



Microgreens- How to Use Them



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Microgreens are just as their name sounds- micro (small) greens (leafy veggies).

You may be wondering what all the fuss is about with these tiny specimens and why you should care- Well here it goes-

These tiny veggies generally contain a much higher nutrient (vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, and phytonutrients) level than their full grown big brothers! Most microgreens are high in vitamin c, vitamin k, antioxidants, and trace minerals. Some microgreens contain all essential amino acids. To find out more on how concentrated the nutrients in microgreens are, look to USDA for guidance. A good place to start is <https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2014/specialty-greens-pack-a-nutritional-punch>.

We say that microgreens generally contain higher nutrients than the grown plant because it varies from plant to plant, but one thing that doesn't vary is food safety. If you remember the sprout craze, you may remember that eating the seeds can be problematic if the seeds aren't completely clean or grown in anything other than water or paper towels. Microgreens avoid that problem by being harvested at the stem, so there is less need to worry about dirty seed. However, all the benefits of sprout nutrition are retained!

What is a phytonutrient? A phytonutrient, also called a phytochemical, is a compound found uniquely in plants that determine their characteristics, such as color, taste, and smell. Nutritional science and medical researchers are actively studying their characteristics, as they are currently thought to be responsible for the beneficial effects of plant based foods in the human diet. Many compounds you may have heard of, such as resveratrol, flavonoids, sulforaphane, and lutein are all phytonutrients. They are not considered "essential" to human health, but that may be partly because they have only been discovered in the last twenty years or so, and are currently under study. For more reading on phytonutrients look to Harvard Health Publishing for more information at <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/fill-up-on-phytochemicals>.

They are versatile! You can absolutely add a dash of low prep flavor to most foods by sprinkling on some microgreens. Add some cilantro to a pepper jack grilled cheese with green peppers, tomatoes, and olives, or maybe some cress to an egg, avocado, and tomato sandwich. Top your salads or noodle dishes with some extra nutrition and a mild broccoli, pea, or mustard crunch. The uses for microgreens don't stop with garnishes though. Microgreen mixes can be eaten as a complete salad in the winter, sauteed as a green with eggs, or cooked in stir fries. The only limitation is to not overcook. Microgreens become less visually appealing, tasty, and nutritious with overcooking. They can be added to soups in the last few minutes of cooking though, if you need some extra nutrition or flavor. If you would like to read a collection of recipe ideas and a basic how to on storage check out GroCycle at <https://grocycle.com/best-microgreens-recipes/>.

So, take a handful and add it to your sandwich, salad, eggs, and more and you are on the fast track to health!

PLUS they have up to 40x the nutrition of their big bros! Whoa!

Flavor Overview

			
Sunflower Sweet and Crunchy!	Broccoli Mild Broccoli Taste	Pea Tastes like pea!	Buckwheat Tastes like lettuce!
			
Radish Mild heat	Cilantro Just like its full grown bro	Mustard Medium heat	Cress Wasabi type heat



Sunflower Shoots

A sweet and crunchy addition to any salad, sandwich, burger and more! It has the crunch of iceberg lettuce, but with the nutrition of kale! It tastes wonderful- I have been known to eat it straight as a snack- yum! Children seem to universally approve of the taste, and like the idea that they are eating sunflowers. Moms, capitalize on this unique opportunity. Sunflower microgreens are also considered a complete plant protein, as they contain all essential amino acids, and are particularly high in zinc. Great for vegans and great for the winter cold and flu season!

We have reproduced a recipe from Coleman's Farms on Sunflower Shoot spread, but more delightful recipes can be found at
<https://www.martinsgardenact.com/sunflower-shoots-recipes>.

Sunflower Shoots Spread

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups sunflower shoots (tender), with stems
- 2 tbsp sunflower seeds, soaked in water for 15-20 minutes
- 4-5 cashew nuts – more if you would like it more creamy
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast flakes - or as per taste
- Sea salt – to taste
- Water – just enough to blitz and bring the mix to a spreadable consistency

INSTRUCTIONS

Place in a chutney grinder with the sunflower seeds, cashew nuts, a little salt and water. Blitz till creamy or textural, as per your liking. Spoon the mix from the sides and blitz again till the required consistency is reached.

