

Vitamin K and its health benefits

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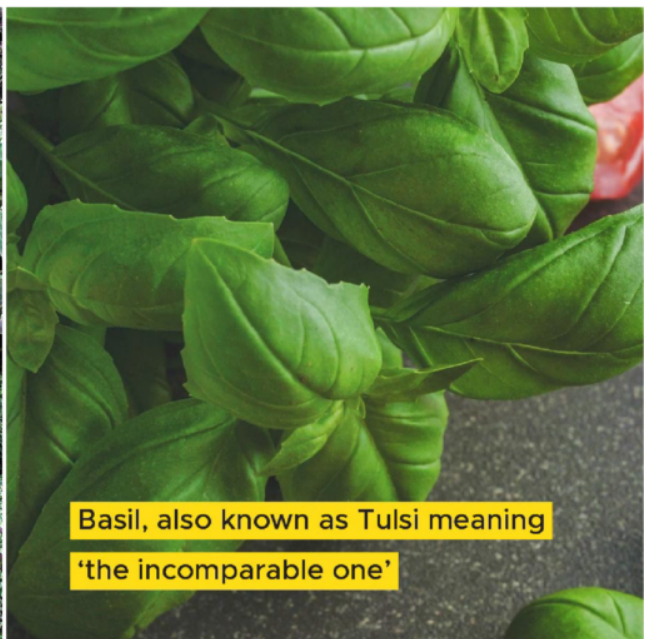
Named after the German word 'Koagulation' (or coagulation), Vitamin K refers to a group of three basic types of vitamins; K1, K2 and K3. Vitamin K1 is easily found in most plant foods, especially green vegetables, along with K3 which is found in most foods. Vitamin K2 is less common in plant-based diets, except where they have gone through fermentation in the case of tempeh or miso. The daily recommended amount of Vitamin K is 80 mcg (micrograms).

Vitamin K is most commonly associated with blood clotting; the process requires a complex interplay of multiple proteins, of which 4 of them require vitamin K to function. Additionally, Vitamin K has been vigorously studied for its role in bone health, where it helps maintain a healthy bone mineral density. This helps reduce risk of bone fractures, especially hip fractures. Preliminary studies show promise in the use of Vitamin K in the fight against osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

Vitamin K is critical for the process of photosynthesis in plants, so it should come as little surprise that fresh greens are a go-to ready source.



Kale & its many varieties



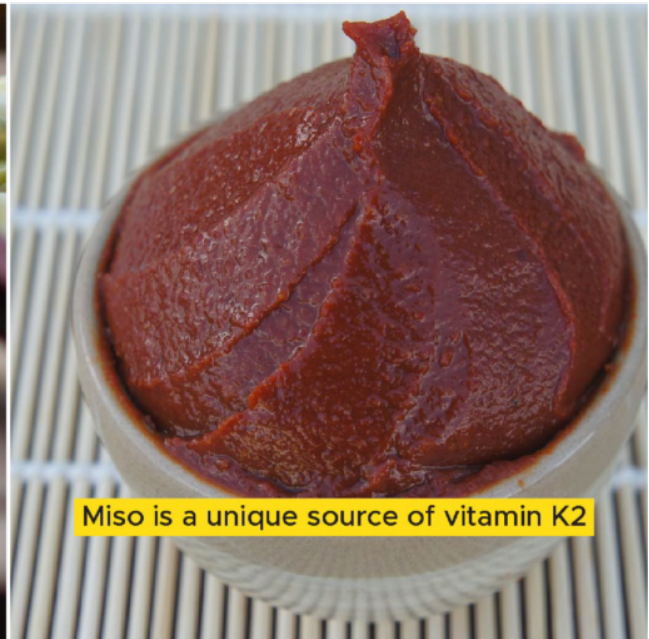
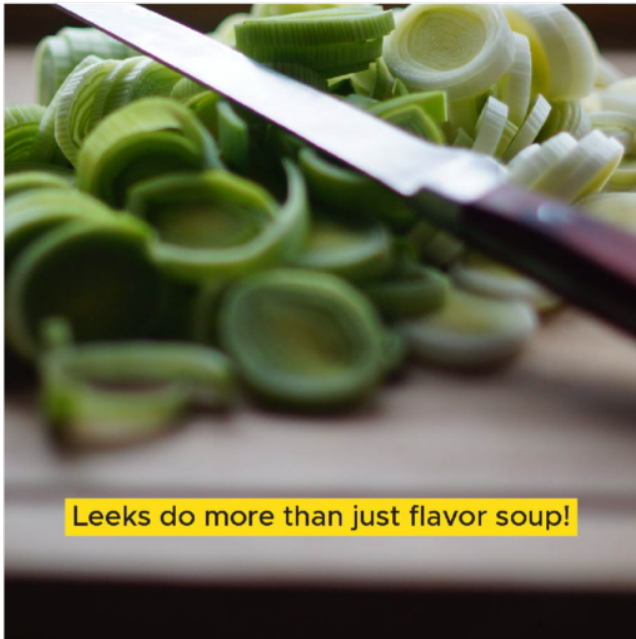
Basil, also known as Tulsi meaning
'the incomparable one'

