



# mix it up

The Culinary Medicine Cookbook for  
Mixing Things Up in the Kitchen

## Cooking Sustainably with Stems and Leaves

Whole, fresh produce is typically harvested with thick stems, stalks, and large leaves still attached. These components are sometimes sold along with the vegetable, like radish leaves or Brussels sprout stalks. While they are often discarded prior to sale or prior to cooking, most components can be used in cooking to add flavor, texture, and nutrients.

### WASHING LEAVES:

To properly clean leaves, first fill a large bowl with cold water.

Submerge the leaves, swishing them around to dislodge dirt and debris.

Lift the produce out of the water, leaving any grit behind.

Pat dry with a clean towel or use a salad spinner to remove excess moisture.

### PREPARING STEMS:

For leafy greens with thick or fibrous stems, like kale or Swiss chard, strip the leaves by running your hand down the length of the stem.

For very thick stems and stalks, such as those from broccoli or Brussels sprouts, peel away the outer layer if it's too fibrous; then, chop it into smaller pieces.

These stems can be used separately or alongside the leaves.

Delicate stems, like those of herbs such as cilantro or parsley, can be chopped together with the leaves to provide extra flavor.

### PESTO OR SAUCES:

Tender leaves, like carrot tops or radish greens, can be blended with garlic, nuts, and olive oil for a vibrant pesto or other herb-based sauce. Stems of herbs like cilantro or parsley can be added for extra flavor.

### SOUPS AND BROTHS:

Use cleaned stems and leaves from kale, beets, cauliflower, or chard in soups. Chop them into bite-sized pieces and add them toward the end of cooking, allowing them to wilt until tender.

### STIR-FRIES:

Chop clean, sturdy stems like those from broccoli into thin bite-sized pieces and add to stir-fries. Be sure to sauté them early as you build the dish since they take longer to soften than other vegetable components.

### SALADS:

Add tender stems like from parsley or cilantro into salads for extra crunch and flavor. Leafy greens can also be washed, dried, and tossed directly into salads.

### SMOOTHIES:

Washed and dried greens like kale stems or radish greens can be added directly into smoothies. Their intense flavor is typically masked when blended with fruits and other flavorful components like ginger.

These ideas are part of the *Mix It Up* cookbook. The book presents dozens of ideas, recipes, and various resources to teach you how to use recipe frameworks to make your own delicious dishes.

