

Florida Fresh: Lettuce¹

Claudia Peñuela²

Nutrition Facts

Florida's Lettuces are:

- ✓ High in vitamin A (with the exception of crisphead lettuce). Vitamin A aids in normal vision, healthy skin, and protects against infections.
- ✓ High in vitamin K which helps in proper bone growth and blood clotting.
- √A good source of vitamin C which helps to heal cuts and keeps teeth and gums healthy.
- ✓A good source of folate. Folate produces red blood cells and reduces a woman's risk of having a baby with certain brain or spinal cord birth defects.
- ✓ Source of fiber. Fiber reduces the risk of heart disease.
- ✓ Naturally free of fat and cholesterol, and low in calories and sodium.

Note: There are four types of lettuce: romaine, butterhead, crisphead, and looseleaf. Romaine lettuce has tall, tightly packed, darker green leaves, with the inner leaves in lighter hues. Butterhead lettuce has buttery texture and its leaves are not as tightly packed. Crisphead lettuce has pale green leaves forming a tight head. Looseleaf lettuce does not form a head; its leaves are joined at the stem.

Why Buy Locally?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that the average farmers' market produce travels about **50 miles** to its destination, compared to **2,000 miles** for supermarket produce.

Buy locally and get these benefits:



- Freshness and good nutrition. Fruits and vegetables harvested in their peak have better flavor and nutritional characteristics.
- Social/cultural. Helps the community to be aware of the importance of agriculture.
- Environmental. Protects natural resources such as green space, wildlife, water, air, and soil.
- Economic. Promotes local labor force.
- 1. This document is FCS8879, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published: August 2009. Visit the EDIS Web site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.
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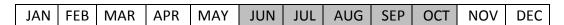
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Where are Florida's lettuces harvested?

Florida's lettuces are harvested throughout Florida.

When can you buy Florida lettuces?

You can buy Florida lettuces **November** through **May**. This is **seven months of the year!**



Select

- \checkmark Crisphead and romaine lettuces heavy for their size and that have crisp, tender leaves.
- ✓ Butterhead and looseleaf lettuces that have softer leaves.
- \checkmark Bright color (dark to light green). The darker the green, the more antioxidants and nutrients.
- ✓ Mixed lettuces for more nutritional balance.
- ✓Lettuces that do not have dry leaves.
- ✓ Lettuces with leaves that are not wilted, browned, and/or yellowed.

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Sweet and Sour Leafy Green Salad

- 5 cups torn romaine lettuce
- 3 cups lightly packed spinach
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 2 peeled and sliced oranges
- 1 cup halved pitted prunes
- ½ cup sliced red onion
- ½ cup nonfat honey mustard dressing
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Yield: 4 Servings Time: 10 minutes

Toss all ingredients in a large bowl.

*Nutrition info per serving (¼ recipe) Calories: 190 cal; Fat 1g; Sodium 310 mg; Carb 47g; Fiber 7g; Protein 4g; Vit A 130%; Vit C 110%; Calcium 10%; Iron 10% * Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron listed as % of daily value based on 2,000 calories.

Adapted from: http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/recipesearch.aspx

Florida Salad

1 cup torn romaine lettuce

½ cup coarsely chopped escarole 2 peeled and sliced carrot

½ cup coarsely chopped **endive** 1 seeded and sliced **green pepper**

1 bunch chopped cilantro

1 peeled and sectioned tangelo

1 peeled and sliced avocado

½ cup coarsely chopped kale

1 peeled and sliced cucumber

½ cup sliced strawberries

4 sliced radishes

½ cup whole cherry tomatoes

Yield: 8 Servings

Toss all ingredients in a large bowl. Choose low-fat dressing.

Nutrition info per serving (Without dressing): Calories: 95 cal; Fat 3 g; Carb 9 g; Fiber 1 g; Protein 0 g

Adapted from: http://www.florida-agriculture.com/recipes/vegetables/vegetable-6050.htm