



## Minty Kale Pesto

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 10 / **Cook Time** / **Serves** 4 - 6

## Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**knife skills:** Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls) and Rock and Saw.

**blend:** to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

**chop:** to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

**juice:** to extract or squeeze out the juice of a fruit or vegetable, like a lemon, orange, or carrot, often cutting open or peeling the fruit or veggie first to access its flesh.

## Equipment

- Food processor or blender (or medium mixing bowl + immersion blender)
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Citrus squeezer (optional)
- Measuring spoons
- Liquid measuring cup
- Wooden spoon

## Ingredients

Minty Kale Pesto

- 1/4 C sunflower seeds
- 1/2 C fresh kale

- 4 to 8 fresh mint leaves
- 1/4 C shredded Parmesan cheese **\*\***(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free shredded Parmesan OR nutritional yeast)**\*\***
- 1/4 C olive oil
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 to 1 tsp salt

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Minty Kale Pesto

**Dairy:** For 1/4 C shredded Parmesan cheese, substitute 1/4 C dairy-free/nut-free shredded Parmesan OR nutritional yeast.

## Instructions

### Minty Kale Pesto

#### intro

Pesto is a sauce usually served with pasta and made with basil leaves, pine nuts, garlic, olive oil, and Parmesan cheese. However, it can also be made with different herbs and greens and without nuts. Our recipe today includes kale, mint, and sunflower seeds!

#### chop + combine

Chop up **1/2 cup kale**, **1 garlic clove**, and **4 to 8 mint leaves** and add them to a food processor, blender, or a medium bowl (for use with an immersion blender).

#### juice + measure

Squeeze **1 teaspoon lemon juice** into the kale, then measure and add **1/4 cup olive oil**, **1/2 teaspoon salt**, and **1/4 cup sunflower seeds**.

#### blend + stir

Blend until smooth. Stir in **1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese**. Taste and adjust flavor, adding more salt if needed. Add the Minty Kale Pesto to pasta or gnocchi, like our **Butternut Squash Gnocchi**, and toss together.

## Featured Ingredient: Kale!

Hi! I'm Kale!

"I'm a very healthy type of cabbage with dark green or purple leaves. Did you know that massaging my leaves with olive oil and salt makes them more tender? This is especially nice if you're eating them raw in a salad. Search, and you shall find a recipe for just about anything made from kale, even kale cupcakes!"

## History

Kale may be experiencing an explosion in popularity over the past several years, but did you know that kale is an Old World staple in many countries worldwide, including Scotland, Kenya, Denmark, Italy, and Portugal? It's true. People have been enjoying kale for at least 2,000 years.

People in the Mediterranean area were the first to cultivate kale. They called it cabbage back in the day. In Roman times, cabbage was a significant crop and became a staple for peasants in the Middle Ages.

Kale made its way to the United States from England 400 years ago in the 17th century.

Despite its longstanding popularity all over the globe, the average American eats only two to three cups of kale per year. Check out how much kale you will eat today in our recipes!

Kale used to be called "peasant's cabbage," probably because it grew so abundantly. The modern name "kale" came from the Scottish word for the plant: "kail." In Scotland, in the 14th century, small gardens were known as "kailyards" because they grew so much kale.

In Ireland, years ago, on Halloween, single women and men would pull up kale stalks to predict the future of their love lives and wealth.

## Anatomy & Etymology

Holy Kale! There are over fifty varieties of kale, even though we only see about three in the grocery stores! This limited supply is due to several types being inedible. Some are rather coarse, bitter, and indigestible. Ornamental Kale comes in many colors, including pink and white.

Kale leaves can be curly or straight, thin, and scalloped. Lacinato kale is popular because it is mild, and its thinner leaves are more tender than other types of kale. Other names for Lacinato kale are Tuscan and Dinosaur (or Dino)!

Leaves can be either purple or green. Purple leaves have a slightly different nutrient content than green leaves, but both are nutritious.

Kale is part of the Cruciferous family of vegetables because of the shape of its flowers. Taste a piece of raw kale. Does it taste like anything you've eaten before? Other vegetables in this family include Brussels sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower—maybe kale tastes similar to one of these veggies!

Some kale varieties can reach up to 17 or 18 feet tall!

The word "kale" came from the Northern Middle English word for cabbage, "cale" (compare Scots "kail"), from Latin "caulis."

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Kale prefers to grow in cold weather, but it can be grown during any season and in most climates. Kale grown and picked during the winter actually tastes sweeter! That's because kale reacts to frost by producing sugars.

Kale is harvested when leaves have grown to at least 12 inches long. Each leaf is picked individually by snapping the leaf off close to the stalk.

When shopping for kale, look for deep green leaves, unless it's the purple variety.

Before eating kale, wash each leaf under cold running water, as a lot of dirt hides at the bottom of the stalks.

Kale is super versatile. It can be braised, steamed, roasted into chips, dehydrated, blended raw into smoothies, added to soups, sliced and added to salads, or juiced.

In Japan, kale is dried, ground into powder, and added to drinks.

## Nutrition

Kale is the Superhero of Vegetables. It has many antioxidants and vitamins that help keep us healthy, smart, strong, and feeling good.

Kale contains an incredible array of vitamins and nutrients, including vitamins A, K, and C, calcium, and fiber.

Remember what fiber does? It helps our digestion! Our intestines depend on fiber to work well and help us absorb the nutrients we need from our food (and get rid of what we don't!).

Kale contains over 45 different compounds that have been proven to fight cancer.

Because of an essential fatty acid in kale, called alpha-linolenic acid (or ALA), eating it may help prevent heart disease and stroke. Other foods high in ALA include avocados, navy beans, and edamame (soybeans).

The vitamins A and K in kale will be absorbed better if you eat it with a healthy fat, like avocado, olive oil, cheese, or olives.

Kale contains lutein, which is good for our eyes and vision. Lutein also helps kale retain its beautiful deep green color.

Kale includes more vitamin C than an orange and more calcium than milk!