

Broccoli

Choosing, Storing, Preparing, and Enjoying

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Broccoli is nutritious and delicious. It is often available fresh and frozen, meeting budget, preference, and accessibility needs. Broccoli supports health in many ways. Consider the points below when choosing, storing, and preparing broccoli so it can be enjoyed in a variety of ways.

Choosing Broccoli

When selecting broccoli, look for:

- Tender, dark green stalks with tightly closed buds; buds with yellow flowers or wilting or thick stems indicate the broccoli is old and tough.
- No smell or faint smell.
- Plain, frozen broccoli. Avoid frozen broccoli with seasonings or sauces to minimize excess sodium.

Storing Broccoli

To extend the life of fresh broccoli, save money, and enjoy the best flavor and texture, consider these storage tips:

- Store broccoli unwashed in the refrigerator. Wash broccoli just before using it.
- Use fresh broccoli within three to five days. The shorter storage time will help prevent the loss of nutrients and help retain texture, flavor, and color.

Preparing Broccoli

Always wash fresh broccoli under cool running water. Avoid soaking it because vitamins and minerals can be lost in the water. Trim the leaves and peel the stalk.

Fresh broccoli can be enjoyed raw or cooked. When steaming, boiling, and microwaving broccoli, use a small amount of water and cook it only until it is bright green and tender—as briefly as possible to preserve both the crisp texture and the nutrients. If broccoli is overcooked, it will turn a dark green—almost gray—color. This makes it unpleasant to look at, smell, and eat.

Enjoying Broccoli

Broccoli is available fresh and can be enjoyed on its own, with a dipping sauce, or added to a dish. It is also available frozen. This option provides the nutrients of fresh broccoli, and adds the convenience, accessibility, and budget-friendliness of frozen. Frozen broccoli is often seasoned or with sauces to add flavor. Look for low sodium versions or choose plain frozen broccoli, without sauces or seasonings, to add your own flavor.

Broccoli works together with other foods to support our health in a variety of ways

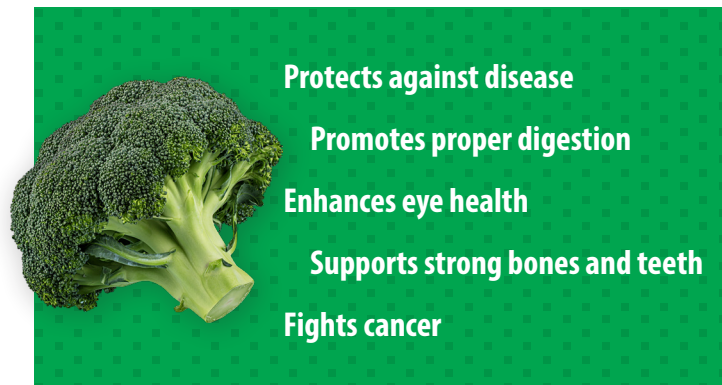


Table 1. Broccoli cooking methods.

Method	Steps to Take
Steam	Place broccoli on a rack above boiling water and steam for approximately 6 to 8 minutes. For crisp, tender broccoli, steam fresh broccoli for 4 to 6 minutes; frozen broccoli should be steamed for 8 to 10 minutes.
Boil	Place broccoli in a saucepan with 1 inch of boiling water and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook for 5 minutes with the lid off, then cover and cook for 10 to 15 minutes more until broccoli reaches the desired tenderness. Broccoli can also be cooked with the lid on for the entire 15 to 20 minutes. To allow the unpleasant odor associated with cruciferous vegetables to escape, lift the lid a few times. This method also protects the green color of the vegetable.
Microwave	Place broccoli in a microwave-safe dish. Add 1 inch of water and cover the dish with a lid. Microwave it for 3 to 4 minutes or until it is tender. Remove and rinse with cold water. Frozen broccoli likely has instructions on the package.
Roast	Place broccoli on baking sheets. Drizzle with olive oil, and season as desired. Roast at 400°F until the broccoli starts to turn brown—about 15 to 20 minutes.
Sauté	Add a small amount of vegetable oil or butter to a skillet, frying pan, sauté pan, wok, or on a griddle over medium to medium-high heat. Once the pan is heated and the oil moves freely in the pan, add broccoli in a single layer. Toss the broccoli every so often to help cook evenly. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until tender.

