

KALE

Substitutions: Collards, turnip greens, beet greens, broccoli raab, mustard greens, dandelion, spinach and Swiss chard. Although greens have distinctive flavors that lend them to a particular preparation, they can be used interchangeably in recipes.

To store: Place kale unwashed, wrapped in a sealed plastic bag in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. Best used very fresh, but may last for a week.

Handling: Wash leaves in basin of cool water to remove grit. If the greens have thick stems, you must remove them. Fold each leaf in half and slice out the stem. Then stack the leaves up and slice them diagonally into 1-inch-wide strips.

To cook: Saute greens until tender in a covered pot or large sauté pan with olive oil, a pinch of salt, and garlic or onion. You can cook in bouillon to take a bit of the edge off the flavor. Blanch greens until they wilt, 6-10 minutes. Dot the cooked greens with butter or cream and season with fresh herbs or salt and pepper. Try serving cooked greens alone as a side dish or use them in soup or with pasta, beans, rice, or potatoes. Add a few sliced kale greens to soups and stews during the last 10 minutes of cooking time. Add sautéed kale to omelets, quiches, scrambled eggs, or casseroles.

To freeze: Blanch washed greens for 2-3 minutes. Rinse in cold ice water to stop the cooking process, drain, and pack into airtight containers.