

## **PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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### Purple Lettuce Coming Soon

It's true, purple lettuce will be showing up in a store near you before too long. So don't blame too much Halloween candy or liquid beverages when you see it! They will be called Burgundy Romaine and Burgundy Leaf Lettuce, and the company is selling them as 'Nutraleaf'. Go ahead and try some because they are extra nutritious for us, as well as prettier to look at. Maybe the kids will even eat their salads now!

Where did this weird stuff come from? Not from Frankenstein, but New Jersey! It was developed at Rutgers University. The plant scientists there have been working on it for quite some time. They used regular cross breeding to create lettuce that had more color, and a lot more nutritional value, than pale green iceberg. But it still has about the same few calories, only 22 cal, per cup as regular lettuce.

However, instead of the usual tiny smattering of nutrients, these lettuces are stuffed! You've surely heard how good blueberries are for us, all the antioxidants and polyphenols, how they protect our memories, eyes, hearts, and more. Well, these new purple lettuces have twice as much antioxidant power as blueberries! I'm still not sure how lettuce pancakes would go over for breakfast though.

I have tried some of their purple lettuce breakfast smoothies, which were surprisingly good! The simplest was a head of Burgundy lettuce, a cup of raspberry or blueberry juice, a small carton of strawberry Greek yogurt, and a cup of frozen mixed berries. Whoosh it all in a blender and enjoy breakfast on the way out the door.

Besides the polyphenols, the burgundy lettuces have lots of vitamins A and C, also good antioxidants. They have several minerals, including manganese for our enzymes, iron for our blood, and potassium to help keep our blood pressure down. And they're higher in fiber than iceberg lettuce or red leaf lettuce too.

They are much darker purple – burgundy - than red lettuce. They're darker than red cabbage is too. And in general the deeper the color of fruits and vegetables the more phytonutrients they have

and the better they are for us.

Like all lettuce, they will like to be kept cold in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Put each head gently into a plastic bag, but don't seal the bag. Add a damp paper towel if you expect to keep it more than a day or two. The extra humidity will help keep the leaves crisp. When you're ready to use it rinse it well in running water. Shake it, or pat the leaves dry with paper towels. To separate the leaves cut across the base of the head.

You can use them in any salad or sandwich where you would usually have green lettuce. But these will add a lot more color (and nutrition) to your plates, bowls and sandwiches. These leaves are wide and ruffled, so they will be beautiful under a salad. They're large enough to use easily for wraps too. Family and friends who need to eat a gluten-free diet will appreciate that! And the smaller leaves in the middle of the heads will work very well for holding, or dipping into, holiday dips for appetizers and snacks. Think lovely green guacamole in burgundy lettuce cups! Or, shred them and add at the last minute to stir-fries for some extra color. Burgundy shreds with yellow peppers will be gorgeous. And if you're trying to disguise a leftover, burgundy lettuce will make them extra special. Shred leftover beef, pork or chicken, or crumble a leftover hamburger or slice of meatloaf, add some salsa and taco seasoning, and serve in lettuce wraps. Leftover potato salad with or without some added chicken, or tuna or pasta salads will also sparkle in purple lettuce cups.

This salad was developed for quinoa, but leftover cooked rice would work well too. The avocado dressing is healthy, and looks much prettier over burgundy lettuce.

#### Quinoa with Avocado Dressing

1 cup regular or red quinoa	1 head Burgundy leaf lettuce, rinsed
1 cucumber, chopped	½ cup toasted nuts (almond, walnut)
1 ripe avocado, peeled and seeded	¼ cup plain nonfat yogurt
1 Tbsp lemon or lime juice	salt, pepper, hot pepper sauce to taste

Prepare quinoa according to package directions and cool. Combine avocado, yogurt, juice, hot sauce, salt and pepper in blender. Blend until smooth. Trim base of lettuce and separate leaves. Use large leaves to line 4 medium bowls. Chop inner leaves. Stir chopped leaves, quinoa (or cooked rice), cucumber and nuts together and spoon into the bowls. Drizzle avocado dressing over each. Serves 4.

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