

# Health Benefits of Arugula



Arugula is a tender green in the brassica or cruciferous family. Its relatives include broccoli, cabbage, Brussels spouts, kale and cauliflower. This group of vegetables is celebrated for their low-calorie, high-nutrient content. Arugula is often used in salads to add a bit of tangy flavor and is a favorite in Mediterranean cooking.

## WHAT MAKES ARUGULA GREAT?

### Nutrition

Arugula contains multiple antioxidants which fight free radicals known to contribute to aging and disease. These antioxidants include vitamins C and K, beta-carotene, and Sulphur –containing compounds called *glucosinolates*. These compounds are responsible for the tangy flavor of arugula as well as many of its health benefits.

### Antioxidants

#### ◆ Vitamin C

- ◇ Water-soluble vitamin
- ◇ Unlike animals who can make their own vitamin C, humans must consume vitamin C from foods on a daily basis
- ◇ Required for making collagen for healthy skin and connective tissue, and important for wound-healing
- ◇ Involved in protein metabolism, and synthesis of neurotransmitters
- ◇ Important role in immunity, prevention of scurvy and absorption of non-heme iron

#### ◆ Beta Carotene

- ◇ Water soluble vitamin must be consumed on a daily basis
- ◇ A type of retinol (precursor to vitamin A) which includes several types of carotenoids
- ◇ Carotenoids are responsible for the bright colors of our fruits and vegetables
- ◇ Keeps skin, eyes and immune system healthy
- ◇ Fights to protect DNA

#### ◆ Folic Acid

- ◇ Makes new cells, DNA, fetus brain development

#### ◆ Vitamin K

- ◇ Fat-soluble vitamin involved in blood-clotting, bone metabolism and antioxidation

#### ◆ Glucosinolates

- ◇ Sulphur-containing compounds found in Brassica (Cruciferous) vegetables
- ◇ Chewing or chopping arugula greens triggers antioxidant and anti-inflammatory responses that can reduce risk of disease
- ◇ One form of glucosinolate is *sulphoraphane*. Studies demonstrate this compound can detoxify carcinogens and inhibit cancer cell growth
- ◇ Studies found beneficial effects of cruciferous vegetables like arugula for reducing risk of breast, bladder, colorectal, endometrial, gastric, lung, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate and renal cancer

#### ◆ Minerals

- ◇ Calcium
- ◇ Potassium and magnesium
- ◇ Arugula also contains iron, phosphorus, copper and manganese

#### ◆ Nitrates

- ◇ Nitrates in raw greens like arugula can be used by the body to create nitric oxide, a compound that triggers the muscles in the arteries to relax and expand (vasodilate) improving blood flow and lowering blood pressure



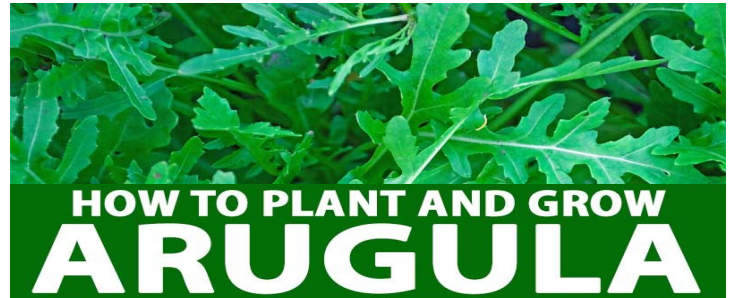
**Oregon State**  
University

stephanie.polizzi@oregonstate.edu  
631 Alder Street, Myrtle Point, OR 97458  
541-572-5263 ext 25291  
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos>

## BUYING AND USING ARUGULA

Fresh arugula should be bright and green. Although the leaves are tender, they should not be yellow, wilted or slimy. Store arugula in the refrigerator in a plastic bag with a dry paper towel to absorb excess moisture and prevent decay. Arugula cannot be frozen and is best used within 2 weeks.

Arugula has a mild peppery flavor and adds a bit of zing to salads. Mix it with other greens or use alone. Add to sandwich layers or chop into cold or hot side dishes. Puree arugula into pesto, dips or spreads. Arugula can also be sautéed or steamed as a stand-alone side dish. It is often used in Italy as a topping for pizza.



## HOW TO PLANT AND GROW ARUGULA

Arugula can be sown from seed in full sun or partial shade. Plant seeds 1/4" deep in rows 10" apart or sprinkle in planter 3-4" apart. Sow in spring and again every 2-3 weeks for a continual harvest.

Arugula has a shallow root system so keep soil moist by watering the base of the stem, not the leaves. Thin plants as they grow but don't discard. These baby greens are equally delicious and nutritious.

Arugula loves cool weather so it can be sown in late August through the fall and winter growing season.

### Roasted Beets & Arugula Salad

Adapted from [SparkPeople.com](http://SparkPeople.com)

#### Ingredients:

8 medium roasted beets, diced  
1/2 cup toasted walnuts  
3 oz crumbled cheese (optional)  
2 cups fresh arugula  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
1 Tbsp white balsamic vinegar  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions:

1. Scrub beets and wrap individually in foil. Place in baking dish and bake at 400°F for 1 1/2 hours. Cool, peel and dice.
2. Toast walnuts in a dry pan over medium heat. Mix arugula with beets and nuts.
3. Top with cheese if desired.

### Arugula Pesto

Elise Bauer [SimplyRecipes.com](http://SimplyRecipes.com)

#### Ingredients:

2 cups packed arugula leaves  
1/2 cup shelled walnuts  
1/2 cup fresh parmesan (optional)  
1/2 cup olive oil  
6 cloves garlic, unpeeled  
1/2 clove garlic, peeled, minced  
1/2 tsp salt

#### Directions:

1. Brown 6 cloves of garlic with peels on in skillet over medium heat until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Remove from pan, cool and remove skins.
2. Toast nuts in a skillet over medium heat until lightly browned, about 2 minutes.
3. Combine arugula, walnuts and both roasted and raw garlic in food processor. Pulse while drizzling olive oil until smooth.
4. Stir in optional parmesan cheese.
5. Serve over pasta, roasted potatoes or use as an alternative to red sauce on pizza.

## REFERENCES

[GardenersPath.com](http://GardenersPath.com)

[Glucosinolates: Bioavailability and Importance to Health](#)

[Linus Pauling Institute](http://LinusPaulingInstitute)

## More Arugula Recipes

[AllRecipes.com](http://AllRecipes.com)

[Oh She Glows Everyday Cookbook](#)

[30 Arugula Recipes that Aren't Just Salads](#)