



## Stress-Relieving Massaged Kale Salad

You have probably heard about what a nutritional powerhouse kale is, but may not have tried it because you are not sure how to make it. This is a great way to try kale, and it has the bonus of being a stress reliever.

- Rinse a bunch of kale and strip the leafy parts from the stem
- Cut or tear the leaves into salad sized pieces
- Put the kale pieces into a zip topped plastic bag
- Add a drizzle of good quality oil and some lemon juice (for approximately 2 cups of kale, add 2 tablespoons of oil and 1 ½ tablespoons of lemon juice. This is a guide, adjust according to your taste)
- Squeeze the air out of the bag and seal it tightly

Now, here comes the stress relieving part...

- Squeeze the bag for five minutes or so. Keep massaging the kale, breathing slowly and deeply as you do. Keep your jaw relaxed, and your tongue on the bottom of your mouth
- Let the kale sit in the bag for a few minutes more
- Add to other greens or use it alone as your salad base

The squeezing and the acid in the lemon juice break down the fibers in the kale so it is easier to eat. Vinegar can also be used, but it will need more massaging and resting time to get the same texture as lemon juice. Let your preference be your guide.

## Salad with a Capital “S”

We have all heard about the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, but still only about 10% of Americans meet the recommended lower limit of 5 a day. One way to get closer to the goal is to make a salad part of at least one meal every day. We’re not talking about the small bowl of iceberg lettuce with a tomato wedge covered in dressing. We’re also not talking about the smothered-in-cheese-bacon-bits-and-meat-in-a-taco-shell-bowl “salad” in name only. We’re talking about Salad-with-a-capital-“S”-loaded-with-vegetables-that-cause-a-taste-explosion-in-your-mouth SALAD.

Here is how: start with a base of leafy greens. Organic, if available, is the best choice. Darker colored leaves often have more nutrients. Combining different lettuces (after washing and drying them) can add interesting flavors and textures. For example:

- **Bibb or Boston** - softer leaves and a mild taste
- **Romaine or Cos** – firm leaves, the go-to for classic Caesar salad, but also works well with other greens
- **Red or Green leaf** – another variety with softer leaves and sweetish, mild taste
- **Iceberg** - crisp, pale green with a very mild taste
- **Radicchio** – red colored, with a mild bitter taste
- **Arugula** – mild pepper taste, it is a good source of calcium and is great mixed with other lettuces
- **Kale** – comes in curly or flat leaf, a little bitter but a nice addition to any of the above varieties
- **Spinach** – soft, mild taste which combines well with any of the other varieties
- **Spring mix or mesclun** - combination of small, young greens

Once the base is set, start getting creative. Think in terms of different colors. In the produce aisles, look around and choose something from each color family. Try to include at least five different colors in your salad and think about adding something you haven’t eaten in the past week.

Peppers come in red, orange, yellow, and purple, not just green. Tomatoes can be yellow, orange, pink, striped, and dark green. Some are mild, some are sweeter, and some are low in acid. Check out cherry tomatoes and heirloom tomatoes. Heirlooms come from tomatoes which have had their seeds passed down through generations for at least 50 years.

Other options are:

- Snap peas
- Zucchini and yellow squash
- Mushrooms
- Carrots
- Green beans
- Broccoli and cauliflower florets
- Radishes
- Chopped onion (red, green, yellow, sweet)
- Celery
- Cucumbers
- Artichoke hearts
- Chopped or shredded cabbage (red or green)
- Beets
- Jicama
- Defrosted frozen mixed vegetables (corn, peas, green beans)
- Brussels sprouts – raw ones taste milder than cooked ones and are full of powerful antioxidants. They can be shredded, or thinly sliced for a nice addition to your greens.



MIND ▸ BODY ▸ SPIRIT

### *Building a Better Salad, continued*

Don't forget roasted vegetables. Roasting brings out the sweetness in many vegetables, like cauliflower, and onions. Try roasted asparagus spears or eggplant slices. Simply place pieces that are about the same size on a baking sheet, drizzle with good quality oil, and roast at 400° for 20-30 minutes, tossing periodically until soft and browned on the edges or done to your liking. Raw vegetables can be diced, sliced, spiralized, or grated to change the texture and make your salads more interesting.

#### **Some excellent plant-based protein additions are:**

- Beans: Edamame (soybeans), garbanzo, black, navy, or kidney (1/2 cup). If using canned, rinse canned beans under cold water to remove some of the added sodium.
- Hummus (2 Tablespoons)
- Peas, cooked quinoa or lentils (1/2 cup)
- Chia, hemp, sunflower, pumpkin or sesame seeds (2- 4 Tablespoons)
- Tofu chunks (1/2 cup)
- Nutritional yeast (1-2 Tablespoons)

#### **Add some healthy fats:**

- Olives
- Avocado slices or a tablespoon of guacamole
- A handful of almonds, pecans, walnuts, or other nuts



- Homemade vinaigrette dressing made with cold pressed oil, vinegar, and herbs of your choice. Making your own is easy, tastes good, and adds important nutrients to your diet not found in commercially made dressings.

#### **Extras:**

- A small amount of dried fruit (no sugar added), for example 1 tablespoon of raisins or dried cranberries, or a few chopped dates or prunes
- Some sliced fruit like apple, mango, or pear, or a cup of berries or pomegranate seeds
- Fresh herbs, like basil, mint, oregano, parsley, or thyme
- Cooked grains like wheat berries, couscous, barley or rice (1/2 cup) – these can be made ahead and kept in the refrigerator

- Hard cooked eggs
- Small amount of salmon, tuna, chicken or other animal protein (1 - 3 ounces), preferably organic, wild caught, pasture raised, or grass fed depending on the type of protein

Investing some time once a week to prepare vegetables and add-ons so they are readily available will simplify the salad construction process. For family dinners, serve the add-ons in separate bowls and let each member choose their favorites for a custom creation.

Storage containers (glass is recommended) can extend the life of your prepared vegetables slightly, but it is best to use your produce within a few days of purchasing for maximum flavor and nutrients.



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