



Get to know: Leeks

The leek is a vegetable that belongs, with onion and garlic, to the genus *Allium*. Leeks look and smell like scallions, but have a smaller bulb and long white stalks of superimposed layers of leaves that flow from white into green. Leeks are widely appreciated by farmers and cooks for their more delicate and sweeter flavor, compared to its onion relatives. By adding leek to your recipes it provides a subtle touch of 'onion' without overpowering other flavours.

Nutrition

One cup (100g) of leek has 32 calories, 14.15g of carbohydrates, 1.8g of fibre, and 1.5g of protein. With 32 calories per 1-cup cooked serving, leeks fill you up without costing you too many calories. If you're trying to control your calorie intake to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, foods like leeks make a good choice.

Fun Facts

The leek is one of the national emblems of Wales, alongside the daffodil. According to legend, the king, Cadwaladr of Gwynedd, ordered his soldiers to identify themselves by wearing this vegetable on their heads in a battle against the Saxons that took place in a leek field. The legend even managed to sneak its way into Shakespeare's *Henry V*, where the main character tells the Welsh officer Fluellen that he too is wearing a leek "for I am Welsh".

Health Benefits

100 g of leeks will provide 29 percent and 13 percent of one's daily dose of vitamin K and manganese respectively and it contains important amounts of the flavonoid kaempferol, which has been repeatedly shown to help against cardiovascular damage. Although leeks have not received the same amount of scientific attention as their relatives, it can well be assumed the overlap in terms of health benefits associated with reduction in oxidative stress, chronic low-level inflammation, atherosclerosis, type 2 diabetes, obesity, rheumatoid arthritis, and allergic airway inflammation applies to leek. We would also expect to see leeks providing measurable amounts of protection against several different types of cancer, mostly likely including colorectal cancer.



source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leek, www.whfoods.com

image: tropicalmoments.files.wordpress.com

What you can try with leeks:

Creamy ham, leek & mushroom spaghetti

Recipe by: BBC Good Food

Serves: 4

What You Need:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 medium leeks, thinly sliced
- 200g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 300g spaghetti
- 140g low-fat soft cheese
- 85g wafer-thin smoked ham, shredded
- small pack basil
- 25g grated parmesan

What To Do:

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Stir in the leeks, 2 tbsp water and some seasoning, cover, then cook for 5 mins over a medium heat until softened. Add the mushrooms and garlic, then cook for 3 mins more. Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti according to pack instructions, then drain, reserving a little of the cooking liquid.
2. Stir the soft cheese into the leek and mushroom mixture, adding enough of the reserved pasta liquid to give a sauce-like consistency. Add the ham, basil leaves and Parmesan, then toss in the spaghetti.

source: www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/230615/creamy-ham-leek-and-mushroom-spaghetti

More information

- Leek Soup: www.yummly.com/recipe/Leek-Soup-1025073
- Mushroom, Leek and Fontina Frittata: bonappetit.com/recipe/mushroom-leek-and-fontina-frittata
- Stir Fry Pork with Leek: cooking-china.com/chinese-recipe/en/pork/stir-fried_pork_with_chinese_leek.html