

Turnip greens nutrition facts

Turnip greens are dark-green leafy tops of the plant turnip. The greens indeed hold more nutrition profile than the vegetable tuber itself concerning vitamins, minerals, and health-benefiting antioxidants. Turnips are members of the Brassicaceae family and have the same standard growth characteristics with other brassica members such as [cabbage](#), [kale](#), [Brussel sprouts](#), etc.



Turnips with green tops.

Turnips roots can be grown during all the seasons in the temperate regions. However, its top greens can be at their best during winter. Warm climate would be detrimental since it affects the roots which turn woody and brittle, and leaves become deep-green and bitter in taste. The plant requires well-drained fertile soil.

In order to reap turnip's tender greens, the crop should be planted closely, at 4 to 6 inches apart between the seedlings, to stunt their bulb (tuber) formation and direct their nutrition instead into top greens. It's young tender leaves should be harvested early when the plant reaches about 4-6 inches tall.

Turnip greens feature light green, broad leaves with long petiole rising directly from its root top. They have the taste similar to mustard greens but with less intense spicy flavor. Young tender greens indeed feature sweet flavor with a subtle taste of peppery note.

Health benefits of turnip greens

- Turnip tops carry more vitamins and minerals than that of the vegetable tuber itself. Besides, the leafy tops are very low in calories; carrying of just 32 calories per 100 g.
- Like kale and mustard greens, turnip tops are quite compact regarding nutrition profile of vitamins and minerals and health benefiting antioxidant properties.
- Turnip greens are one of the excellent sources of **β -carotene**, **lutein**, and **zeaxanthin**. 100 g fresh raw greens provide 6952 μ g, and 11984 μ g of β -carotene and lutein-zeaxanthin levels respectively. These flavonoids have potent antioxidant and anti-cancer activities. Beta-carotene converted into vitamin A inside the human body.

- **Zeaxanthin**, an important dietary carotenoid, is selectively absorbed into the retinal macula lutea in the eyes where it thought to provide antioxidant and protective light-filtering functions. Thus, it helps prevent retinal detachment and offer protection against "age-related macular degeneration related macular degeneration disease" (ARMD) in the elderly.
- The top greens are one of the highest **vitamin-A** sources in the plant kingdom. 100 g leaves provide **11,587 IU or 386% of RDA**. Vitamin-A is required for maintaining healthy mucosa and skin and is essential for vision. Foods rich in this vitamin are known to offer protection against lung and oral cavity cancers.
- Again, they are among the top vegetable sources for **vitamin-K**; 100 g provides 251 µg of this vitamin that is about 209% of recommended intake. Vitamin-K has a potential role in bone health by promoting osteoblastic (bone formation and strengthening) activity. Adequate vitamin-K levels in the diet help limiting neuronal damage in the brain; thus, has an established role in the treatment of patients who have Alzheimer's disease.
- 100 g of fresh leaves contain **60 mg, or 100% of daily recommended levels of vitamin-C**. Vitamin-C is a modestly potent water-soluble antioxidant which helps the body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful oxygen-free radicals.
- This leafy vegetable is notably good in many B-complex groups of vitamins such as riboflavin, **folate (48% of RDA/100g)**, niacin, **vitamin B-6** (pyridoxine), thiamin, pantothenic acid, etc., that are essential to the body as part of coenzymes during the metabolism in the body.
- Its leaves are also a rich source of minerals like magnesium, **copper, calcium**, sodium, potassium, **iron**, manganese, and phosphorus. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps controlling heart rate and blood pressure by countering effects of sodium. The human body uses manganese as a co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, *superoxide dismutase*. *Iron* is required for cellular oxidation and red blood cell formation.

Turnip greens are one of the finest sources of essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that can offer protection from the vitamin-A deficiency, osteoporosis, iron-deficiency anemia, and believed to protect from cardiovascular diseases and possibly from colon cancers.

