



# RECIPE for health

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featured food:

**KALE**

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You may have heard. Kale is the new spinach. Kale's surge in popularity may be related to its hardiness in our northern climate. Or that it has a distinctively rich, almost sweet flavor. Or that you can hardly go wrong in preparing it.

Varieties commonly found in the grocery store (Scotch kales) have curly leaves with a thick, sturdy stem. You'll find other varieties such as Lacinato (also called Dinosaur and Tuscan—long, bumpy blue-green leaves) and Siberian (Russian—flat, gray-green leaves) at farmers' markets.

The freshest kale will have firm, deep-colored leaves and sturdy stems. Store it unwashed in an air-tight bag for up to 5 days. Before preparing kale, remove stems and ribs then wash the leaves in several changes of cool water. If you buy bagged greens (prewashed), storage life is short—use or blanch them within a day or two.

In addition to this month's recipe, here are **4 more ways to prepare kale:**

**Kale chips** in microwave. Use Lacinato kale. Dry leaves thoroughly and tear into 2- to 3-inch pieces. Toss with small amount of oil. Working in batches, spread leaves in a single layer on a dinner plate. Sprinkle with kosher salt. Microwave 3 minutes; continue in 30-second increments until crispy. Repeat for remaining batches.

**Tenderize for salads.** Stack leaves and cut into ¼-inch ribbons. Use your fingertips to knead and squeeze Scotch kale for 5 minutes, other types for 1 minute.

**Pan steam.** In heavy pan, cook garlic in olive oil. Add damp chopped kale to pan, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Season to taste.

**Slow braise.** In heavy pan, cook onions in olive oil. Add damp chopped kale and cook until kale begins to wilt. Add 2 cups liquid, cover and cook until leaves are tender, about 30 minutes. Uncover, increase heat and cook until liquid evaporates. Season to taste.

## Kale and Lentil Stew

*Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 8-10.*

- 1 pound (2 ¼ cups) French green lentils, sorted and rinsed
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cups diced yellow onions
- 3 cups medium diced celery
- 3 cups medium diced carrots
- 1 Tablespoons minced garlic
- 3 Tablespoons tomato paste
- 8 ounces beer (I prefer a nice hoppy IPA type beer)
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 1-14oz can diced tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 small bunch Tuscan kale, center ribs and stems removed, leaves coarsely chopped
- 1 Tablespoon minced thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Freshly grated pecorino Romano cheese

Place lentils in a large bowl; add boiling water to cover. Allow to sit for 15 minutes; drain.

Meanwhile in a large stockpot over medium heat, heat olive oil and sauté onions, celery, and carrots for 10 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for one minute. Add tomato paste and sauté for another minute.

Deglaze pot with beer. Stir in broth, tomatoes and cumin. Bring to a boil, add the lentils then reduce heat to low and let simmer for 10 minutes, add kale and continue simmering until kale is tender and lentils are cooked through, about 20 minutes.

Add thyme, taste stew and adjust seasoning as needed with salt and pepper. Garnish with freshly grated cheese and serve.

Try **Kale and Lentil Stew** for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Brody Square and Riverwalk Market at Owen on March 19.