

Health benefits of broccoli

- Broccoli is one of the very low-calorie vegetables; provides just 34 calories per 100 g. Nonetheless, it is rich in dietary fiber, minerals, vitamins, and anti-oxidants that have proven health benefits. Total antioxidant strength **oxygen radical absorbance capacity** (ORAC) of broccoli is 1632 µmol TE/100 g.
- Fresh Broccoli is a storehouse of many **phytonutrients** such as *thiocyanates, indoles, sulforaphane, isothiocyanates*, and flavonoids like *beta-carotene cryptoxanthin, lutein, and zeaxanthin*. Studies have shown that these compounds by modifying positive signaling at molecular receptor levels help protect against prostate, colon, urinary bladder, pancreatic, and breast cancers.
- Fresh broccoli is an exceptionally rich source of vitamin-C; providing 89.2 mg or about 150% of RDA per 100 g. Vitamin-C is a powerful natural antioxidant, and immune modulator helps fight against flu-causing viruses.
- Further, it contains good amounts of another anti-oxidant vitamin, **vitamin-A**. 100 g fresh head provides 623 IU or 21 % of recommended daily levels. Together with other pro-vitamins like beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, and zeaxanthin, vitamin-A helps in maintaining the integrity of skin and mucosa. Vitamin-A is essential for healthy eyesight and helps prevent macular degeneration of the retina in the older adults.
- **Broccoli leaves** (green tops) are an excellent source of carotenoids and vitamin-A; (**16000 IU of vitamin-A per 100 g**) carrying these compounds many folds higher than that in their flower-heads.
- Fresh heads are an excellent source of **folates**; contain about 63 µg/100 grams (provides 16% of RDA). Studies have shown that consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits rich in folates during pre-conception, and pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects in the newborns.
- This floret-vegetable is a rich source of vitamin-K and the B-complex group of vitamins like Niacin (vitamin B-3), pantothenic acid (vitamin B-5), pyridoxine (vitamin B-6), and riboflavin. Further, its florets also hold some amount of omega-3 fatty acids (Alpha linolenic acid-ALA).
- Furthermore, it is also a good source of minerals like calcium, manganese, iron, magnesium, selenium, zinc, and phosphorus.

Creamy Cashew Broccoli Soup

Broccoli is crazy low in calories, but since it's packed with fiber and water, it'll help you stay fuller longer. Instead of cream, this soup gets its velvety texture from cashews, which are high in protein, fiber, and satiating healthy fats.

SERVINGS: 4

1 c raw cashews
5 c low-sodium vegetable broth, divided
1 Tbsp canola oil
1 sm onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
6 c broccoli florets
2 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
Salt and pepper, to taste

- 1. SOAK** cashews in hot water for 1 hour (or in cold water overnight). Drain. Blend cashews with 1 c of the vegetable broth until smooth. Set aside.
- 2. SAUTE** onion, garlic, and broccoli in the canola oil in a large stockpot until onion begins to soften and broccoli is bright green, 3 to 4 minutes.
- 3. ADD** the cashew mixture, the remaining vegetable broth, and the soy sauce. Bring mixture to a simmer and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes, until broccoli is completely soft. Allow mixture to cool slightly.
- 4. TRANSFER** mixture to a blender and blend until smooth. Return soup to stockpot and add apple cider vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for 5 minutes, or until hot. Serve.

NUTRITION (per serving) 260 cal, 9 g pro, 22 g carb, 6 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 17 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 589 mg sodium