Remove into a bowl, add the nutritional yeast flakes, and adjust the salt and water.

A drizzle of extra virgin olive would not hurt. Some crispy capers or a sprinkling of toasted sesame seeds are very tasty too.

Broccoli Micros

If you like broccoli you'll like these. If you don't like broccoli you'll like these because they don't have the texture of full grown broccoli, or that intense broccoli taste! Broccoli micros would be delicious on top of a salad or in a spring vegetable dish like pasta primavera. Broccoli (and broccoli micros) are particularly high in sulforaphane, and microgreen stage is when this powerful antioxidant is at the highest levels. Sulforaphane is one the nutrients thought to contribute to the beneficial effects of cruciferous vegetables. It is being investigated as an anti inflammatory, as well as all of the typical antioxidant effects like anti-cancer and anti-aging. Whhhhat! That's cool! So load up your sandwich already! Following is a recipe for a salad from Becca Shern, RD found at <http://minimalwellness.com/microgreens/>. Don't be afraid to use what you have, which may be sauerkraut (healthy probiotics), pickled beets, or some other yummy fermented vegetable.



Broccoli Microgreens Salad with KimKraut, Avocado, and Lemon Hummus

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup broccoli microgreens
- ½ cup kimkraut (or commercially prepared beet-based sauerkraut)
- ¼ avocado, sliced into small pieces
- 1 tbsp salted sunflower seeds
- 2 tbsp Annie's Goddess Dressing (would also be good with a simple homemade vinaigrette)
- 2 tbsp lemon hummus

INSTRUCTIONS

Put microgreens onto a large plate and top with kimkraut, avocado slices, sunflower seeds.

Drizzle with dressing and top with hummus and fresh cracked pepper. Enjoy!



Pea Shoots

Pea shoots have a very mild pea flavor. They are delightful eaten raw anywhere a pea taste may be welcome, but they are also one of the best microgreens to stir fry with as they will hold their shape and texture the best while cooking. Try pea shoots in place of broccoli in a stir fry with mushrooms, onions, and peppers or as the base for a winter salad. Pea shoots are especially high in folic acid and vitamin C. Another great addition to your diet for keeping healthy in the winter cold and flu season! We have reproduced an example recipe from food.com at

<https://www.food.com/recipe/pea-shoots-stir-fried-pea-shoots-chow-dau-miu-146661>

Pea Shoots (Stir-fried Pea Shoots -- Chow Dau Miu)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs young pea shoots, loosely packed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp oyster sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

Rinse the pea shoots thoroughly in cold water twice, lightly drain.

In a large wok or skillet over high heat, heat oils add ginger, garlic and sugar. Toss and add shoots, soy, & oyster sauce.

Stir-fry for two to three minutes, or until the leaves soften and are tender. Remove shoots leaving the liquid in the pan. Place shoots on serving dish. Reduce the remaining liquid by 1/2. Pour over shoots and serve immediately.

Buckwheat Micros

Buckwheat is commonly eaten in Asian countries, both as a grain and as a microgreen. We like buckwheat because it tastes a whole lot like romaine lettuce, only healthier. We use buckwheat micros primarily as a salad. Buckwheat is being studied for a potentially beneficial effect on blood sugar levels. It has a light texture, a visually appealing pink stem, and is high in nutrients like all microgreens.

Buckwheat contains all essential amino acids, just like sunflower shoots, and is particularly high in manganese, magnesium, copper, and zinc. Another great food to help rev up your immune system in the winter!

We have adapted a recipe originally found at

<https://topwithcinnamon.com/buckwheat-apple-jar-salad/>.



Buckwheat, Apple, and Orange Jar Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 5-7 cherry tomatoes, halved
- drizzle of olive oil
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken broth
- 50 grams raw buckwheat groats, rinsed well
- ¼ apple
- 1 small orange
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- large pinch of salt
- handful of baby spinach
- handful of buckwheat micros

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 200 C (400 F) and put the tomatoes cut side-up on a baking tray. Drizzle them with some olive oil and roast in the oven for 20-30 minutes until slightly shrivelled.

