KALE FOR KEEPS

Kale is everywhere these days, from chips and juices to nail polish and skin lotion. Now everywhere includes your freezer. Earthbound Farm Organic Kale can sit there quietly until you’re in the mood for a superstar green. Then it goes straight from freezer to recipe with no washing or chopping.

You can pick up decent frozen kale from Stahlbush Island Farms, Trader Joe’s, or Whole Foods 365 Organic, but they’re second best next to Earthbound’s irresistible, flavorful leaves.

You won’t be thinking about the vitamin A (110 percent of a day’s worth), vitamin C (60 percent), and calcium (10 percent) that are listed on the package. Or the load of lutein and vitamin K in each 25-calorie (¹∕₃-cup) serving.

Trust us. Just throw a handful from the freezer into your soup or pasta sauce. Or run some under warm water for a minute, squeeze out the excess water, chop, and toss into your salad.

Or sauté some minced garlic in olive oil, add frozen kale, and stir-fry over medium-high heat until the greens are tender, about 2 to 3 minutes. Mushroom fan? Slice in some baby bellas or shiitakes right after the garlic. Mmm.

Don’t feel like turning on a burner? Place half the bag’s contents in the microwave for 2 minutes. For the entire bag, double the time. (You shouldn’t need the 7 to 9 minutes that Earthbound suggests.) Then drizzle with olive oil. You’ll devour it on the spot.

The kale craze is in full swing. Now you can keep it on ice, ready to rumble.

ebfarm.com—(800) 690-3200

BIG MACSTAKE

Leave it to Applebee’s. Why create healthy new menu items when you can toss two old standbys onto one plate and “invent” a new dish? All you need is a zippy name...something like, say, 4-Cheese Mac & Cheese with Honey Pepper Chicken Tenders.

Tossing in the add-on du jour doesn’t hurt, either. According to Applebee’s menu, the mac & cheese is “loaded with Applewood smoked bacon.” Ah, yes. If bacon can show up in everything from ice cream to doughnuts, why not in mac & cheese and fried chicken? It’s a no-brainer.

And speaking of brains, consider switching yours off when you order the 4-Cheeser. Better not to know that the dish will dispatch 1,830 calories to those tender parts that are padding your midsection. And that the calories come with a nice dose of white flour from the pasta, breadstick, and breading.

Your arteries will be too busy dealing with the 41 grams of saturated fat and 4,300 milligrams of sodium to fuel much brain activity anyway. And do you really want to know that your dish is roughly equal to four McDonald’s Double Cheeseburgers?

Next time, take a look at Applebee’s Have It All menu, which promises “indulgent flavors & satisfying portions all under 550 calories.”

Memo to corporate: If you can turn out entrées like Napa Chicken & Portobellos and Savory Cedar Salmon for less than 550 calories, why sell those other belly-and-brain-overload dishes in the first place?

applebees.com—(888) 592-7753

Orange You Glad!

Peel and slice 3 navel oranges. • Mix ¼ tsp. vanilla extract with 6 oz. 0% plain greek yogurt. • Microwave 2 Tbs. orange marmalade until pourable, 10-15 secs. • Divide orange slices among 4 plates. Top each slice with a dollop of yogurt and a drizzle of marmalade.

dish OF THE MONTH

“Sell by” and “Best if used by” dates let you know when a food passes its peak quality or taste, not when it becomes unsafe. But if any food looks, smells, or tastes “off,” toss (or return) it, no matter what the date.