

Health Benefits of Parsley

- Parsley is one of low calorific herb. 100 g of fresh leaves carry just 36 calories. Additionally, its leaves hold zero cholesterol and fat, but rich in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. On the whole, the herb helps in controlling blood cholesterol and may offer protection against free radical-mediated injury and cancers.
 - Parsley contains health benefiting essential volatile oils that include *myristicin*, *limonene*, *eugenol*, and *α -thujene*.
 - The essential oil, **Eugenol**, present in this herb has been in therapeutic application in dentistry as a local anesthetic and antiseptic agent for teeth and gum diseases. *Eugenol* has also been found to reduce blood sugar levels in diabetics; however, further detailed studies required to establish its role.
 - Parsley is rich in polyphenolic flavonoid antioxidants, including *apiin*, *apigenin*, *crisoeriol*, and *luteolin*; and has been rated as one of the plant sources with quality antioxidant activities. Total ORAC value, which measures the antioxidant strength of 100 g of fresh, raw parsley, is 1301 μ mol TE (Trolox equivalents).
 - The herb is a good source of minerals like **potassium**, calcium, manganese, iron, and magnesium. 100 g fresh herb provides 554 mg or 12% of daily required levels of potassium. Potassium is the chief component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure by countering pressing effects of sodium. Iron is essential for the production of heme, which is a critical oxygen-carrying component inside the red blood cells. The human body uses manganese as co-factor for the antioxidant enzyme, *superoxide dismutase*.
 - Additionally, the herb is also rich in many antioxidant vitamins, including **vitamin-A**, β -carotene, vitamin-C, vitamin-E, *zeaxanthin*, *lutein*, and *cryptoxanthin*. The herb is an excellent source of vitamin-K and folates. Zeaxanthin helps prevent age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) in the retina (eye) in the elderly population through its antioxidant and ultraviolet light filtering functions.
 - Fresh herb leaves are also rich in many essential vitamins such as pantothenic acid (vitamin B-5), riboflavin (vitamin B-2), niacin (vitamin B-3), pyridoxine (vitamin B-6) and thiamin (vitamin B-1). These vitamins play a vital role in carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism by acting as co-enzymes inside the human body.
 - It is, perhaps, the richest herbal source of vitamin-K; provide 1640 μ g or 1366% of recommended daily intake. Vitamin K has been found to have the potential role in bone health by promoting osteoblastic activity in the bones. It also has an established role in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease patients by limiting neuronal damage in their brain.
 - Wonderful! Humble parsley has just 36 calories/100 g, but their phyto-nutrients profile is no less than any high-calorie food sources.
 - This unique herb provides:
 - 38% of folates, 14% of calcium,
 - 77.5% of iron and 5561 mcg of zeaxanthin.
 - 5054 mcg of carotene-beta
 - 220% of vitamin C, 281% of vitamin A,
 - 1366% of vitamin K,
- (Note: the values are in % of RDA per 100 g (RDA-Recommended daily allowance))

Parsley soup -*Serves six*

125g (4½oz) flat-leaf parsley	75g (2¾oz) butter
1 large onion, finely chopped	300g (10½oz) potatoes, peeled and chopped
750ml (1½ pints) chicken stock	125ml (4fl oz) double cream

Cut the stalks off the parsley and chop them. Split the leaves into two portions and roughly chop one half. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed pan and add the potato, onion and stalks. Cook over a low heat, covered, with a splash of water, until the onion is soft and the potato tender. Add splashes of water as needed to keep the veg from 'catching' on the bottom. The mixture should be sweet, herby and buttery. Add the stock and some seasoning and bring to the boil. Cook on a brisk simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the chopped parsley and cook gently for one minute then pour into a large bowl to arrest the cooking process. Blanch the rest of the parsley by submerging it in a bowl of just boiled water for 30 seconds. Drain in a sieve and run cold water over it. Add the cream and blanched parsley to the soup and purée. Check the seasoning – a squeeze of lemon can sometimes just help to pull the flavors together. Gently reheat and serve.