See the table below for in depth analysis of nutrients:

Turnip greens, fresh, raw leaves, Nutrition value per 100 g. (Source: USDA National Nutrient data base)

Principle	Nutrient Value	Percentage of RDA
Energy	32 Kcal	1.5%
Carbohydrates	7.13 g	5.5%
Protein	1.50 g	3%
Total Fat	0.13 g	<1%
Cholesterol	0 mg	0%
Dietary Fiber	3.2 g	8%
Vitamins		
Folates	194 µg	48%

Niacin	0.600 mg	4%
Pantothenic acid	0.380 mg	7.5%
Pyridoxine (B-6)	0.263 mg	20%
Riboflavin	0.100 mg	7.5%
Thiamin	0.070 mg	6%
Vitamin A	11587 IU	386%
Vitamin C	60 mg	100%
Vitamin K	251 µg	209%
Electrolytes		
Sodium	40 mg	3%
Potassium	296 mg	6%
Minerals		
Calcium	190 mg	19%
Copper	0.350 mg	39%
Iron	1.10 mg	14%
Magnesium	31 mg	8%
Manganese	0.466 mg	12%
Phosphorus	42 mg	6%
Selenium	1.2 µg	2%
Zinc	0.19 mg	1.5%
Phyto-nutrients		
Carotene-β	6952 µg	--
Crypto-xanthin-β	0 µg	--
Lutein-zeaxanthin	12825 µg	--

Selection and storage



Turnip greens with tubers in a market.

Turnip tops are at their best during fall and spring. Fresh greens are also readily available all around the year. In the market, choose freshly harvested heads either alone or bearing

the vegetable-tuber. Choose fresh looking, young tender deep green leaves with firm petiole. Generally, the top greens are tied in bunches and sold along with their small-taproot. In that case, look for small, healthy, firm turnip tubers.

Avoid yellow, sunken, wilted, or over-matured leaves as they are less appetizing and spoil early. As like any other greens, turnip tops also perish quickly and should be consumed as soon as its harvest.

Once at home, sever the top greens from the root, using a knife an inch above the root top. If left intact, the greens deprive of moisture and nutrients from the tuber. Store them in the refrigerator set at a high relative humidity of over 95% where they stay fresh for 2-3 days.

Preparation and serving methods

Turnips tops are at their best during winter and spring lasting from November until February. Wash the greens in cold water to rid off any surface dirt. Mop them dry using a paper towel. Chop closely using a serrated knife for even cooking.

Turnip tops feature very broad leaves akin to beets or swiss chard with long and sometimes wide, thick petiole. Trim away any tough and woody petioles. Remove any old overmature, wilted, bruised leaves. Then, wash prepared leaves in a colander under cold tap water to remove any surface sand and dirt. Gently swish away excess water or mop dry using a paper towel. Chop the leaves and petioles to the desired length using a kitchen knife. Young tender greens can be eaten raw or preferably mixed with other greens and vegetables. However, large mature leaves are quite bitter in taste as they contained lots minerals and vitamins and preferred to only after cooked, sautéed, steamed or braised.

Here are some serving tips:

- In the Southern part of United States, many Southern-style dishes prepared using freshly harvested turnip tops especially mixed with complementing greens such as [kale](#), [collards](#), [mustard greens](#) along with bacon, and salt-cured pork in mouth-watering recipes.
- In South Asia, turnip greens generally mixed with milder greens like [spinach](#) in the preparation of saag recipes. The greens can be added to stuffing, casseroles, quiche, stews, stir-fry, etc.
- Although not as popular as kale chips, greens of turnips can be employed as chips.
- Turnip greens can be juiced into a healthy drink. However, raw greens impart a bitter taste and a tinge of soreness to the oral mucosa. This can be avoided by juicing gently steamed greens in place of raw ones.

Safety profile

Oxalic acid content in the turnip greens is very small (0.05 g/100g) in comparison to other high oxalate content greens and vegetables like turnip-tuber (0.21g/100g), amaranth (1.09 g/100g), [parsley](#) (1.70 g/100g), etc. This bitter principle in mature leaves is because of their

high mineral content. It can be minimized by boiling turnip greens in hot water and then discarding it before adding the greens in recipes. ([Medical disclaimer](#)).

Further reading:

1. [USDA National Nutrient Database](#).
2. University of Illinois Extension-Watch your garden grow.
3. Oxalic acid content of selected vegetables-[USDA](#).