

**VEGETABLES THAT ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO BUILD IRON STORES &** **HOW TO   
WORK WITH THEM**

We are going to consider how vegetables provide iron for strength, knowing that limited amounts of dairy products are excellent sources and most individuals rely on meat and fish for a balanced diet.

A vegetarian diet - one that allows for moderate amounts of dairy products (known as lacto-ovo vegetarian) is a proven means of supplying adequate nutrition in a heart-healthy sense. Eliminating dairy products in a vegan diet, when nutritionally balanced, is an even more effective heart-healthy lifestyle practice.

If you are interested in reading rationale on this subject, you may find a brief overview in one of the cooking books referenced, New Vegetarian Cuisine, which may be purchased on Amazon.com. Or you may inquire of Dr. Hans Diehl.

If you examine the database of food composition of the American diet, you will note the manufactured cereal foods are highest in iron because they are fortified. However, other considerations are their high sugar content (sugars, corn syrup--fructose, malt, etc.) and the presence or absence of whole grain)

Interestingly, mollusks or clams have the highest unfortified iron content of all foods in the American diet - 24 mg./3 oz can and 5.9 mg. when breaded and fried. One must consider the environment where the animal dwells-the bottom of the shoreline region-and what filters through their bodies.

**IRON COMPOSITION OF FOODS OF THE AMERICAN DIET**

[Obtained from the US Dept. of Agriculture Nutrient List at http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/000020.html ] Notice how they are prepared so that the nutrient is available for digestion.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Spinach** - at the top of the list, even when cooked (6.5 mg/cup); when raw .8 mg/cup; 1 leaf = .27 mg. | **Jerusalem artichokes**, raw -- a remarkable vegetable root worthy of investigating (5.1 mg/cup; globe or French type are 2.1) |
| **Dark leaf lettuce** (approx. 2.2/serving) | **Baked white potatoes skin** (4 mg) |
| **Dandelion greens**, cooked (1.9 mg/cup) | **Brussels sprouts**, cooked (1.9 mg/cup) |
| **Peas**, cooked (3.8 mg/cup) | **Winter squash**, cooked (1.4 mg/cup) |
| **Baby lima beans**, cooked (3.5 mg/cup) | **Beets**, cooked (1.3 mg/cup) |
| **Pumpkin,** canned (3.4 mg/cup) | **Asparagus**, cooked (1.3 mg/cup) |
| **Tomatoes**, stewed (3.4 mg/cup) | **Kale**, cooked (1.2 mg/cup) |
| **Turnip greens**, cooked (3.1 mg/cup) | **Broccoli,** cooked (1.1 mg/cup raw broccoli has .64 mg/cup) |
| **Beet greens or chard**, cooked (2.7 mg/cup) [**Raisins** are approx. the same] | **Parsely**, 10 sprigs are .6 mg |
| **Collard greens**, cooked (2.2 mg/cup) | **Tomatoes**, raw (.49 mg/cup) |

[One hard-boiled egg is only .6 mg]  
  
Many other highly nutritious natural foods fall below this line, but that is why we should balance the compositions of foods in the menu to acquire adequate nutrients for health, building on the above list and thinking of complimentary foods also containing iron but perhaps richer in other minerals.  
  
