

Leeks Soothe Nerves

What Are Leeks and What Do They Taste Like?

A member of the Allium family, leeks are a bulbous vegetable with a white base that transitions from light green to dark green at the top. Only the tender white portion is eaten. Some mistake this portion as the stem or stalk, but it is a cylindrical bundle of leaf sheaths.

Leeks have a mildly sweet flavor that is reminiscent of other alliums, such as onions, shallots, garlic, and chives.



Nutritional Benefits

Note: Most of the nutrients in leeks are concentrated in the bulb and lower leaf section, except for folate and B6 which are found throughout the greens and bulbs.

- Excellent source of antioxidants like vitamins C, K and beta-carotene that have anti-inflammatory and anti-aging benefits
- Healthy for your heart and contributes to reduced risk of stroke. They are good sources of folate and B6, which work to keep homocysteine levels low, preventing artery damage and reducing formation of blood clots.
- Contain dietary fiber, which feeds your healthy gut microbiome and contributes to boosting immunity.
- Contains iron for maintaining red blood cells that carry oxygen to tissues, and manganese, important for regulating nerve function.
- Contain potassium while also being low in sodium, which helps to lower blood pressure.

How to Cut and Wash Leeks

- Cut off the root and the tough green leaves at the top.
- Cut the leek half lengthwise.
- If you're not cooking whole leeks, lay them cut-side-down and cut them into half-moons



Leeks hold a lot of dirt between their sheaths, so cleaning them is extra important. You can do so one of three ways:

- **Use a colander:** Place the whole or sliced leeks into a colander and rinse with running water, using your hands to toss them until all the dirt and debris are gone. Blot dry with a paper towel.
- **Soak:** Soak leeks in cold water for about 30 minutes, repeating until there is no dirt in the water.
- **Use a salad spinner:** Fill a salad spinner with sliced leeks and rinse with cold water. Spin the leeks in the salad spinner until dry.

Leek vs. Green Onions

Green onions are the best substitute for leeks, however, they're still quite different. Unlike leeks which tenderize while cooking, green onions can become slimy under high heat. Green onions have a much more pungent flavor than leeks, which is why they are generally added to dishes after cooking to add freshness and crunch.

How to Store and Freeze Leeks

Store whole leeks in the crisper drawer of the fridge for up to a week. A lidded container or zip-top bag that's not completely sealed is a good idea to keep their smell contained. Don't wash or trim them until just before using them.

Leeks can very easily be frozen. First, decide if blanching is something you want to do: Un-blanching leeks can be stored for up to two months before they lose their flavor, blanched leeks will keep for about a year.

Slice or chop the leeks. If you're blanching, bring a pot of water to a boil, and add your leeks for just a minute. You can transfer them to a bowl of ice water or to a dry surface and let them cool on their own. Make sure they're completely cool and dry before moving on.

Spread your leeks into a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet and freeze for an hour. Transfer them to a freezer bag, remove as much air as possible, seal, and store them in the freezer. Use directly from frozen or thaw in the fridge or on the counter. Frozen leeks are best used in soups or stews since they lose much of their structure upon thawing.

Leek Recipes

[Leek Potato Stew](#)

[Leek Salad](#)

[Leek Tomato Soup](#)

[Leek and Potato Frittata](#)

Fun Fact: Egypt and southern France – are generally recognized as the ancestral homelands of leeks.