Meanwhile bring the broth to boil in a small pot. Add the rinsed buckwheat, stir together and then turn down the heat to simmer. Place a lid on and leave to cook for 20 minutes then drain and place back into the pot. Cover with the lid again and leave for 10 minutes to absorb any excess moisture.

Take the apple and slice it thinly. Cut out the core and then cut the slices into matchsticks. Cut the orange in half and squeeze the juice of one half over the apple matchsticks, tossing to coat.

Squeeze the juice from the other orange half into a small jar. Add the balsamic, mustard, olive oil and salt to the jar. Fit the lid and shake the jar to emulsify the dressing.

Take a large jar with a tight-fitting lid and pour the dressing into the bottom. Layer the cooked buckwheat on top, followed by the roasted tomatoes, apple, the spinach and finally the sprouts. Seal with the lid.

To eat: pour the salad out into a bowl and toss to coat with the dressing.

Note- Crumbled feta, layered into the jar just after the spinach is a delicious addition!



Radish Micros

Radish micros are a great spicy garnish with a nutritional kick! These visually appealing microshave a bright pink stem with rounded dark green leaves.

They have the spiciness of radishes, but tend to be just a touch milder. Use them wherever the peppery taste of radish would be welcome. Radish micros are a cruciferous veggie, just like broccoli micros, and are high in the antioxidants cruciferous veggies are known for. They are high in folate, vitamin b6, vitamin c, and manganese.

We have included a recipe for microgreens salad modified from Kitchen Vignettes at PBS. The original can be found here

<https://www.pbs.org/food/recipes/homegrown-microgreens-salad/>.

Microgreens Salad

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad:

- 1 cup of microgreens (try sunflower, pea, or buckwheat)
- 1 blood orange, peeled and cubed
- ½ avocado, peeled and cubed
- ¼ cup of radish shoots
- ¼ cup of shredded carrot
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts

For the Dressing:

- 1 Tbsp cold-pressed olive oil
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 clove chopped garlic (optional)
- A dash of salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

If your microgreens have some soil on them, give them a light wash and air dry them in a colander for a few moments. (They are very fragile so need to be handled with care).

Place them in a bowl and add the remaining salad ingredients.

Stir up your vinaigrette in a little jar and pour on top of the salad.

Cilantro Micros

Cilantro micros make a great replacement for regular cilantro. They require less prep, as they can simply be sprinkled on dishes without the chopping normally required when using fresh cilantro. Try these micros in salsa, eggs, Mexican dishes, middle-eastern dishes, and curries of all types. The nutrition found in the micros is much more concentrated than in the full grown herb and is especially high in lutein and beta carotene. So these micros would be great for eye health! We have included a recipe from little wild things farm originally found at



<https://www.littlewildthingsfarm.com/recipes/2017/7/4/summer-corn-chowder-salad-with-cilantro-microgreens>.

Summer Corn Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 4 thick slices of bacon (4 ounces)
- 1 pound purple, gold, or red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 2 bell peppers (red, yellow, orange or mixed), diced
- 6 - 7 medium ears of corn, kernels removed
- 1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup cilantro microgreens
- Salt and crushed red pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large frying pan, cook the bacon over medium-low heat until crisp, about 5 to 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels and let drain. Break up or chop into crumbled pieces.

Pour off most of the bacon fat from the skillet, leaving a few tablespoons for frying. Add the diced potatoes and cook over medium heat until they start to brown, about 3 to 6 minutes. Stir and cook for about 2 minutes longer, until almost tender; they'll finish cooking with the other vegetables. Add the diced peppers and cook, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes and peppers are tender, about 5 minutes. Add the corn kernels and cook, stirring, until heated through but still crisp, about 3 minutes.

