

Stalk Options

There's a lot more culinary life in celery than the diet crowd lets on. And research shows it can help prevent memory loss, lower blood pressure and may even inhibit cancer.

Celery's reputation as a diet food in no way does justice to its culinary strengths and subtleties. Here's a vegetable about which most of us know little except that it's "mostly water" and has "practically no calories."

The vegetable's bold texture and crunch can bring a satisfying contrast to all kinds of dishes. And its leaves, too often discarded, are supremely edible, adding a dash of good flavor — and celery's highest concentration of nutrients — to salads, soups or virtually any other dish.

Nutritional Facts about Celery

- A new study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* shows that luteolin — a bioactive plant compound found in celery, carrots, peppers, olive oil, peppermint, rosemary and chamomile — reduces age-related inflammation in the brain and may help prevent memory loss.
- Celery contains coumarins, compounds that help prevent free radicals from damaging cells. Coumarins also enhance the ability of certain white blood cells to eliminate harmful cells, including cancer cells.
- One serving of raw celery — about two to three stalks, or a little more than 1 cup chopped — provides 44 percent of the daily suggested amount of vitamin K (good for blood and bones) and 14 percent of vitamin C (an immune-system booster).
- Celery is a good source of potassium, calcium and magnesium, all associated with reduced blood pressure.
- The acetylenics in celery have been shown to inhibit tumor growth.
- Celery contains active compounds called phthalides, which contribute to celery's distinctive aroma and help lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, improve circulation and aid detoxification.

Source: Experience Life / Healthy Eating / April 2011