



# nutrinews

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Q:

Is there any nutritional difference in types of lettuce?

A:

The USDA reports that the top 3 vegetables we consume are lettuce, tomatoes and potatoes. Coincidentally, these are the same 3 vegetables found in a typical fast food meal... lettuce and tomato on the hamburger, and fries on the side. Oh yes, then there is ketchup. That counts, doesn't it?

While I encourage you to branch out to additional vegetables in a variety of colors, if your main source is going to involve lettuce, there are many tasty choices to increase nutritional value within your existing eating habits.

Many students find it difficult to eat the 3 to 5 cups of vegetables a day that are recommended by nutrition experts. So why not make the most of the veggies you do eat? One way is to choose your lettuce

wisely. Whether you put it on sandwiches, wraps, burritos or tacos, or have a salad, there are options to give you more nutritional bang for your limited vegetable intake buck.

Until recently, the only lettuce used on sandwiches and at salad bars was iceberg lettuce. Now you can request darker, leafier lettuces and spinach at places like Subway and Baggins, while you've always had this option at On Deck Deli. Pre-made salads at a number of fast food chains like McDonald's

and Wendy's have begun using some of the darker greens in their salads. Most salad bars are also including a variety of lettuce choices. As you order sandwiches, wraps and salads anywhere, ask if they can put leaf lettuce or spinach on or in it. If you're making your own, move it up a notch and use the darker lettuces or even spinach, the nutrient powerhouse of greens.

Bottom line: Go by the color... the greener or darker the better.



Nutritional comparison of common greens from least (5) to most (1) nutritious (all quantities are approximately equal and contain between 15 and 40 calories).

Rank	Type	Amount	Fiber (g)	Vit A (IU)	Vit C (mg)	Calcium (mg)	Iron (mg)	Sodium (mg)	Potassium (mg)
5	Iceberg	1/6 head	1	200	3.6	20	trace	10	120
4	Romaine	6 leaves	1	1000	2.4	20	trace	0	140
3	Red Leaf	1 1/2 cups	1	1500	2.4	20	0	30	212
2	Leaf lettuce	1 1/2 cups	2	2000	3.6	40	0	30	230
1	Spinach	1 1/2 cups	5	3500	15.0	60	12	160	130

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