

Produce of the Month

# Broccoli

**Welcome!** Broccoli, a member of the cabbage family and a close relative of cauliflower, is often times referred to as a "super food", and rightfully so. This lush green vegetable provides not only a variety of textures, from the soft florets to the crunchy stems, but also a wealth of nutritional benefits. Broccoli is also quite versatile, making for a delicious addition to salads in raw form and a popular ingredient in many dishes in cooked form.

Of course, cooked broccoli all by itself is a tasty side dish, and raw broccoli can make a great snack.

Whatever way you prefer to enjoy broccoli, you always know you'll be enjoying a vegetable with a nutritional content that's hard to beat.

Sources: WHFoods.com

## How Broccoli Is Good For You

You can tell that broccoli is good for you just by looking at it and its lush green color. You know there's lots of nutrition packed inside, but how much? Take a single boiled stalk of broccoli, medium in size (7 - 8 inches) for example which packs 318% daily value of Vitamin K. You read that right...318 percent! Figures for other vitamins are equally impressive, with 195% DV Vitamin C and 56% DV Vitamin A.

Broccoli also comes packed with a wealth of important minerals, including potassium, calcium, phosphorus, manganese and magnesium. Broccoli also contains beta carotene, which not only provides a large amount of the vegetable's Vitamin A through a conversion process that takes place inside the body, but also serves as an immune system booster and an antioxidant, preventing cell damage by oxygen!

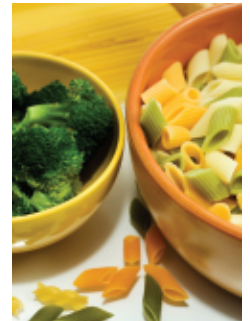


Sources: NutritionData.com, BellyBytes.com

## A Tasty Treat To Try At Home

### Lemon Garlic Broccoli Pasta

- 2** heads fresh or 1 (14oz) bag frozen broccoli
- 2 quarts** water
- 1** pound whole wheat penne noodles
- 2 tbsp** olive oil
- 1 tbsp** lemon juice (fresh or bottled)
- 2** cloves minced fresh garlic or 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp** salt
- 1 tsp** red pepper flakes, optional



#### METHOD

1. If you're using fresh broccoli, wash and cut it into florets.
2. Boil the water in a covered medium sized pot. When the water boils, add the whole wheat penne noodles.
3. As soon as the water returns to a boil, set the timer for 5 minutes.
4. When the timer goes off, add the broccoli to the pasta and continue cooking.
5. Set the timer for 5 minutes.
6. When the timer goes off, drain the broccoli and pasta. Set aside.
7. In a medium sized bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and red pepper flakes. Stir to mix well.
8. Pour the lemon juice mixture over the hot broccoli and pasta. Stir to combine.
9. Enjoy!
10. Leftovers: Cover and put in refrigerator for up to 3 days

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## How to Buy, Store and Best Prepare Broccoli

When choosing fresh broccoli from the produce section of your local market, avoid buying stalks with mushy or open heads, yellowing or open flowers. The bud clusters should be nice and firm with a good green color. Avoid broccoli with limp stems, as well as overly-mature broccoli which will end up with a tough texture.

Just like any fruit or vegetable, it is very important to thoroughly wash broccoli before eating it. However, if you will be storing your broccoli in the refrigerator, wait to wash until you are ready to cook it. Water in the bud clusters can easily harbor bacteria. If you choose to refrigerate your broccoli for later use, be sure to consume it within a couple of days. For long term storage, you can freeze broccoli.

Unlike some other produce, broccoli retains a good amount of its nutrient content when cooked. The best ways to cook broccoli for maximum health benefits are steaming, boiling and stir-frying. Even after cooking, broccoli has more Vitamin C than oranges and nearly the same amount of calcium as you would find in milk! But whatever you do, don't microwave your broccoli unless you want to eliminate almost all of its nutrition! In fact, a recent study showed broccoli loses up to 97% of some major antioxidant compounds when cooked in the microwave. So stick to steaming, boiling and stir-frying to get the most out of broccoli!

Sources: Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association, WHFoods.com, BellyBytes.com

## Notable Quotable

*"Never eat broccoli when there are cameras around." - Michael Stipe, lead vocalist for R.E.M.*

## Did You Know That ...

- Broccoli was first cultivated in Italy, where it is known as "broccolo".
- Broccoli is believed to have been around for about 2,500 years and was quite popular with ancient Romans.
- "Broccolo" translates as "cabbage sprout".
- The name "broccoli" is ultimately derived from the Latin word "brachium", which means "branch" or "arm".
- There is 8 times as much beta carotene in broccoli sprouts as there is in the stalks.
- Broccoli made its way to France in the 1500s and England in the 1700s.
- Broccoli was first grown in the United States in the 1920s by Italian immigrants who planted the vegetable in their gardens at home.
- Ninety percent of all broccoli in the United States is grown in California.
- Some broccoli takes on a purplish green color.
- Although available year round, broccoli is best from October through May.

Sources: WHFoods.com, Dole Fruit & Vegetable Encyclopedia, BellyBytes.com

## The Word(s) on Broccoli

Below are a number of facts about broccoli, but one word has been removed. Try to figure out what word should be added to make the statements complete.

1. The Italian word for broccoli is "\_\_\_\_\_".
2. Broccoli contains \_\_\_\_\_, which the body easily converts into Vitamin A but also serves as an immune system booster and antioxidant.
3. Broccoli loses most of its nutrition when cooked in the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. All but 10% of broccoli grown in the U.S. comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Cooked broccoli has more \_\_\_\_\_ than oranges.
6. When refrigerated, broccoli should only be \_\_\_\_\_ right before cooking.
7. Broccoli was popular with the ancient \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Broccoli first appeared in England in the \_\_\_\_\_ century.
9. A medium stalk of broccoli is defined as 7 \_ to \_\_\_ inches long.
10. Broccoli is best from the month of \_\_\_\_\_ through May.

Answers: 1: broccolo, 2: beta carotene, 3: microwave, 4: California, 5: Vitamin C, 6: washed, 7: Romans, 8: 18th, 9: 8, October



## For More Information

For more information about broccoli, please contact:

*Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association,  
WHFoods.com,  
BellyBytes.com  
Dole Fruit & Vegetable Encyclopedia*