



# Leaf Lettuce

## Harvest of the Season

### Eat More Arizona Grown Leaf Lettuce

Vegetables are nature's power food! Eating a variety of vegetables and fruits gives you different vitamins and minerals to help keep your heart, teeth, gums, eyes and skin healthy. Eat them every day at meals and snacks.

Buy fresh vegetables, like leaf lettuce, in season when flavor is best and the price is low!

Most recently, Arizona produced 1,925,100,000 pounds, or almost 963,000 tons, of varietal leaf lettuces. That's over \$705 million of lettuce! This includes romaine and head lettuce. Also, organic lettuces were harvested from 3,236 acres and yielded 57 million pounds, or almost 28,500 tons of organic lettuce.

### Why Eat More Leaf Lettuce?

Leaf Lettuce is full of nutrients. Here's how the nutrients in leaf lettuce keep you and your family healthy:

Nutrients Found in Leaf Lettuce	
<b>Vitamin K</b>	Plays a role in bone and blood health
<b>Vitamin A</b>	Helps your eyes and skin stay healthy
<b>Vitamin B9 (Folate)</b>	Helps keep your hair, skin and nails healthy and helps prevent birth defects
<b>Fiber</b>	Helps keep your heart healthy and improve digestion
<b>Potassium</b>	Helps you maintain a healthy blood pressure

### What are the Different Types of Leaf Lettuce?

Try different types of leaf lettuce to find your family's favorite. These are a few types of leaf lettuce grown in Arizona on farms of all sizes:

- Spring mix
- Spinach
- Butter
- Endive
- Escarole
- Mache
- Romaine
- Salanova®

## How Much Do We Need?

In general, your family should eat:

Age	Vegetables	Fruits
Children 2 - 3	1 cup	1 cup
Children 4 - 8	1 1/2 cups	1 to 1 ½ cups
Older children and teens	2 to 3 cups	1 ½ to 2 cups
Adults	2 1/2 to 3 cups	2 cups

Patience works better than pressure. Offer your children new foods. Then let them choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy a food when they have made the choice to try it.

Make half your plate vegetables and fruits. Visit [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more information.

## How to Choose, Store and Prepare Leaf Lettuce

### Choose:

- Choose lettuce that looks fresh, crisp and free from brown or yellow edges.
- Avoid lettuce that looks wilted
- Choose head lettuces that are heavy in weight and where the leaves are tight.

### Store:

- Store fresh leafy greens in the refrigerator at or below 41° F and use within three to five days.
- Loosely wrap in a damp paper towel and put in either a plastic bag or a plastic food-grade container to extend shelf life.
- Keep raw uncooked items like eggs and meat away from ready-to-eat items like lettuce in your grocery cart and refrigerator to prevent cross contamination.
- Always wash lettuce under cool, running water.
- For best results, spin dry using a salad spinner.

### Prepare:

Fresh leaf lettuces are often eaten raw and in a salad. Try these tips for washing and preparing your leaf lettuces.

1. Always prepare lettuce with washed hands.
2. Remove the core. For head lettuce, hit the core (head side down) on a counter or cutting board. The solid hit will separate the core from the head and the core can be easily twisted and pulled away from the head.
3. Wash lettuce that will be used immediately under cool, running water.
4. Tear or chop lettuce into desired bite-sized pieces and allow lettuce to dry. Use a salad spinner for best results.
5. Serve with other ingredients as desired.

Tip: While shopping in the grocery store, pick up your leaf lettuce last and place in a soft cooler to help keep lettuce cool until you get home.

To learn more, visit [fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](https://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org).



## Plant and Grow Leaf Lettuce

- Plant leaf lettuce seeds with your kids. Plant your seeds in an area or garden with partial sun exposure. Be sure to pay attention to how much sun your lettuces are getting. They may need shade from other plants to prevent sun damage. Lettuce grows well in Arizona because of its dry climate.
  - In the central and southern regions of Arizona, plant between September and October for a winter crop that will grow through April.
  - In northern Arizona, plant lettuce in February or March for a spring and summer crop that will run through September.
- Leaf lettuces need about five to seven weeks to grow until harvest. Baby versions of these lettuces need less time to mature.

Visit [extension.arizona.edu](http://extension.arizona.edu) for harvest and planting information.

## Arizona Sunshine Salad

### Ingredients:

- 1 peeled grapefruit
- 1 peeled orange
- 10 cups bite-size pieces of fresh lettuce leaves
- 1 thinly sliced, small red onion
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon water
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cumin

### Directions:

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap.
2. Wash fresh fruit and vegetables before preparing.
3. Cut fruit into bite size pieces and toss with the sliced red onion in a large bowl.
4. Mix remaining ingredients in a small bowl. Drizzle over salad and toss just before serving.
5. Serve cold.



**Makes 8 servings,**  
approximately 1 ½  
cups each.

### Nutrition Facts

per serving  
calories.....47  
carbohydrates .... 9 gm  
protein..... 1 gm  
total fat..... 2 gm  
saturated fat..... 0 gm  
trans fat..... 0 gm  
cholesterol ..... 0 mg  
fiber ..... 2 gm  
total sugars..... 3 gm  
sodium..... 9 gm  
calcium..... 13 gm  
folate..... 10 mcg  
iron.....0.1 mg  
calories from fat...34%

For more free recipes, visit [EatWellBeWell.org](http://EatWellBeWell.org).

## Choose Locally Grown Vegetables and Fruits

- Arizona grown vegetables and fruits taste best and cost less when purchased in season.
- Vegetables and fruits grown in Arizona spend less time in the back of a truck. This causes less damage to the vegetables and fruits.
- When farmers sell directly to consumers, they cut out the middleman and receive full value for their product. This allows farmers to continue to farm and provide service to the community.
- Let your kids be produce pickers. Help them pick vegetables at a grocery store, your local farmers' markets, or at a u-pick farm near you! Go to [arizonagrown.org](http://arizonagrown.org) for more information.

Visit the School Food Programs section of the Arizona Department of Education Health and Nutrition Services website at [www.azed.gov](http://www.azed.gov) for more information.



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