

Broccoli

Arkansas Fresh

History

Broccoli was cultivated by the Romans and is believed to be the first of the cole crops (cabbage family) to evolve from wild cabbage. The term “broccoli” refers to “sprouting broccoli” rather than “heading broccoli,” which cannot be distinguished from cauliflower. All the cole crops, including broccoli, originated in Europe and Siberia. It was cultivated in England in the early 1700s and in America in the late 1700s. It gained recognition and prominence here after 1920. It was first grown commercially in California and iced and shipped to Boston in 1923.

Buying & Storage Tips

- Look for Arkansas broccoli from May to July and from November to December.
- Select broccoli heads with tight buds which range from dark green to purple in color.
- Avoid bunches that have spreading buds, are yellow in color and look wilted.
- Refrigerate broccoli unwashed in a perforated plastic bag. Broccoli stored in the cold and with high humidity can be held 3 to 5 days.
- Store broccoli away from apples and pears because these fruits naturally give off ethylene which speeds the yellowing of broccoli.

Preparation Tips

- Peel stems to remove the woody layer and cut into pieces. Cook stem pieces slightly longer than florets.
- Avoid overcooking broccoli because discoloration and strong flavors can develop. Cooked broccoli should be crisp for best flavor.
- Boiling: Add cut broccoli to a small amount of boiling water. Cook uncovered for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Microwaving: Place cut broccoli in a microwave-safe dish with ½ cup of water, cover and cook 5 to 7 minutes on high.
- Steaming: Bring about 1 inch of water to boil in a saucepan. Place steam basket in the pan and add cut broccoli, placing the stem pieces and large stalks on the bottom. Cover and steam 4 to 6 minutes.

Nutrition Information

Broccoli is an important source of fiber and many nutrients. Broccoli provides vitamins A and C which are antioxidants that may reduce your risk of heart disease and certain cancers. It is also a source of calcium, magnesium and vitamin K for healthy bones; potassium for healthy blood pressure and fiber to help control cholesterol and keep you regular.

1/2 cup chopped broccoli, boiled

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Calories: 23 | Fat: 0.2 g |
| Carbohydrate: 4.3 g | Protein: 2.3 g |
| Potassium: 127 mg | Sodium: 8 mg |
| Vitamin A: 10% RDI* | Calcium: 7% RDI |
| Vitamin C: 80% RDI | Fiber: 2.2 g |
| Folate: 14% RDI | Iron: 5% RDI |

*Reference Daily Intake

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Broccoli is low in calories, low in sodium and high in vitamin C. It is a significant source of other nutrients such as folate and vitamin A.

Recipes

Broccoli with Caramelized Onions and Almonds

Makes 4 servings, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup each Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

3 tablespoons chopped slivered almonds
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, or to taste
4 cups broccoli florets
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Preparation

1. Toast almonds in a medium-sized dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until lightly browned and fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a small bowl to cool.
2. Add olive oil to the pan and heat over medium heat. Add onion and salt; cook, stirring occasionally until soft and golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Adjust heat as necessary to prevent burning.
3. While onions are caramelizing, steam broccoli until just tender, 4 to 6 minutes. Plunge florets into cold water to stop the cooking process and keep the broccoli bright green. Drain and transfer to a large bowl. Add the nuts, onion, vinegar and pepper; toss to coat. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Information Per Serving

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Calories: 102 | Protein: 3 g |
| Fat: 7 g | Carbohydrates: 9 g |
| Saturated fat: 1 g | Fiber: 3 g |
| Cholesterol: 0 mg | Sodium: 166 mg |

A Lighter Broccoli Salad

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: about 1 cup)

Ingredients

4 cups small broccoli florets (about 1½ pounds)
1½ cups seedless red or green grapes, halved
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup raisins or dried cranberries
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup slivered almonds
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup light mayonnaise
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plain fat-free yogurt
3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon white vinegar

Preparation

Combine the first five ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate small bowl, stir together mayonnaise, yogurt, sugar and vinegar. Pour dressing over broccoli mixture and toss well. Chill for 1 hour.

Nutrition Information Per Serving

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Calories: 175 | Protein: 3 g |
| Fat: 6 g | Carbohydrate: 31 g |
| Saturated fat: 1 g | Fiber: 4 g |
| Cholesterol: 4 mg | Sodium: 148 mg |

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Enjoy Arkansas' Fresh Broccoli