



Tuscan flavors of olives and beans make this salad a treat

By Melissa D'Arabian

News flash: Kale is still in. It's still one of the nutritional highlights in my crisper drawer, and winter is its peak season, which means it's most abundant, healthy and cheap right now.

Kale, part of the same family as broccoli, is loaded with vitamins (particularly A, C and K) as well as smaller quantities of protein, fiber and an impressive array of minerals. Plus, a cup of kale has under 35 calories, and a bunch of organic kale will set you back probably a little over a dollar right now. So, you're going to need some updated kale recipes to get your through the winter.

The two varieties most available in the supermarkets are curly kale and the darker flat-leaved version that is called Tuscan, lacinato or dinosaur kale. Tuscan kale is thicker and heartier than the curly variety, so it holds up nicely in sautees. Both kale varieties are slightly bitter in flavor and do well to be "massaged" in acid, like lemon juice, which simulta-

neously tames the bitterness and gently breaks down the kale cells, making the leaf more tender in raw or lightly-cooked applications.

Today's recipe is a saute starring Tuscan kale. I like to think of it as a warm salad with leaves made slightly more tender by a lemon juice massage and a quick saute. The main flavors are perfectly Mediterranean: anchovy paste and olives for saltiness (you can cut the quantities down if you are watching sodium), lemon zest for brightness, and garlic, which is a heart-healthy staple of the region. Small grape tomatoes add sweetness and acid, while a handful of black beans boost the already-fiber-rich kale, turning this into a side dish that means you really can serve way less meat for the main. Or, double the recipe and skip the meat altogether, which makes the dish extra healthy and wallet-friendly.

Ingredients

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

1 bunch Tuscan, or lacinato kale, removed from thick stem, about 12 large leaves

2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra lemon juice for serving, if desired

2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

1 clove garlic, minced

2 teaspoons anchovy paste

2 teaspoons lemon zest

A pinch red pepper flakes (optional)

2 tablespoons chopped or sliced olives

1/2 cup grape tomatoes, halved

1/2 cup cooked white beans, drained and rinsed if canned

2 tablespoons shredded parmesan cheese, for serving

Lemon wedges, for serving (optional)

Preparation

Thoroughly wash the kale leaves (no need to dry), and slice into strips. Place in a medium bowl and pour lemon juice on top of the leaves. Use your hands to massage the lemon juice into the leaves, coating well. Let sit for a few minutes while you prepare the rest of the ingredients. Heat large skillet over medium heat.

In a small bowl, mix together the olive oil, garlic, anchovy paste, lemon zest and red pepper flakes. Scrape the oil mixture into the pan and saute until fragrant, stirring with a wooden spoon, about 1 minute. Add the olives and kale leaves, stir and then cover with a lid and allow to steam for 2 minutes. Uncover and stir in the tomato halves and beans. Turn off the heat and top with parmesan cheese. Serve with lemon wedges for squeezing. — AP