**Suggested Recipes**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Spinach** | **Legumes** |
| **Bulgur with Spinach & Oranges**  (Remember, citrus has Vit. C and C enhances absorption of Iron) 1. In a 2-qt. saucepan over high heat, bring water to a boil; stir in 1/4 cup of bulgur wheat. Then remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with fork.  2. Add: 4 c. coarsely chopped fresh spinach 1/4 c. low-sodium vegetable stock (broth) 1 c. drained canned mandarin oranges or fresh sections Simmer over a low heat for 2-3 minutes or until spinach has wilted. Remove from heat.  3. Mix in a small bowl: 1/2 c. nonfat yogurt 1 T. red wine vinegar (optional) 1 T. minced scallions 2 tsp. olive oil 1/2 tsp. ground cumin 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper (optional)  Pour over bulgur and oranges. Mix. Sprinkle with 1 T. sesame seeds [A variation on this is using pre-steamed brown rice] (Source: New Vegetarian Cuisine, page 352. Amazon.com) | **Snow Pea & Grape Tomato Salad**  1. Assemble:  1 c. washed grape tomatoes 6 ox. fresh snow peas, strings removed, and blanched in boiling water for 30 seconds 2. Combine 2 T. chopped fresh cilantro in 1/4 c. Oriental-style vinaigrette 3. Combine all.  **Lentil Delight**  1. In 4 qt. saucepan place 3 c. dried lentils (rinsed and carefully examined for dirt and gravel) with water covering at least 1 1/2 inches. Bring to boil, turn off heat, and let sit for 2 hours with lid on.  2. Then cook at medium heat for approx. 1 hour or until slightly firm with soft insides. 25 minutes before end of cooking, add:  1 c. of barley or brown rice, a small onion chopped, and  1 T. chopped garlic 2 tsp. salt  3. 10 minutes before end of cooking, add: 1/3 c. olive 1 13 oz can seasoned stewed tomato chunks 1 T. herb seasoning of choice: basil, oregano, Italian |
| **Scrambled Eggs & Greens**  You may use any combination of 2 greens, the richer being spinach, turnip, beet, dandelion, and watercress. 1. Prepare a large frying pan with no-stick spray and warm it. Add 1/2 c. chopped red onions and 2 minced garlic cloves and stir until tender.  2. Add: 1 c. coarsely chopped fresh spinach 1 c. coarsely chopped collard greens (or other choice) 1 T. water  And cook for 5 mins., or until greens are wilted and water has evaporated. Set aside in a bowl. Wipe out pan.  3. In a medium bowl, whisk together: 2 T. water 2 c. egg substitute 1 tsp. Dijon mustard 1/4 tsp. fennel seeds, crushed (or basil or oregano herb) 1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper (optional)  4. Warm 1 T. canola oil in frying pan; add the egg mixture and stir while cooking for 3 minutes, or until soft. Stir in the greens and 1/4 c. Monterrey Jack cheese. Cook for 30 seconds, or until cheese starts to melt and eggs are firm. (Source: New Vegetarian Cuisine, page 245. Amazon.com) | **RED & YELLOW VEGETABLES**  **Pumpkin Soup**  **(Serves 4)**  **1. Cook 2 medium baking potatoes, peeled and cut into 2" pieces until tender. Drain.**  **Transfer to blender, add 1 c. buttermilk and process.**  **2. In a 3-qt. saucepan over medium heat, melt 1 T. margarine. Stir in: Potato mixture 2 cans pumpkin 2 T. peanut butter 2 c. low-sodium vegetarian stock 1 1/2 c. skim milk 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon 1/8 tsp. grated nutmeg**  **Stir until heated through, remove from heat and stir in 2 tsp. lemon juice.**  **Sun-dried Tomato & Parsley Pesto**  **1. In a small bowl, combine 12 sun-dried tomatoes (dry) and 1 c. boiling water. Let stand for 2 minutes. Drain and reserve the soaking liquid.**  **2. Place the soaked tomatoes in the bowl of a food processor. Add 2 plum tomatoes, quartered. Process until coarsely chopped. Add: 1/4 c. chopped fresh lat-leaf parsley (or cilantro) 1 T. grated Parmesan cheese 1 T. pine nuts 2 tsp. red wine vinegar 2 T. reserved tomato soaking liquid**  **3. Cook 12 oz. tri-color tortellini or bowties in boiling water until tender. Drain.**  **4. Toss the pesto mixture in a large bowl with the pasta and serve.**  **(This recipe can be found in New Vegetarian Cuisine, p. 45; the one on the left on p. 161)** |