

Cilantro (Greens)

Interesting facts: Cilantro is an herb that is the leafy portion of the coriander plant. It is also known as Chinese parsley. People can have a love or hate relationship with cilantro. People who hate cilantro may sense the aldehyde chemicals in the leaves that give it a soapy smell and not sense the citrusy notes of the beneficial herb.

How to select: Organically grown cilantro is the best choice. Fresh cilantro is usually sold in bunches (with roots attached is best) and often next to its cousin parsley. But do not mistake the two; cilantro has rounded flatter leaves and has a stronger flavor and citrusy aroma. Choose cilantro that is firm with bright, deep green, even colored leaves.

What to avoid: Avoid wilted, yellowing or brown, slimy leaves as they are signs of rotting.

How to clean and store: Cilantro is highly perishable and should always be refrigerated. Rinse the herb through cold running water to remove soil debris and tap off the excess water. Place the roots in a glass of water and cover the leaves with a loose-fitting plastic bag. If the roots have been removed, wrap the leaves in a damp cloth or paper towel then place in a plastic bag. Fresh cilantro should last about two weeks refrigerated.

How to prepare: Before chopping, dunk and rinse cilantro in the water bowl, holding it by the stems. Shake off the excess water; pat dry with paper towels. Start slicing through the stems. Rock the knife back and forth for a finer chop. Store any unused herbs.

Recipe idea:

Black Bean, Corn and Red Pepper Salad: In a bowl place 2 cups organic frozen corn (defrosted), 2 cups organic black beans, drained (1 can 14.5 ounces). Dice a large red pepper, and ½ red onion and ½ cup chopped cilantro and place in with the corn and beans. Dressing: Whisk ¼ cup olive oil, juice one organic lime and ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Pour dressing over salad toss and serve.