Recipes

Baked Broccoli Frittata

Yield: 8 servings

- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup tomato, diced
- 1 small red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 green onions, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 whole eggs
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/4 cup 2% milk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 cup low fat mozzarella cheese, divided.

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
- Place broccoli florets, diced tomato, bell pepper and green onions in a 9x13 baking dish. Spoon olive oil evenly over vegetables. Roast the vegetables in the oven until crisp-tender, approximately 10 minutes.
- In a bowl, combine eggs, Dijon mustard, water, milk, salt, black pepper, and Italian seasoning. Whisk mixture until frothy. Stir in a 3/4 cup of shredded low fat mozzarella cheese.
- Pour the egg mixture over the roasted vegetables. Stir gently with a fork to combine. Sprinkle the remaining 1/4 cup of mozzarella cheese over the top.
- Return to the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes or until set and cheese is browned on top. Serve and enjoy.

Per serving: 130 calories; 8 grams fat; 170 milligrams cholesterol; 400 milligrams sodium; 5 grams carbohydrate; 9 grams protein

Broccoli Cornbread

Yield: 12 servings

- 1/4 cup margarine, melted
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or cooked frozen broccoli, finely chopped
- 4 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 (8.5-ounce) box quick corn muffin mix

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- In a mixing bowl, blend melted margarine, onion, salt, cheese, broccoli, and eggs. Stir in muffin mix.
- Pour into a greased 9x13 inch pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the top is a golden brown.
- Allow to cool and cut into 3-inch squares.

Per serving: 90 calories; 6 grams total fat; 60 milligrams cholesterol; 240 milligrams sodium; 5 grams carbohydrate; 4 grams protein

Broccoli Salad

Yield: 16 servings

- 6 cups fresh broccoli, chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 medium red onion, peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 8 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled (optional)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise

- Combine all ingredients in a medium-sized bowl and mix well.
- Chill for 1 to 2 hours before serving.

Per serving: 100 calories; 4 grams fat; 5 milligrams cholesterol; 135 milligrams sodium; 13 grams carbohydrate; 2 grams protein

Ramen Skillet Dinner

Yield: 4 servings

- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, thinly sliced
- 1 bag (16 ounces) frozen broccoli
- 2 cups cooked chicken, chopped
- 1 package (3 ounces) chicken-flavored instant ramen noodles
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

- Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and broccoli. Cook until vegetables are crisp tender (about 5 minutes). Add the cooked chicken to the skillet. Stir and heat, about 1 to minutes.
- In a small bowl, combine the contents of the ramen seasoning packet, water, garlic powder, ginger, and red pepper flakes. Pour the water and seasonings into the skillet. Stir and bring to a boil.
- Break ramen noodles apart and add them to the skillet. Stir to moisten noodles. Cover the skillet and cook until noodles soften (about 2 minutes).
- Serve immediately.

Per serving: 280 calories; 8 grams fat; 60 milligrams cholesterol; 360 milligrams sodium; 22 grams carbohydrate; 26 grams protein

References

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Resources

For information about growing produce, check out NEP's Growing Your Own Garden series at <https://www.planeatmove.com/get-moving/growing-your-own-garden/>. *Broccoli* can be found [here](#).

For more information on using your fresh broccoli, consider Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipes: <https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/plate-it-kentucky-proud>.

The recipes listed can be found at [Plan.Eat.Move.com](https://www.planeatmove.com), where you can find additional recipes using **broccoli** in a variety of ways.

For more information on different cooking methods, check out *FCS 3-634: Savor the Flavor: Exploring Cooking Methods*.

For more information on preserving food, check with your local county Extension office.

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