



# Nutrition News - November 2021

## Beyond The Caul(iflower) of Duty

Cauliflower is a nutritional powerhouse, offering an array of vitamins and minerals that are excellent for your health, including calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, fiber, vitamin C, folate, and vitamin K1, as well as antioxidants. Like most other plant foods, cauliflower also contains small amounts of all nine essential amino acids.

### Preparation is Key for Cauliflower

Boiling cauliflower causes it to lose some of its vitamins and minerals in the cooking water, so try steaming cauliflower instead to preserve nutrients.

While cauliflower is great for you no matter how you prepare it, research shows that you'll get the most antioxidants — like polyphenols and flavonoid compounds — from eating it raw. Extracts from cooked cauliflower showed lower antioxidant activity than uncooked extracts. Steaming is the next best option, followed by boiling.

### Cauliflower Chemistry

Cauliflower and the other cruciferous veggies contain an extensively studied set of plant compounds that turn into the powerful cancer-fighting phytonutrient sulforaphane. Specifically, the isothiocyanate compound glucoraphanin interacts with the enzyme myrosinase and converts into sulforaphane.

Cauliflower is in season locally from August through November, but cauliflower may also still be going strong into the winter in some areas

to our south. When choosing cauliflower to take home, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, fresh cauliflower should have tight, compact curds (the part we eat) and bright green, intact leaves. Avoid plants that have brown, slimy spots, or loose sections, as this indicates damage and potential rotting, as well as a shortened lifespan. Proper storage helps ensure that your cauliflower will stay fresh for as long as possible.

At home, store your cauliflower in a produce bag in the crisper drawer, where it should last for about a week. Before you prepare your cauliflower to eat, remove its outer leaves, cut it into florets, and rinse thoroughly.

You can also cut the cauliflower into florets when you get it home and store these in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer. If you choose the latter, it's best to blanch your florets before freezing to retain the most nutrients. Fresh cauliflower is also delicious when pickled or fermented, which also preserves it longer.

### Colorful Cauliflower?

Most cauliflower is white, but it also comes in fun colors, like orange, green, and purple. These varieties can be harder to find, though they are more common at natural and specialty foodstores, farmers markets, or community supported agriculture (CSA) operations. Looking ahead to next year's garden, cauliflower are fairly easy to grow from seed if you want your own supply.

### White Cauliflower

The white varieties, like Snowball, White Corona, and Early White, remain pale because they're completely covered by their leaves as they grow and mature. To help preserve the white coloring, farmers will tie down the largest outer leaves of

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## Cauliflower (continued)

each cauliflower plant. This protects them from direct sunlight, preventing the development of chlorophyll, the pigment that turns so many vegetables green.

### Green "Cauliflower"

Green cauliflower, also known as "broccoflower," is actually a broccoli-cauliflower hybrid plant. The Romanesco variety exhibits a spiral growth pattern and grows to a similar size as white cauliflower; however, it ends up with a crunchier, nuttier flavor. Generally, green cauliflower is sweeter, milder, and more fibrous than white cauliflower.

### Orange Cauliflower

Orange varieties of cauliflower have more beta-carotene pigment — the orange nutrient found in carrots, orange bell peppers, and sweet potatoes. This is a good thing, since orange cauliflower has 25% more vitamin A than its white counterpart. This particular cauliflower head was able to store enough beta-carotene to produce a noticeable orange tint.

### Purple Cauliflower

Lastly, purple cauliflower comes in a range of beautiful hues, from lavender, to violet, to dark purple. These contain more anthocyanins, or antioxidant pigments that give produce like eggplant and blueberries their purple, red, and blue coloring.

Some popular varieties of purple cauliflower are Sicilian Violet, Violet Queen, and Purple Cape. These are sweet, mild, and nutty and can be used pretty much anywhere you would use white cauliflower.

## Easy Recipe: Roasted Cauliflower (Serves 6)

### Ingredients:

- 1 medium cauliflower, sliced into small florets or half-inch-thick "steaks"
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons melted butter (unsalted)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground paprika (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper (optional)

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 425°F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper for easier cleanup. Add the cauliflower to the center of your baking sheet, drizzle with oil and butter, and toss to coat. Season the cauliflower and toss again, then spread into a single layer. Bake cauliflower for 15-20 minutes, or until desired tenderness and golden at the edges. Baking time may vary depending on the size of your pieces.

### Substitution

Instead of butter, use another 2 tablespoons of olive oil.

### An Addition For Cheese Lovers

Sprinkle 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan over the cauliflower during the last five minutes of cooking.

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