

Leaf Lettuces (Greens)

Interesting facts: Lettuce is leafy vegetable that belongs to the sunflower family. It originates from Mediterranean region, but it can be found around the world today. Lettuce prefers colder climate, which postpones development of flowers and ensures proper development of leaves. Around 23 million metric tons of lettuce are produced and consumed each year. Majority of globally consumed lettuce originates from China. Iceberg, Romaine and Leaf lettuce are the best-known varieties of lettuce. They differ in color, texture and in the amount of nutrients.

How to select: Lettuce should be displayed at the markets under refrigeration, or on ice because it is quite perishable. Try to choose lettuce with healthy outer leaves—these are likely to be the most nutritious part of the green, containing much more beta carotene a bit more vitamin C than the pale inner leaves. Unfortunately, the outer leaves are usually the most damaged part of the head, but from a nutritional standpoint, it's best to salvage as many as you can.

What to avoid: Watch out for limp, withered leaves that have brown or yellow edges, or dark or slimy spots. Once the greens have passed their prime, there is no way to restore them to crisp freshness.

How to clean and store: Store in a plastic bag for 3-5 days and when ready to use: Rinse in cold water: Shake the water from the leaves and place them on paper towels to dry thoroughly. You might even consider using another paper towel to blot them dry.

How to prepare to use: Raw in Salads, Juice