

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BOOK REVIEW

THE POWER GREENS COOKBOOK

140 Delicious Superfood Recipes

By: Dana Jacobi

Available through Amazon.com

The book we are reviewing this month was chosen because we hear so much about adding greens to our diets being so good for us but many of us don't really know much about greens so.....

The first thing Ms. Jacobi recommends is that, while she has carefully researched this book for good nutrition recommendations, you should always consult with your doctor before making sustained or extensive changes to your diet. Ashley Koff, RD who is a dietitian who has worked with patients for over a decade to use food to improve and maintain their health, wrote the Foreword. She says she has often heard, "I know I should eat more greens but I don't know how to cook them so they will taste good and still be healthy." Ms. Koff says it is the combined knowledge of the health power of greens and easy great-tasting ways to prepare them that provides true power. She said she was thrilled when one of her favorite cookbook authors, Dana Jacobi, "created this book that does both beautifully and simply."

She continued, "These fifteen leafy dark greens deliver nutrients that will actually improve the health of every part of your body. At your core, greens improve digestion by helping to remove toxins from the body as well as helping promote a healthy PH level that in turn creates a more suitable environment for good bacteria (probiotics). As we age, our bodies need nutrient support to protect all our cells and maintain the health of organs large (skin) and small (eyes). Leafy Power Greens are one of the most important sources of different antioxidants---vitamins and minerals as well as plant nutrients (phytonutrients). These antioxidants play a critical role as our body's cleanup team. They seek out the "dirt" (free radicals) that life's stresses, food, environmental toxins and the general workload in the body produce."

She went on to talk about how important taste is and how many of her patients over the years have tried to eat foods they don't like but they either don't eat enough of them or they pair them with foods that aren't good for them so they will taste better so these efforts haven't helped them get healthier. So, the key is to make healthy food taste great! Everybody isn't going to like the same foods and we don't always have the same tastes over our lifetime. Also, many greens are subjected to greater amounts of pesticides than other produce so it is important to use organically grown greens. Actually, you will find, Ms. Koff says, that these organic greens are usually the same price or close to it. Also, frozen organically grown greens are just as acceptable as "ready to eat" and variety is important in our diets so try all these 15 kinds of greens along with a lot of interesting and delicious ways to prepare them. Often, you will also gain further nutrients from the other ingredients in these recipes.

Ms. Jacobi says she grew up with a Mom who was a foodie, a health nut, a good cook and a great teacher. She said her mother taught her that good foods begin with buying good quality fresh foods, that storing them correctly until you use them is important and how you prepare them makes a huge difference in the taste. She said, "The benefits from eating power greens are vast---ranging from maintaining strong bones to protecting against cancer from head to toe, inside and out, including warding off skin cancers. They contain substances that neutralize and help eliminate toxins that accumulate in our bodies. Eating them helps reduce the risk of diabetes and strokes and helps keep your mind keen and your vision sharp! These

fifteen dark, leafy greens are dense with health-supporting nutrients and phytochemicals that protect against heart disease and high blood pressure and neutralize free radicals caused by inflammation and aging. To put it bluntly, eating Power Greens can save your life!” Also, many of these greens contain as much fiber as a bowl of oatmeal or even more. Some even contain a useful amount of protein which is particularly helpful in a meatless diet.

The fifteen Power Greens are: Arugula, Bok Choy, Broccoli Leaf, Broccoli Rabe, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Chard and Beet Greens, Cilantro, Collard Greens, Kale, Mustard Greens, Parsley, Romaine Lettuce, Spinach and Watercress. Ten of these Power Greens are Brassicas, aka cruciferous vegetables. Crucifers are a varied and supercharged botanical family. The ones included here: arugula, bok choy, broccoli rabe, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, collard greens, kale, broccoli leaf, mustard greens and watercress. Like other crucifers, such as radishes, turnips and broccoli, these greens taste hot or bitter because of the abundance of sulfur compounds and other phytochemicals they contain. These act as detoxifiers and often have anticancer properties along with other benefits explained in the sections for each vegetable. Parsley and cilantro are so rich in phytonutrients, vitamins and carotenoids that they are recommended as highly as the other greens.

The author goes on to tell you how to choose the greens, when to buy them, how much to buy, how and how long to store and how to sort before storing, how to wash, how to freeze and how to choose frozen greens and, of course, many, many ways to cook them, including preparing by “Short cook-quick cool” method of preparation. Her preferred way to store greens is to loosely wrap in a paper towel, then slip them inside a plastic bag, stems facing the opening. Leave the bag open or close it loosely. Check and change towel every couple of days and you can turn the bag inside out and reuse if too much moisture collects. There are individual ways of storing the greens also covered. She tells you the equipment you will need in your kitchen to easily prepare greens.

The kinds of recipes are: DIPS, SPREADS & BITES (Examples: Fig and Arugula Crostini, Watercress Deviled Eggs & Mexican Seven Layer Dip); SOUPS (Examples: Roasted Tomato Soup with Crisped Collard Greens, Thai Coconut Soup with Shrimp & Savoy Cabbage; Hot and Sour Soup with Bok Choy & Hoppin’ John Stew with Mustard Greens); SALADS: (Examples: Caesar Salad with Parmesan Chickpeas; Spicy Chopped Salad; Spinach Salad with Seared Nectarines and Honey-Mustard Dressing; Potato Salad with Green Peas & Watercress & Bangkok Beef Salad); MAIN DISHES: (Examples: Cod with Roasted Eggplant Ratatouille; Salmon Steamed in a Cabbage Leaf with Corn Butter; Pan-Seared Chicken Cutlets with Arugula, Orange & Fennel & Ginger Beef with Bok Choy. PASTA and GRAIN DISHES: (Examples: Baked Macaroni and Cheese with Spinach, Tortellini with Broccoli Rabe Florets; Toasted Couscous with Brussels Sprouts and Wild Mushrooms & Coconut Rice with Black Beans and Collard Greens); SIDE DISHES and CONDIMENTS: (Examples: Tahini Creamed Spinach; Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Miso-Orange Splash, Garlic and Parsley Smashed Potatoes, & Chard with Browned Onions; and SMALL MEALS and SNACKS: (Examples: Bacon, Arugula and Tomato on Focaccia; Zucchini, Onion and Fresh Herb Frittata; Spinach and Corn Pancakes with Lime Drizzle, Oatmeal Everything Cookies, Chocolate Fudge Energy Squares, Popcorn Trail Mix, Mean Green Smoothie, & Parsley-Ginger Lemonade.

The last Section is on THE BASICS and divides each of the fifteen greens into its own section with how to buy, store, and prepare along with the specific recipes for each green in its own section, making it easy to check out everything about the green you have purchased or are considering purchasing and preparing.

This is a particularly well-thought-out, usable book with some really simple (mostly), nutritious and GOOD recipes to use to improve your health.

Dana Jacobi is the author or co-author of fifteen cookbooks, including the bestselling 12 Best Foods Cookbook and Cook & Freeze: 250 Delicious Dishes to Serve Now and Later. Two of her books were

nominated for the James Beard Foundation Book Award. She writes “Something Different,” a bi-weekly column for the American Institute for Cancer Research and has written for Cooking Light, Food & Wine and The New York Times. An early adapter of digital media, she posted Dana’s Market Basket at Prevention.com. As Food and Wine editor for Prodigy, one of the first digital media sites, she posted The Byteable Feast, one of the first food blogs, from 1988 to 1993. Along with teaching cooking and developing recipes, she now blogs at danadish.tumblr.com and lives in NYC.