

The Power of Green

Go green, eat green, drink green, be green, and live green. This is the anthem of a new generation of conscientious people who desire to live healthy and in harmony with nature. Living green means living closer to nature and the abundance it provides. The term 'green' in relation to food encompasses nature's most abundant super foods. Green foods exist in the form of plant vegetation, sea vegetables and fresh water algae. These green foods are found in almost every region and exist to support life at all levels

On a calorie by-calorie-basis, green vegetables contain substantially more fiber than whole grains. For example, 2 pieces of whole-wheat bread contain approximately 140 calories, only 4 grams of fiber, and 140 milligrams (mg) of potassium. In contrast, 2 cups of broccoli contain only 87 calories, but more than 9 grams of fiber and about 1,000 mg of potassium. And 5 cups of romaine lettuce (about the size of a large salad) provide only 80 calories, but 5 grams of fiber and 580 mg of potassium.

To understand the role green vegetables can play in your nutritional health, particularly when combined with other healthy foods such as fruit, consider that by eating 2 apples, 2 oranges, 2 cups of broccoli, and 5 cups of romaine lettuce on a daily basis, you would get approximately 450 calories, 28 grams of fiber, and more than 2,400 mg of potassium. The average American consumes only 15 grams of fiber per day; **the typical recommendation is to get 25-30 grams per day** (even that amount is likely too low).

Nutritional Powerhouses

Pound for pound, calorie for calorie, green vegetables pack a nutritional wallop - just look at the nutritional profile for relatively small portions of these six popular green foods, courtesy of the **Food and Drug Administration**.
(Note: DV = recommended daily value based on 2,000 calorie daily diet)

Vegetable	Calories	Fiber	Potassium	Vitamin A (% DV)	Vitamin C (% DV)	Calcium (% DV)	Iron (% DV)
Asparagus (5 spears)	20	2 g	230 mg	10%	15%	2%	2%
Broccoli (1 medium stalk)	45	3 g	460 mg	6%	220%	6%	6%
Bell pepper (1 medium)	25	2 g	220 mg	4%	190%	2%	4%
Leaf lettuce (1.5 cups shredded)	15	1 g	170 mg	130%	6%	2%	4%
Celery (2 medium stalks)	15	2 g	260 mg	10%	15%	4%	2%
Cucumber (1/3 medium)		10	1 g	140 mg	4%	10% 2%	2%

Healthy Recipe

Dietitian's tip: Firm pears, such as Bosc, are best for grilling. If you choose not to grill, try Asian pears for a more crunchy texture. The nutrient values are similar. By Mayo Clinic staff

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar

1 tablespoon water

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons chopped walnuts

2 firm yet ripe pears, cored and cut into 6 lengthwise wedges, peel intact

Lemon juice for brushing

For the vinaigrette

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, plus extra for brushing

1 tablespoon rice vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon minced shallot

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese

Directions

Prepare a hot fire in a charcoal grill or heat a gas grill or broiler (grill). Away from the heat source, lightly coat the grill rack or broiler pan with cooking spray. Position the cooking rack 4 to 6 inches from the heat source.

In a small frying pan over medium heat, combine the brown sugar, water and pepper. Cook, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves. Stir in the walnuts, reduce the heat to low and cook for 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and quickly spread the nuts on a sheet of parchment (baking) paper or a plate. Set aside and let cool.

Brush the pear wedges with lemon juice and arrange on the grill or broiler pan. Grill or broil, turning once, until the pears begin to brown, 3 to 4 minutes total. Set aside.

To make the vinaigrette, in a small bowl, whisk together the 2 tablespoons lemon juice, rice vinegar, mustard and shallot. Add the salt and pepper and whisk to blend. While whisking, slowly add the olive oil in a thin stream until emulsified.

In a large bowl, combine the watercress and blue cheese. Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and toss gently to mix well and coat evenly.

To serve, divide the salad among individual plates. Place 2 pear wedges on each, then sprinkle with the walnuts.

Nutritional Analysis (per serving)

Calories	101	Monounsaturated fat	2 g
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Protein	2 g	Cholesterol	3 mg
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Carbohydrate	13 g	Sodium	184 mg
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Total fat	5 g	Fiber	2 g
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Saturated fat	1 g
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