



NUTRITION TIPS

Vegetables Kuka Leaves

Kuka leaves are obtained from baobab trees. The leaves, whether fresh or in a dry powder form, are used to make the Kuka soup - a rich delicacy in northern Nigeria. Sometimes, this soup is thickened slightly with dried okra and is served with *two shinkafa* or *dawa* (rice or millet pudding). Kuka leaves are very nutritious since they are rich in vitamins A and C, folic acid, zinc, manganese, calcium and protein.

To cook the soup, first prepare the fish or meat, then pour the stock of these into a large pot before adding the blended vegetables, onions and chili pepper. Let this simmer for fifteen minutes, then add the Kuka leaves - and if necessary some okra. Stir and cook for about ten minutes. Season to taste and serve hot with *two shinkafa*.

Pumpkin Leaves

Pumpkin leaves, or *ugwu*, is a medicinal food that contains lots of vitamins and minerals. These leaves are the main ingredients used in

cooking the popular *Edikang Ikong* soup.

The dark green *Ugwu* leaves contain lots of vitamin A, C, iron, calcium and protein. While calcium helps children make strong bones and teeth, vitamin C helps to build body tissues and also assists in the synthesis of blood. The vitamin A helps children develop healthy eyes and also protects them from diseases.

When buying *Ugwu*, ensure that you pick the ones that are young and fully developed. You should wash the leaves in clean water before cooking. You can also juice the leaves, then add carrot and orange to give a delicious vitamin C rich drink.

Ukazi Leaves

The Ukazi leaf is well known for its high vitamin and mineral content. By eating the Ukazi leaves regularly, your children stand to benefit from its abundant nutrient content. Ukazi leaves are usually eaten raw or as vegetables when shredded and cooked in soup and eaten with pounded yam, fufu or garri. They are also the main ingredients in

the preparation of Afang soup - a major delicacy in southeastern Nigeria. Preparing this soup can be a delight because the Ukazi leaves are usually mixed with other rich, traditional ingredients to give the uniquely flavoured soup that children really enjoy.

Ewedu

One of the most nutritious dark green leafy vegetables is spinach, or *ewedu*, a plant grown mainly in southwestern Nigeria. This vegetable is rich in vitamins A, C and D and is usually one of the first foods offered to babies because of its nutritious and healthful effects on their delicate stomachs.

When buying *ewedu*, ensure that you buy the fresh ones. To cook, remove the leaves from the stem and wash them thoroughly before chopping them to pieces. Then pour the chopped *ewedu* into a pot of boiling water, add *iru* (locust bean) and *kaun* (potash) and salt, if desired. Then allow it boil for ten minutes with the pot uncovered. Serve with pepper stew and amala or fufu.

* For more information on child nutrition

Visit the Olu Akinkugbe Foundation
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