



Leeks

Growing & Harvest Info

Plant leeks in well-drained, moist soils and full sun. Add compost or fertilizer to the soil before planting. Plant seeds 6 inches apart and 6-8 inches deep. Water well. Mulch after planting to retain soil moisture. As leeks grow, add soil back so that it reaches the base of the first green leaf and then mound the soil around the stalks, starting when the stalks are 1 inch thick. Continue to fertilize the soil throughout the growing season and water 1 inch per week. Insufficient watering produces tough stalks.

Leeks are usually ready for harvest 100-120 days after planting. Begin harvesting when the stalks are 1 inch thick. Harvest earlier to use the leaves like scallions. To harvest, simply pull leeks out of the ground. In heavy clay soil, use a garden fork to reach under the roots and lift them out.

Nutritional Benefits

Leek (bulb and lower leaf)

Source	Rating
Vitamins	GOOD
Minerals	MODERATE
Fiber	MODERATE

Introduction

Leeks are thought to be native to Central Asia, but they have a long history in Europe and North America. Ancient Romans and Greeks popularized the vegetable in Europe; they valued leeks because of their beneficial effect on the throat. Today, leeks are known for many benefits, including lowering cholesterol, reducing the risk of cancer, and repelling insects.

Preservation

Storing:

- Shake and brush the plant to remove as much soil as possible, then thoroughly rinse.
- Before using, slice in half and rinse any remaining soil.

Refrigerating:

- Lightly wrap leeks in plastic wrap to contain the odor and moisture. Store in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator.

Freezing:

- Only freeze leeks if you plan on using them in soups or other recipes, rather than as a main dish.
- Cut into slices or leave whole.
- Seal in airtight bags and freeze.
- To preserve flavor, do not thaw before cooking.

Vegetable state	Use by
Raw	5 days
Refrigerated	2 weeks
Frozen	3 months



Leeks

Studies show that leeks lower levels of bad cholesterol and reduce the risk of blood clots and cardiovascular disease.

Prepare leeks like this:

Boiled
Fried
Poached
Sautéed
Roasted

Try leeks in:

Soups
Casseroles
Sauces
Pastas

Recipe 1: Leek and Potato Soup

Ingredients

- 3 leeks, chopped
- 18 small red potatoes
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 3 tbsp butter
- 2 cups milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

- Place potatoes into a large saucepan and add water to cover. Bring to a boil and cook until tender. Meanwhile, sauté leeks in butter until translucent.
- When potatoes are done, skin them while they are still hot and cut them into bite sized pieces.
- Place potatoes into a pot with chicken broth and leeks. Season with salt and pepper.
- Cover over medium heat until simmering, then remove from heat and stir in milk. Serve.

Recipe 2: Sautéed Spinach and Leeks

Ingredients

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 leek, cleaned, trimmed and sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 18 oz spinach, fresh
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

- Heat olive oil in a large pan over low-medium heat.
- Add leeks and sauté for 3-4 minutes, until softened. Add garlic and sauté an additional 30 seconds.
- Add spinach and sauté for 2-3 minutes, or until spinach is mostly wilted.
- Add salt and pepper to taste.