many of our most popular salads. Try toasting large pieces of kale with a paste of ground nuts & spices to make the most delicious homemade kale chips. These have replaced Doritos in my house. Kale chips are also sold in many healthy markets or gourmet grocery stores. You will love them!

Kiwi - these bright green fruits contains more vitamin C than any other fruit (including the obvious orange). They're high in fiber, potassium and vitamin E. Once peeled, I quarter them and eat them like I would an apple. Make a green fruit salad with honeydew melon, green apples, kiwi, green grapes, mint & some chopped pistachios for an easy yummy treat any time of day.

Limes - really tart with more acid than lemons, this fruit is packed with antioxidants shown to help prevent hardening of the arteries and help fight cancer. I squeeze lime on fish, poultry, salads and serve in fun cocktails. The most delicious margaritas burst with freshly squeezed lime juice, tequila, Cointreau & sweetened with agave syrup.

Peas - there is nothing better than fresh ones from your market or local farm stand. They are a good source of heart healthy potassium and folate. Filled with fiber and protein, fresh peas make a delicious veggie sautéed with some diced onions, butter, salt, & pepper. If you want to splurge toss with some crispy crumbled bacon. You can also make a delicious pureed pea soup with snipped chives & minted crème fraîche.

So for those "Green Eggs and Ham...." I will not eat them in the rain. I will not eat them on a train. I do not like them here or there. I do not like them ANYWHERE! Now you really know how to get your green on. Eat, Love, Party!