

## FEATURED INGREDIENT: COLLARD GREENS

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KITCHEN



Photo: Love+Craft Kitchen

Not as flashy and famous as its close cousin, Kale, **Collard Greens** are oftentimes overlooked and underestimated. These large, leafy greens may be a bit of a wall flower, yet they should be confident in their place on our dinner menus. Collards are dynamos of “do your body good” nutrients - being excellent sources of vitamins C, K and A, fiber, antioxidants, and amino acids that help reduce inflammation, detox, cleanse, fight disease and boost immunity. Whew! How’s that for the strong, silent type.

Collards have a long culinary history dating back to ancient Greece and they have consistently been present in many cultures. Today, people in the United States most often associate collards with southern cooking, but they are also grown and regularly used in traditional and contemporary dishes in Portugal, Brazil, northern Spain, Africa, Kashmir and the Balkans.

Some examples include:

- Caldo Verde - Portuguese “green broth or soup”
- “Haak” or “Hakh” - stewed collards seasoned with spices in the Kashmiri region of India
- “Couve a Mineira” - a Brazilian dish of sautéed collard greens in olive oil and butter

### Fun Facts

- Eating collard greens and black-eyed peas on New Year’s Day is a tradition for many. It is believed that doing so will bring wealth and good luck for the coming year!
- On June 2, 2011, collard greens became the official state vegetable of South Carolina. (Senate Bill No 823).

### SELECT and STORE

Collard greens are easily found year-round in grocery stores and at farmers markets beginning in May. Look for dark green leaves that are fresh, crisp and full, avoiding those that are wilted or bug infested.

Thoroughly wash the leaves before storing or using. Shake off excess water, then wrap them in a paper towel or tea towel. Collards store well in the refrigerator (high humidity storage bin) for up to a week, sometimes slightly longer. They can also be blanched or fully cooked and frozen for up to 3 months.

## USE

Collard greens are easy to add to your menus. Both the leaves and stems are edible, yet the stems may be tough and require additional cooking time. If serving raw, stems are oftentimes removed.

Here are a few easy suggestions -

- chop or shred and add to scrambled eggs, omelets or frittatas
- use the leaves as a wrap
- shred or chop for use in raw salads
- sauté, braise or steam with garlic, onions and any other seasonings for a side dish
- add to soups, stews, chili, pasta, dips, sauces and smoothies

When braising collard greens, save the liquid as it contains all the high-powered nutrients from the leaves. Drink it as is, or add it to soups or smoothies.

For a few more ideas on how to enjoy collard greens, check out [“10 Delicious Ways to Eat Collard Greens”](#) from *the Kitchn*.

## RECIPE

### [Collard Greens Salad with Black-Eyed Peas](#)

