

# Broccoli

Evidence shows that broccoli first arose in Italy. The florets are actually masses of hundreds of tiny flower buds. Broccoli is said to be a very potent anti-cancer food. Sulfurophanes are the compounds responsible for this, and they are abundant in broccoli!



## TIPS:

**Short-term Storage:** Put crowns or florets in plastic and store in refrigerator for 3-7 days. The amount of stress the plant faced has a lot to do with how long it will store.

**Long-term Storage:** Blanch and freeze.

**General Cooking Info:** Very versatile vegetable: soups, stews, baked dishes, dips, salads...Many people just throw the stalk of broccoli away. It's actually edible and quite enjoyable if prepared correctly: Peel the tough outer skin of the stalk with a paring knife. Cut into 1/2" cubes or thin sticks. Steam or saute as you would florets until tender.

**Growing info:** Broccoli and Cauliflower require a narrow range of temperature to grow well and produce a quality crop. They only like cool weather--not too cold, not too hot. And they like a highly fertile soil. We tried growing Cauliflower in the spring for the last two years, but the heat of summer came too quick in both cases to have a nice crop or any crop at all. So we'll only be doing cauliflower in the fall this year. Broccoli is a little less picky, and so we're going to attempt a sizable spring crop, but it's sort of hit and miss as to the quality of the harvest. Fall crops produce good crops much more consistently, and they can be extended into early winter. These plants take up a lot of space in the garden relative to many other crops, and they feed heavily, so they have a much larger foot print in the grand scheme of the garden.

**Common Problems:** *Cabbage worms in broccoli heads.* It's inevitable in organic production. We spray with Bt to reduce their numbers, but it's impossible (as far as we know) to eradicate them naturally. Many people see the worms as an affirmation to the chemical free nature of the food they're looking at. Some people see the worms as a presence that completely turns them off to eating the broccoli. To be sure you aren't eating worms (although they're quite nutritious themselves!), is to chop the broccoli into floret sized pieces. Float the pieces in salted cold water and give them a good shaking in the water. Leave them there for 15 minutes at least and pick out any floating worms or worms seeking "higher ground."

### **Steamed Broccoli Recipe**

1 bunch of broccoli

Many options here:

Olive oil, butter, flax seed oil, or mayonnaise

Lemon zest or juice, balsamic vinegar

Toasted almonds, toasted sesame seeds

1 Rinse out well your broccoli, and break into large, bite-sized florets. Cut off the stem and peel off the thick skin around the stem. Quarter or halve the stem lengthwise.

2 Bring 3/4 to 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan with a steamer. (Note that if you don't have a steamer, you can simply put the broccoli directly into an inch of boiling water.) Add the broccoli to the steamer and cover; reduce heat to medium and let cook for 5-6 minutes. The broccoli is done when you can pierce it with a fork. But be careful not to overcook the broccoli. As soon as it is pierce-able, remove from heat, place in serving dish.

3 Dress to taste with butter, olive oil, flax seed oil, mayonnaise, lemon zest or juice, balsamic vinegar, toasted almonds, or sesame seeds

*from Simply Recipes*

### **Parmesan-Roasted Broccoli**

4 to 5 pounds broccoli

4 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced

Good olive oil

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons grated lemon zest

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted

1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons julienned fresh basil leaves (about 12 leaves)

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Cut the broccoli florets from the thick stalks, leaving an inch or two of stalk attached to the florets, discarding the rest of the stalks. Cut the larger pieces through the base of the head with a small knife, pulling the florets apart. You should have about 8 cups of florets. Place the broccoli florets on a sheet pan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Toss the garlic on the broccoli and drizzle with 5 tablespoons olive oil. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, until crisp-tender and the tips of some of the florets are browned.

Remove the broccoli from the oven and immediately toss with 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil, the lemon zest, lemon juice, pine nuts, Parmesan, and basil. Serve hot.

*from Barefoot Contessa*

### **Broccoli Cheese Casserole**

2 tablespoons butter, plus 2 tablespoons butter

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

3 tablespoons flour

1 1/2 cup hot milk

1 1/2 cups grated sharp cheddar

2 heads broccoli, cut into 2-inch pieces, quickly steamed

1 1/2 cups crushed butter crackers

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in medium saucepan over medium high heat. Add in onions and cook until translucent, about 4 minutes. Stir in flour and stir to coat onions. Cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in hot milk. Return to heat and bring to a simmer. Stir in cheese by the handful. Add broccoli to the cheese sauce and pour into buttered casserole dish.

Melt remaining butter in a small skillet and stir in cracker crumbs. Cover the broccoli casserole with the buttered cracker crumbs. Bake until bubbly and lightly browned, about 20 minutes.

*from FoodNetwork.com*