Kale & its many varieties

Belonging to the cruciferous family, Kale is a bona fide superfood with its high concentrations of Vit K (1 cup cooked gives >1000% DV!), minerals, and antioxidants. Do you know the many varieties of kale out there?

Curly Kale has a peppery, bitter/tangy taste. Surprisingly a single serving has more vitamin C than an orange. Great for baking into kale chips. *Red Kale*, with a red stem, has a similar taste to curly Kale but is much sweeter and perfect for eating raw. *Lacinato Kale* is super dark, thinner, soft, and rich in flavor. Best when cooked and good in salads too. *Redbor Kale* has a deep purple color and is best softened through cooking in soups. *Baby Kale* is the easiest kale to find. Smaller and tender, the leaves taste great in salads and smoothies.

Basil, also known as Tulsi meaning 'the incomparable one' Basil is a powerful adaptogen. Adaptogens are herbs that are stress busters (physical, chemical & biological). Use it in cooking, grind into a pesto, infuse in hot water or simply chew a couple of leaves everyday. The eugenol compound extract from basil has been widely studied for its anti-inflammatory effects, providing the same relief that many over-the-counter aspirins do. A half cup of fresh basil provides 98% DV of vitamin K and 10% DV manganese and copper.



Leeks do more than just flavor soup

They comprise 16% inulin fiber, which nourishes good gut bacteria. Studies showed that eating leeks over 2 weeks increased beneficial bifidobacterial count in the gut. Leek belongs to the allium family which also includes garlicks, onions and scallions, and contains many of the same beneficial compounds the latter group possesses. Similarly, let leeks sit 5 minutes after cutting so their anti-cancer compounds develop fully. 1 cup cooked leeks provide 30% DV vitamin K and 6% DV folate.

Miso is a unique source of vitamin K2

A traditional ingredient of Japanese and Chinese cuisine, miso is a paste made from fermented soybeans, the fermentation being triggered by a mould called 'koji' (*Aspergillus oryzae*). The paste imparts the coveted 'umami' taste that these oriental cuisines are famous for. Miso is a great source of beneficial bacteria that strengthen our gut and enhance energy levels. Little wonder that many Japanese households begin the day with a bowl of miso soup. 1 tablespoon yields 1 cup of soup, providing 6% DV vitamin K, along with a host of other beneficial minerals.

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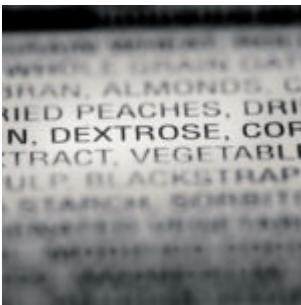


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