chard

Beta vulgaris

In history: A member of the beet family, chard is grown for its meaty stems and tasty greens, but ancient Romans cultivated the plant for its roots as well.

Health: In a mere 35 calories per cup, chard supplies a staggering 700% of Vitamin K needs and a wealth of carotenoids that protect your eyes from age-related loss of vision.

Did you know? Like its distant relative spinach, chard contains oxalates, which are a waste product of plant metabolism. Oxalates are responsible for the gritty film left on your teeth after eating the vegetable.

About the veggie: Chard is one of the few vegetables that contains red and yellow betains—a type of pigment that produces the bright stem and vein color seen on certain types of chards. Red betains contain antioxidants; yellow betains do not. Betains are also found in beets, amaranth and prickly pears.

Cynara scolymus

Artichokes

Taste: A chemical compound found in artichokes called cynarin inhibits the sweet receptors on our tongues, so desserts will taste especially sweet when followed by a course including these members of the lettuce family.

Health: This flower bud contains a flavonoid called silymarin, which works as an antioxidant to help protect artery walls from damaging LDL cholesterol.

Etymology: The word “artichoke” comes from the Italian word occhioli which means pinecone.

One artichoke supplies 25% of the Daily Value for fiber and Vitamin C.

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