



Let's Talk About Purslane  
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I love plants; they helped save my life in their own special and unique way. They have also introduced me to some of the best friends I have ever had. Throughout that process I learned tons of information about plants that both amazed me and set me free. Then the world went a bit crazy, and now while everyone is discussing food scarcity, I find myself even more drawn to learning about what plants can do to provide everyone with food security.

Here we get to Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), one of many wild plants commonly known here as 'weeds'. What is not commonly known is that it is a food source in many places throughout the world. Purslane is packed with nutrition and is one of the few vegetables that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. In fact, it has the highest recorded levels of omega-3s found in any land-based plant. It contains high amounts of ALA and trace amounts of EPA, which is a more biologically active form of omega-3.

A 3.5oz portion contains: 26% of the recommended daily requirement of Vitamin A (from beta-carotene), 35% of Vitamin C, 17% of Magnesium, 15% of Manganese, 14% of Potassium, 11% of Iron, and 7% of Calcium. It also contains small amounts of vitamins B1, B2, and B3, folate, copper, and phosphorus. The best part is you get all of this for the low, low cost of only 16 calories, making this one of the most nutrient dense foods on the planet if we are calculating calorie for calorie.

Now it's not all butterflies and rainbows, though butterflies love purslane. It should be known if you are prone to kidney stones you should use moderation and leave the seeds out of your culinary exploration. Purslane contains oxalates and the seeds tend to have higher levels of them. Purslane also tends to be saltier than other vegetables due to its succulent nature.

There are different varieties of purslane locally including Horse Purslane (*Trianthema portulacastrum*), which is also edible but may irritate the throat. Some confuse purslane with spurge; this is important to mention because spurge is toxic. Be sure to properly identify any plant you are looking to munch on, as most plants have look-alikes which should typically be avoided. Also source your Purslane responsibly from pesticide and herbicide free locations.

Purslane has a tart flavor with citrus undertones. Some say it tastes similar to spinach and/or watercress. It can be eaten raw, cooked like spinach, steamed, sautéed, juiced, boiled, pickled, drenched in butter, or added into a salad with some oil and vinegar. There's even a recipe for Chimichurri online.

However, don't take my word for it; do your own research on the health benefits of purslane and be amazed at what you find.

References:

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