

Mindfulness at the farm: Massaging kale



Kale is a hearty and versatile vegetable, great for many dishes

Caroline Ishii
Columnist

WAKEFIELD, Que. — For me, kale is a truly Canadian ingredient. Why?

It's easy-going, frost-hardy, and even sweetens in flavour with a touch of frost.

One of the oldest cultivated vegetables, kale has been a staple in people's diets during difficult times. Being hardy, it tends to stay around while other vegetables may whither at the first sign of cooler temperatures.

Kale is part of the cruciferous vegetable family like cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, and collard greens.

Native to the Mediterranean, kales are now more common in northern temperate parts of the Eastern Hemisphere.

Kale has grown in popularity as a healthy green alternative



Left: Rows and rows of 2 ft. tall kale look like palm trees in the field at Juniper Farm. Right: Kale Caesar, made by Caroline, with fresh vegetables from the farm.



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because it is among the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet. While kale was traditionally green, there are many colours in the supermarket, including yellow, green, white, red, or purple, and varieties with curly or smooth leaves.

At Juniper Farm, we have rows

upon rows of tall green and red kale leaves. Reaching up to two to three feet high in some plac-

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es, they look like palm trees in the fields. It's a stunning area referred to as the "sea of kale."

We grow several varieties of kale at the farm: curly green and red, baby kale, and black kale.

My favourite is black or lacinato kale, which I love eating raw in salads. It's also fun that its other name is "dinosaur kale" because its long and slender dark blue-green leaves are puckered in texture

and look reptilian.

There are several ways I use kale at the farm, like kale caesar salad, kale pesto, soups and stews, and kale chips.

The popular "sea of kale chips" we sell at the farm are crispy, chewy, tasty, and healthy. Kale chips are easy to make and versatile because you can add what seasonings you like, preferably dry.

Some possibilities include chili powder, black pepper, garlic powder, nutritional yeast, parmesan cheese, lemon or lime zest, or garam masala.

For a Japanese-inspired twist, I season the chips with *furikake* (Japanese rice seasoning) and *shichimi togarashi* (Japanese seven-spice blend), a popular condiment in Japan made from chili peppers, orange peel, sesame seeds, ginger, and *nori*.

The kale chips burn easily in the oven, so you need to watch them carefully. You've been warned! I've had many cooks leave them in the oven for a quick detour and return to find them burnt.

With smaller leftover bits, you can also put them on top of salads, soups, pasta, or rice. You've got a friend in kale.

See Chef Caroline Ishii's Japanese-inspired kale chips recipe below.

To learn more about Juniper Farm visit www.juniperfarm.ca.

Caroline Ishii's Japanese-inspired kale chips (vegan, gluten-free)

Made with Japanese seasonings, these kale chips pack the flavour

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Chef Caroline Ishii's Japanese-inspired kale chips (vegan, gluten-free)

Ingredients:

- 1 large bundle curly kale
- A few tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp *togarashi* or chili powder (adjust to heat preference)
- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- Furikake* (Japanese rice seasoning) to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 300 F
2. Remove the stems from the kale. Wash and dry the kale leaves thoroughly. Tear the leaves into smaller pieces.
3. Take a deep breath or two before you start. This is for you more than the kale. I believe we put our energy into food, so a more relaxed, happy vibe is better.
4. Put the kale into a large mixing bowl and drizzle with oil. Massage the kale in the oil with your hands. This helps to distribute the oil into the kale and break it down.



PHOTO CREDIT: PIXABAY/ANNA SULENCKA

Chef Caroline Ishii's Japanese-inspired kale chips, a twist on the "Sea of Kale Chips" popular at Juniper Farm.

5. Combine your desired seasonings. Add them to the kale, using your hands to distribute the spices evenly.
6. Taste the kale to see if you want to add more seasonings.
7. Spread the kale in a single layer on baking sheets.
8. Bake for about 20 minutes. You're looking for the chips to be slightly crispy but tender. The time will vary based on your oven, and they burn easily, so

- please watch carefully.
9. Remove from oven and let cool. The chips will crisp up even more once they are out of the oven.
10. Enjoy immediately, as they lose their crispiness with time. To make the chips crispy again, put them in a 200 F oven for a few minutes until they become crisp. They will burn very quickly, so stay close by and pay attention to see when they are ready.



PHOTO CREDIT: NIKKEI NATIONAL MUSEUM

Title: Yokan Cutter. Collection: Yamake Family Collection. Repository: Nikkei National Museum. Accession Number: 1997.9.10. Year: circa 1920.

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family. The family's patriarch, Junzo Yamake, owned a bakery called Kasuga-kashiten at 359 Powell Street from the mid-1920s to 1941. While many of the Yamake's tools were made by local sheet metal shops, this tool, and the other delicate *yokan* cutters in the Yamake Family Collection, were likely purchased directly from Japan. Junzo, his wife (Hatsuye), and their three children (Ikuko, Fusako, and Hiroshi) lived in a suite above the bakery. According to

custodian case files, Junzo was told to liquidate his "chattels," all personal possessions, including his confectionary shop/home in April of 1942. In May 1942, Junzo and his family were forcibly uprooted to Notch Hill, B.C., and later Kamloops, B.C. Explore more of the Yamake Family Collection and other treasures from the NNM at www.nikkeimuseum.org. You can also learn more about the dispossession and forcible uprooting of Japanese Canadians in the Landscapes of Injustice Archive, loi.uvic.ca/archive.