Transfer the vegetables to a large bowl and stir in the onion, cider vinegar, bacon and chopped cilantro. Season with pepper and salt to taste and garnish generously with cilantro microgreens. Serve warm, or at room temperature.



Mustard Micros

Mustard micros are a concentrated form of the highly beneficial and nutritious mustard green. The micros are tender and mild in flavor, while retaining the antioxidants and phytonutrients this cruciferous green is known for. Vitamin K, most trace minerals, plus calcium are all present in higher amounts in this micro! It may sound strange, but I've developed a habit of topping my homemade macaroni and cheese with these. I also like to mix mustard micros with cress micros for an extra spicy garnish. We've included a macaroni and cheese recipe that you might like to try in the spring or fall with green tomatoes. It is incredibly rich, and the addition of the mustard greens adds a little nutrition and spice. The original recipe can be found at <https://www.thebrewerandthebaker.com/archives/18355>.

Green Tomato and Chipotle Mac and Cheese

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb macaroni pasta
- 1 cup panko or fresh breadcrumbs (optional)
- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 2 tbsp butter
- 4 cloves garlic, whole
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 ½ cups broth
- ½ cup reserved pasta water
- 2 tbsp spicy brown mustard
- 1-2 tbsp minced chipotles in adobo (2 tbsp for a spicier mac)
- 1 ½ cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup shredded gouda cheese
- ½ cup quality shredded parmesan
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 cans or 3 cups of diced green tomatoes
- Mustard shoots for topping

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees, then butter 9x13 baking dish and set aside. Combine 2 tbsp olive oil and 1 cup panko crumbs or fresh breadcrumbs in a small bowl and set aside. Combine 3 tbsp flour with 1 tsp pepper, 1 tsp onion powder, and ½ tsp salt in a small bowl and set aside.

Bring water to boil and cook pasta for half the time suggested on the package.

While pasta is cooking, melt 2 tsp butter and olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat and brown the whole cloves of garlic. Remove garlic once brown and discard (garlic has flavored the oil and butter). Whisk in flour mixture until a thick roux is formed.

Before draining, use a coffee cup to remove around ½ cup of pasta water. Drain and rinse pasta with cold water to stop the pasta from cooking once the pasta is ready (½ normal cooking time).

Combine the milk, broth, pasta water, chipotles, and mustard in a bowl, then slowly stream into the roux while whisking and stir until the mixture has thickened. Add cheese and once again stir until mixture is smooth, then remove from heat and carefully add the sour cream.

Combine the pasta and green tomatoes in the 9x13 baker, then carefully pour over sauce coating all the noodles. Top with the panko breadcrumbs and bake for ~30 minutes, until the breadcrumbs have crisped to a golden brown and the pasta is bubbling.

When serving set out the mustard microgreens for a spicy nutrition boost, and allow individuals to top bowls to their liking.

Cress Micros

Cress micros have a mild wasabi kick. They are often referred to as pepper grass to note their spiciness. Try an egg and cress sandwich by topping egg salad with cress. While many enjoy these micros just for their unique spiciness, their nutrition should be noted. Vitamin k and plant nitrates make them especially helpful in a heart healthy diet, and like most other microgreens they are high in antioxidants and trace minerals. We have included a modified recipe from the blog spoon fork bacon originally found at <https://www.spoonforkbacon.com/deconstructed-egg-salad-sandwich>.



Deconstructed Egg Salad Sandwich

INGREDIENTS

sandwich:

- 1 baguette, sliced in half and lightly toasted
- mayonnaise for spreading
- dijon mustard for spreading
- handful of mild microgreens or mixed salad greens
- 1/2 avocado, pitted, skinned and thinly sliced
- 3 hard boiled eggs, shelled and sliced
- salt and pepper to taste

garnish:

- red onions, thinly sliced
- cress microgreens
- dill pickle sandwich slices

INSTRUCTIONS

Spread mayonnaise on one side of baguette and mustard on the other half.

Top with mixed greens, avocado slices and egg slices. Season with salt and pepper.

Top eggs with a small amount of red onions, microgreens and pickle slices. Top sandwiches with bread, gently pressing together and serve.