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An introduction to kale, for many of us a complete stranger

Posted by What's Cooking team, October 20th, 2011

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It might seem a little strange to be talking about a green leafy vegetable in the middle of fall, but Kale is no ordinary cabbage! In Canada, kale is definitely one of the lesser known vegetables; and not always so easy to find in grocery stores. But I highly recommend that people take the time to get to know kale a little bit better. For instance, did you realize that kale actually prefers cold weather? It loves to grow up here north of the 49th parallel! In fact, Kale is said to have a sweeter and more pronounced flavour after it has gone through a frost.

This characteristic has made Kale a favourite ingredient in some traditional fall and winter meals in several Nordic countries.

In the Netherlands for example, there is a wintertime meal called "Stamppot"; a dish great for putting some meat on your bones. It includes potatoes, sausage and kale as main ingredients.

The Irish have a traditional Halloween dish, *colcannon*, which also calls for potatoes and kale, and is usually served with sausages (apparently these three ingredients are a winning comfort food combination).

A Christmas buffet staple in Sweden, Denmark and Holland is the creamed kale dish called *grönlingkål* (usually served as a side to pork). Until the middle ages, kale was one of the most common green vegetables in Europe, and is still very popular there today.

In these traditional recipes the kale is boiled along with other vegetables, but this is not the best way to benefit from its amazing nutritional properties. Did I mention that kale is a wonder food? It's right up there with broccoli! The ideal way to cook kale is by lightly steaming it, or stir frying isn't bad either. Then you can toss it with a little Asian-style dressing, some toasted almonds and pepper flakes. So simple yet so delicious!

Are you already familiar with kale? If so, how do you like to prepare it?

The Research Team

Keywords : fall vegetables, fresh vegetables, local produce, nutritious