

MINUTE NUTRITION NEWS

July 2018

Eating Local and Seasonal: Rapini

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Rapini, also known as broccoli rabe, is a leafy green vegetable that is packed with nutrition. With its distinguished bitter note, it's a great addition for adding depth to the flavor of your dishes. You may have seen this vegetable year round in the grocery store, but keep an eye out this month until October for some locally grown rapini.

Nutritional Benefits

Rapini is an excellent source of **vitamin A** and also contains an antioxidant called **lutein**. Both of these are important for healthy vision. Lutein may also lower the risk of age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

Rapini is also a member of the cruciferous vegetable family. Vegetables of this family have been found in animal studies to contain powerful **anti-inflammatory** properties that may provide **cancer-fighting** effects. The best way to maximize this effect is to lightly cook the vegetables (e.g. steam 3-5 minutes) before consuming.



Rapini is also an excellent source of **vitamin K**, and in lower amounts, **calcium**. Both of these nutrients are essential for maintaining optimal bone health. Half a cup of cooked rapini provides over 25% of the daily requirement for vitamin K and close to 10% for calcium.

Rapini also provides **fibre** and is a good source of **B vitamins**, **vitamins C and E**, and **folate**.

Buying and Storing Rapini

When shopping for rapini, look for bunches that are firm with a bright green colour. Avoid ones that are starting to wilt or turn yellow on the leaves or florets. Once bought, the vegetable should be stored in the fridge inside a plastic bag and consumed within 3-5 days.



Cooking Ideas

The bitterness of rapini pairs well with salty and savoury flavours. Suitable ingredients could be red meats, hard cheeses, anchovies or simple seasonings like salt or fish sauce.

Some examples could be:

- sautéing rapini seasoned with garlic, salt and red pepper flakes;
- topping a pizza with tomato sauce, blanched rapini and cheese;
- adding rapini to a meat sauce in pasta;
- blanching or steaming rapini and topping with grated parmesan.

Recipe of the month

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Cheesy Mushroom, Pork and Rapini Pizza

Who says pizza can't be a dietitian-approved meal? This pizza recipe is a great example of one! Serve this with a side salad for a great summer meal.



Makes 2 pizzas (4 servings)

Ingredients:

4 stalks	Rapini, chopped into 1 to 2 inch pieces
1 tsp	Olive oil
2 cloves	Garlic, minced
6 oz	Ground pork, raw
¼ tsp	Dried oregano
1 pkg (of 2)	Appetizer Flatbreads
½ cup	Canned tomato sauce, no salt added
1 tbsp	Red onion, diced
2 tsp	Parmesan cheese, grated
6	Button mushrooms, sliced
6 oz	Mozzarella cheese, low-fat, grated
Pinch	Crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Bring a saucepan of water to a boil. Add chopped rapini and boil for 1 minute. Drain and put in an ice-water bath or under cold running water to stop the cooking process. Set aside.
3. In a small skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add minced garlic and cook for a few seconds until fragrant. Add ground pork and oregano. Stir gently so that the pork cooks evenly but remains in bite-sized chunks. Set aside once cooked.
4. Lay two flatbreads on a baking sheet. On each flatbread, evenly spread half of the tomato sauce, then layer on half of the diced onions, rapini, Parmesan cheese, sliced mushrooms, cooked pork and Mozzarella cheese. Bake for 7 minutes.
5. If desired, sprinkle a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes on pizzas before serving.

Nutrition information (per ½ pizza):

400 calories, Fat 18g (24% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Protein 24g

Carbohydrate 36g, Fibre 1g (4%), Sugars 5g (5% DV)

Sodium 600mg (26% DV), Potassium 303mg (6% DV), Calcium 434mg (33% DV), Iron 3mg (17% DV)