

December – Featured Vegetable: BROCCOLI

WASH. EAT.



(how easy is that?)



Hi, I'm Barney Broccoli. ¹

Everyone just calls me "Super Vegetable," because I'm jam-packed with vitamins and minerals and I'm a good source of fiber. I know, I'm rushing ahead - but I'm a head of broccoli!

I'm so excited you're joining me on this broccoli adventure. Well, let's get going so we can explore lots of cool stuff about broccoli.

Facts

In 1970 consumption of broccoli was only a half a pound per person.

Today, the average person in the United States eats four and one half pounds a year. WOW, that's a lot of broccoli.

In the United States, broccoli was probably first grown by immigrants from Italy in home gardens in Brooklyn, New York.

In 1923, a group of Italian vegetable farmers in Northern California started to grow broccoli commercially and in a few years they were shipping fresh broccoli to Boston and New York.

History

Broccoli has been around for over 2000 years and has been grown in the United States for around 200 years.

Broccoli was a favorite food of the ancient Romans and first introduced to France in the 1500's and to England in 1720.

My name comes from the Italian word "brocco," which means branch or arm.

Source: ¹Dole 5 A Day. www.dole5aday.com

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Where Grown

Today, 90 percent of the broccoli grown in the United States comes from California.

Like many other vegetables, broccoli is grown in the Salinas Valley and Santa Maria Valley of California from March through December.

It is grown in the Yuma Valley of Arizona from November to March.

Broccoli is also grown in the states of Washington, Maine, Wisconsin, Ohio, Colorado, Oregon, Texas and Florida.

Some of the broccoli grown in California is exported to Japan, where the market place demands only the highest quality.

Types

Italian Green is the most common variety of broccoli grown in the United States. It has light green stalks topped by green and purplish florets. Italian Green is also known as Calabrese for Calabria, the Italian province where it was first grown.

Broccolini is the latest type of broccoli to hit the market. This new generation of broccoli is becoming very popular very quickly. Broccolini is also known as baby broccoli. Compared to regular broccoli, broccolini is smaller, milder and sweeter. It looks like a cross between asparagus and broccoli because of its long thin stalks, but it actually is a cross between broccoli and Chinese Kale.

Nutrients

- High in vitamin A (beta-carotene) and vitamin C
- A cruciferous vegetable that contains phytochemicals (plant compounds) that may help the immune system in disease prevention.

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