

# Nutritious Friend



## Why are tomatoes good for you?

Broccoli is an excellent source of Vitamin C. Vitamin C is needed for the growth and repair of boney tissue. It also helps the body make collagen, a tissue needed for healthy bones, teeth, gums and blood vessels.

Not only is broccoli high in Vitamin C but also folate, which helps the body to make cells, biochemical reactions and for metabolism.

Broccoli is a good source of dietary fiber and potassium. It even contains calcium for healthy bones and teeth! Believe it or not, broccoli has as much calcium per ounce as milk.

Broccoli is low in calories. It is also fat and cholesterol free.

## What is broccoli?

Like cabbage, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable. All are members of the cabbage family.

Broccoli contains the phytonutrient (plant-nutrient) sulforaphane (pronounced: sul-for a-fain). Sulforaphane has been shown in some studies to reduce risk of cancer.

## Health and Learning Success Go Hand-in-Hand

The Nutritious Friends program promotes a different healthy food each month through educational materials, activity & coloring sheets, student interaction and incorporation in the monthly menu. Nutritious Friends proves healthy eating can be delicious as students take part in promotional games, learn interesting nutrition facts and sample new recipes.

# Broccoli

## DID YOU KNOW....

Broccoli got its name from the Latin word "brachium," which means "arm" or "branch."

Broccoli is a vegetable which grows as florets (clusters of flower buds) on stalks (stems).

Broccoli has been around for more than 2,000 years and was first grown in Italy.

Broccoli was introduced to the United States in colonial times, popularized by Italian immigrants who brought this prized vegetable with them to the New World.

Americans have grown broccoli for over 200 years.

Today, California produces the most broccoli in the North America (more than 90% of the nation's broccoli supply!).

The most common broccoli sold in the US is a variety called "Italian Green Sprouting Broccoli."

Broccoli can be mixed with a variety of foods. It can be used as a soup, salad, flavoring for grains, or even as a main dish.

Broccoli florets cook much faster than the stalks. Cut the stalks about halfway up. This causes the stalk to cook faster. Another option is to cut off the florets and add them to the pot after the stalks have cooked for 2 to 3 minutes.

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## Ten Facts About Broccoli

1. Broccoli heads are actually groups of buds that are almost ready to flower; each group of buds is called a floret.
2. The dark green broccoli plant has a firm stalk and branching arms that end in heads of florets.
3. The scientific name for broccoli is *Brassica oleracea*.
4. Broccoli is a member of the Brassicaceae family of plants, which also includes cauliflower, kale, cabbage, collards, turnips, rutabagas, Brussels sprouts and Chinese cabbage.
5. California is broccoli country - more than 90 percent of the nation's broccoli crop grows there!
6. Other states that produce broccoli include Arizona, Washington, Maine, Wisconsin, Ohio, Colorado, Oregon, Texas and Florida.
7. Fresh broccoli is available year-round in supermarkets throughout the United States.
8. One half cup of raw or cooked broccoli counts as one serving of vegetables and contains just 15 calories.
9. A serving of broccoli is a good source of vitamin C and vitamin K.
10. Broccoli contains carotenoids and flavonoids, phytochemicals that fight to protect your health!

## Curly Broccoli Bake

### Ingredients

- 3 cups cooked whole wheat pasta
- 3 cups frozen broccoli, cooked/chopped/drained
- 1 can (10.5 oz) low-fat cream of broccoli soup, condensed
- 1/2 cup fat-free milk
- 2 tablespoons breadcrumbs or crushed cornflakes
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Mix soup with milk, and add chopped broccoli in a large bowl.
3. Add the cooked pasta and mix.
4. Transfer mixture to baking dish which has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.
5. Top with breadcrumbs/cornflakes and seasoning.
6. Bake in oven 10-15 minutes until heated through

**BROCCOLI**  
DECEMBER

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# Cranberries

## Cranberry Facts

Once called a "cranberry" due to its strong resemblance to a crane, this tart, tasty berry is a nutritional powerhouse that has been complementing holiday meals for decades.

Cranberries were first used by Native Americans, who discovered the wild berry's versatility as a food, fabric dye and healing agent. Native Americans recognized the nutritional properties of the berry far before science proved them to be true.

Eating cranberries is healthy because they are high in fiber and Vitamin C. The red color of cranberries comes from important phytochemicals to help prevent heart disease, cancer, and age-related mental decline.

