



Bored with lettuce? Be bold with greens

I'm interested in trying some different kinds of greens for my salads, but I'm not sure what would be the best choices. Any ideas?

If your grocery store's produce section is anything like mine, you have lots of choices. And you're right, it can seem a bit overwhelming to step beyond traditional lettuce (whether it's loose-leaf, iceberg or romaine) and, well, turn a new leaf in your salad-making.

Here are some popular non-lettuce salad greens, with a bit of information about each.

- **Spinach.** Spinach sold in the produce section tends to be the young, tender leaves perfect for salads. Spinach has a mild flavor and is a good source of vitamins A, C, E, K and B6; folate and riboflavin; and calcium, iron and several other minerals.

- **Arugula.** This leafy green is a member of the mustard family and a relative of the radish, and it carries a strong flavor sometimes described as "peppery," "pungent" or "zesty." The smaller, younger leaves tend to be a bit more mild. It's a good source of iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C.

- **Radicchio.** This member of the chicory family looks a bit like red and white cabbage. Radicchio can be bitter but mixes well with other greens and offers variety in flavor and color. Unlike other greens, it's not a good source of vitamin A, calcium or iron but does offer vitamins C, E and K;

folate; and some potassium, copper and manganese.

- **Endive.** Several types of endive, another member of the chicory family, are available. Curly endive has yellow-green curly leaves. Belgian endive is almost white and grows as a small, elongated head. Escarole has broad leaves — its outer, darker leaves are more bitter than the inner pale leaves. Endive is a good source of vitamins A, C, K, thiamin, riboflavin, folate, pantothenic acid, calcium, iron, potassium, zinc, copper and manganese.

- **Watercress.** The small, deep-green leaves of watercress have a peppery or spicy flavor — again, a good item to mix with milder-tasting greens. It's often used as a garnish (whatever happened to parsley?) but try it on sandwiches as well as salads. It won't give you iron, but you'll get a good dose of vitamins A, C, E, K, and B6; thiamin and riboflavin; and calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and manganese.

If you still can't decide, a good source of information — with color photos to help you identify the greens — is offered by Colorado State University Extension at <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/>. Search for "salad greens" and open "Health Benefits and Safe Handling of Salad Greens."

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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**For the week of
Aug. 5, 2007**

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