

OLYMPIA FOOD CO-OP'S PRODUCE NEWSLETTER

Volume 9; Issue 105 March 1-31, 2017

Enjoying Brassicas In March



Vegetables in the brassica family (also called cruciferous vegetables) are packed with nutrients. They are also versatile, easy to prepare, and in March, usually very inexpensive.

Brassicas include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, collard greens, mustard greens, romesco, and turnips.

Below is a summary of their nutritional benefits from whfoods.org:

*Brassicas are high in vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, folic acid, and fiber.

*Two additional macronutrients, proteins and fats, also deserve special mention with respect to recent research ... (Brassicas) can

contribute a surprising amount of protein to the diet — over 25% of the Daily Value in 3 cups — and at a very low calorie



cost... (additionally), 100 calories worth of crucifers typically gives us somewhere between one-third and one-half of a gram of omega-3 fat (333-500 milligrams).



*As impressive as they are in terms of their conventional nutrient content, cruciferous vegetables are even more renowned for their phytonutrients.

During the past five years, cruciferous vegetables have largely taken over the world of research in the area of glucosinolates... what's so special about glucosinolates is their



Produce Drive

for

Thurston County Food Bank

The Thurston County Food Bank will be at both Co-op locations on March 25th from 10am-3pm collecting much-needed produce for food bank recipients. Drop by the Co-op and buy a few extra produce items for those in need!



The Produce Weather Report

Each week one of our distributors, Organically Grown Company, sends us reports about crop availability and how weather may be affecting quality and sourcing. Here's what they had to say about the availability of produce from California this spring: "It's been a wild ride on the entire West Coast this winter with parts of California already getting hit with three times their average annual rainfall, and we're not even done with February yet. In the short term, this means harvest delays and potential quality challenges coming out of the fields... desert regions are predicted to finish up earlier than usual, and the northern growing areas of Salinas, Santa Maria and Oxnard have been hit hard. This is likely to throw off planting schedules, leading to gaps and potential market shortages in April and May." It's a tough time to be a farmer in California—a lengthy drought followed by a massive deluge of rain is causing many problems. As always, the Co-op will do our very best to source quality produce for you, our wonderful shoppers. If we're out of one variety, this may be the spring to try something new!

Perfect Broccoli

If you've ever wondered how good restaurants always seem to have perfectly cooked broccoli, wonder no more! The secret is submerging it in an ice bath as soon as it is just tender to prevent it from cooking any further. I like to lightly steam broccoli in a basket steamer, but you could also briefly blanch/boil it. I keep an eye on it while it's steaming and once it turns bright green, I taste it every few minutes until it is just right. Have a big bowl of ice water ready and plunge the broccoli into the ice water bath as soon as it tastes tender. Then drain it in a colander, and either serve cold (as in a vegetable salad) or heat some olive oil in a pan, add a little chopped garlic, sauté for a couple of minutes, then add the broccoli and a sprinkle of salt for a brief sauté/warm up.

Enjoying Kale, Collards, and Mustard Greens

Hearty greens are very nutrient rich and are good sources of fiber, protein, iron, Vitamins A, C, & K, Calcium, and Potassium. They can be eaten raw or cooked. Each green has its own unique flavor profile, so if you don't like one, try another to see if it suits you better! The softer a green, the less time it will take to cook. Some very soft greens (like mustard greens) can be stirred into a pot of soup at the end with no additional cook time for a great and easy nutritional boost. Kale salads offer a quick and sturdy base for other ingredients, and don't get soggy in the fridge when dressed ahead of time. Just role up the leaves and slice into ribbons, and massage lightly with your dressing of choice.

Using Collard Greens as Tortillas

Collard greens are easy to wrap and roll, they have a mild flavor and a nice texture, and they are super nutritious. I often fill collard greens with a brown rice and black bean salad topped with chunks of avocado. They would also be really tasty with hummus and veggies, but really anything you can put in a tortilla would be great in these. I think collard green wraps would also make really pretty and unique appetizers. There is a good tutorial hereon how to wrap them. The long and short of it is to use them as you would a regular tortilla; lay a whole collard leaf flat, remove the stem, place whatever filling you are using in the middle, fold the sides in, and roll. Easy, tasty, and so good for you!

Roasted Curried Cauliflower

Bon Appétit, September 2004

12 cups cauliflower florets (from about 4 pounds cauliflower)

1 large onion, peeled, quartered

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

3/4 cup olive oil

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

3 1/2 teaspoons curry powder

1 tablespoon Hungarian hot paprika

1 3/4 teaspoons salt

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Preheat oven to 450°F. Place cauliflower florets in large roasting pan. Pull apart onion quarters into separate layers; add to cauliflower. Stir coriander seeds and cumin seeds in small skillet over medium heat until slightly darkened, about 5 minutes. Crush coarsely in mortar with pestle. Place seeds in medium bowl. Whisk in oil, vinegar, curry powder, paprika, and salt. Pour dressing over vegetables; toss to coat. Spread vegetables in single layer. Sprinkle with pepper.

Roast vegetables until tender, stirring occasionally, about 35 minutes. (Can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Warm in 450°F oven 10 minutes, if desired.)

Mound vegetables in large bowl. Sprinkle with fresh cilantro. Serve warm or at room temperature.