Cranberries grow on vines in wet bogs. Native to North America, Wisconsin produces half of the cranberry crop in the USA. Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Washington are other big producers.

**Fun Fact:** More than 100 different cranberry varieties exist, many of which were named after the families that first planted them. Today Americans consume 400 million pounds of this "native to North America" fruit each year.

**Fun Fact Two:** Cranberries are also called "bounce berries" because the ripe ones bounce! Its magical bouncing abilities were discovered in 1880 when a harvester rolled his berries from his loft to a basket at the end of the stairs in an attempt to move them more quickly. In the process, he discovered that the bruised berries were left on the stairs while the ripe, firm berries bounced to the bottom.

**Why do cranberries float?** Cranberries have four air pockets inside them. This allows the cranberries to float to the surface during the wet harvest operation.

## Cranberry Couscous

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup chopped white onion
- 1 1/2 cups cranberry juice cocktail, heated to simmer
- 1 cup couscous
- 2 scallions green parts only
- 1/2 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios

### Directions

1. In a medium saucepan add olive oil.
2. Add the white onion, sweetened dried cranberries and pistachios and saute gently over low heat until onion is translucent and slightly fragrant.
3. Add the couscous and the warm cranberry juice cocktail.
4. Stir with a fork to combine, cover.
5. Let sit for 10 minutes.
6. Add the scallions. Fluff with fork.
7. Season, to taste with salt and pepper. Toss gently to combine. Turn into serving dish. Serve hot.

Recipe courtesy of the Cape Cod Growers' Association.



# ACTIVITIES

## DECEMBER



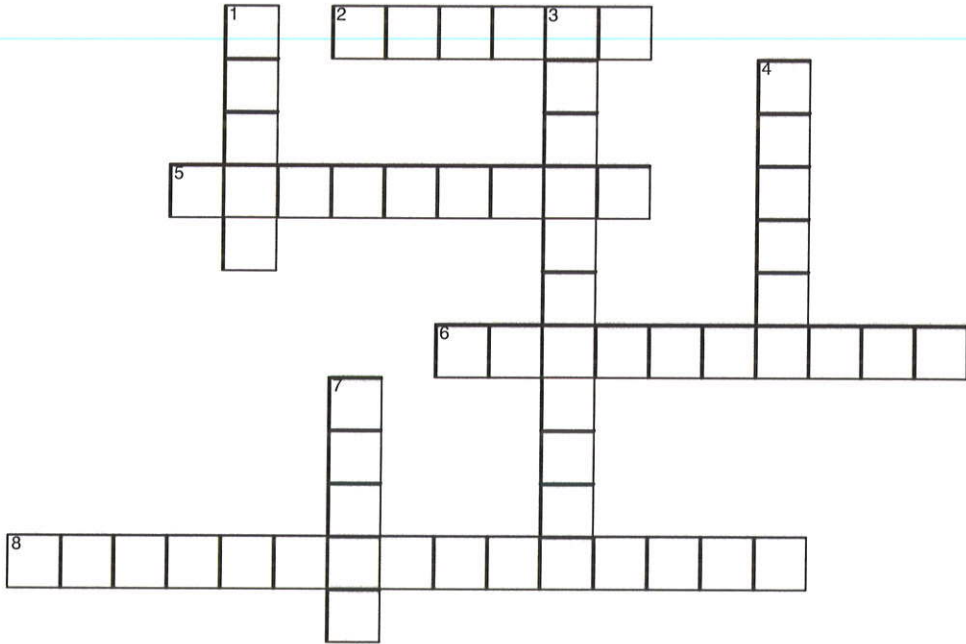
Circle all the broccoli or dark green vegetables on December's menu.

How many did you find?

How many do you plan to eat this month?

What is your favorite dark green vegetable?

### Broccoli Crossword



**ACROSS**

- 2 The word "brocco" means this.
- 5 Broccoli belongs to this food group.
- 6 More than 90% of the broccoli grown in the United States, is grown in this state.
- 8 Broccoli is in the same family as this vegetable.

**DOWN**

- 1 Broccoli is a good source of what?
- 3 Broccoli resembles this white vegetable.
- 4 Broccoli comes from this part of the plant.
- 7 Broccoli was first grown by immigrants from?