

---

# Broccoli Rabe 101

---

A relative of turnip greens.





## *What is Broccoli Rabe?*

Broccoli rabe or broccoli rabe is a common name for rapini, a bright green cruciferous vegetable with edible leaves, buds, and stems. Though it appears similar to broccoli, broccolini, and Chinese broccoli, it is, in fact, most closely related to turnips.

A typical bundle of broccoli rabe is roughly eight long with long stems and darker green, spiky leaves. These leaves surround very small, less compact broccoli-like buds and occasionally yellow flowers.

Because of this leaf and bud combination, bunch broccoli rabe looks like a cross between turnip greens and broccoli/broccolini.

## *Tasting Notes:*

The stem and leaves of this green taste slightly bitter. The buds taste similar to broccoli heads. Some describe the taste of broccoli rabe as similar to bitter greens such as mustard. The bitterness (particularly in the stem) of broccoli rabe can easily be neutralized through blanching.

## *How to store:*

Store broccoli rabe unwashed in the fridge in a plastic bag. Try to use it within a day or two, though it keeps for up to a week.

## *How to Prep:*

Soak the greens in a large cold water bath to remove excess grit and dirt. Rinse in a colander. Trim off the tough bottom sections of the stems that are woody. Then use kitchen shears to cut the greens into smaller pieces.



## *Substitutes:*

Spinach, kale, turnip greens, mustard greens, escarole, endive, chicory, Chinese broccoli, radish greens, dandelion greens, collard greens, and broccolini.

## *Best Uses:*

**Pesto**

**Sautéed in olive oil & garlic**

**Stir fry**

**Side dish for pork ribs**

**Added to pasta with sausage  
and parmesan**

**Pizza**

**Lasagna**

**Omelettes**

**Frittatas**

**Hot Italian sandwich**

**Roasted**



## *Ways To Use Broccoli Rabe Pesto*

- As a pasta sauce, just like traditional pesto
- To make vegetarian lasagna
- On top of a brick of cream cheese, served with crackers as an appetizer.
- To make a vinaigrette (Combine 1-2 T broccoli rabe pesto to 1/2 c vinegar and 1 cup of olive oil)
- As a condiment on a sandwich. You could even mix some with mayo.
- Add a tablespoon on top of cooked protein such as steak, fish or chicken
- To add flavor to steamed, grilled or roasted vegetables
- As a topping or sauce to any savory tart, flatbread or pizza.

## *How to Blanch Broccoli Rabe:*

*Broccoli rabe is often blanched in boiling salt water before it is cooked to neutralize some of its bitterness.*

1. Boil for two minutes total time in water and kosher salt over medium heat in a large pot.
2. Use a slotted spoon or tongs to remove the vegetable from the boiling water.
3. Submerge it in cold water or ice water to stop the cooking process.
4. Douse with extra virgin olive oil before further cooking.

## *How to Freeze Broccoli Rabe:*

Follow the instructions above for blanching through step 3. Cool. Squeeze out any extra liquid. Pack into Ziplock storage bags according to desired size. Or pack into ice cube trays and freeze.

# Suggested Recipes:

## Orecchiette With Sweet Sausage and Broccoli Rabe Pesto

*Adapted from New York Times Cooking*

### **Ingredients:**

1/2 pound broccoli rabe, stems trimmed off and discarded or saved for another use

3 cloves roasted garlic, peeled

10 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano

1 cup finely chopped fennel bulb

1 cup finely chopped onion

1 pound sweet Italian sausage, casing removed

2 cups chicken stock

500 grams (about 1 1/4 pounds) dried orecchiette

### **Directions:**

Bring 3 quarts water to a boil in a pot and add 1 tablespoon salt. Add broccoli rabe and cook about 5 minutes, until tender. Drain and place in a large bowl of ice water. Drain and squeeze dry. Turn on a food processor and drop garlic in through the feed tube. Stop machine, scrape down sides and add broccoli rabe. Pulse until finely chopped. Stop machine. Add 6 tablespoons oil. Pulse until pesto comes together but is not creamy or thoroughly emulsified. Transfer to a bowl and fold in 1/4 cup cheese.

Heat remaining 4 tablespoons oil in a large sauté pan on low. Add fennel and onion, and cook until soft but not brown. Add sausage and cook, mashing it to a fine crumble, until it is no longer pink. Add chicken stock and cook until the stock has mostly evaporated and just glazes the sausage. Transfer sausage mixture to a food processor and pulse until finely ground. Return sausage to the pan. Fold in broccoli rabe pesto. Set aside.

Bring large pot of salted water to a boil. Add orecchiette and cook until al dente, about 7 minutes. Reheat sausage mixture and add about 1/2 cup of the pasta water. Drain pasta and add to pan with the sausage mixture. Toss ingredients together until pasta is evenly coated. Fold in remaining 1/2 cup cheese, check seasoning and serve.

# Sautéed Broccoli Rabe

*From Love and Lemons*

## **Ingredients:**

1 bunch broccoli rabe

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, more for drizzling

2 garlic cloves, sliced

¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Lemon wedge, for squeezing

## **Directions:**

Trim ½ inch off the ends of the broccoli rabe. Prepare a large pot of salted boiling water and a large bowl of ice water. Drop the broccoli rabe into the boiling water and blanch for 2 minutes. Remove and immerse in the ice water long enough to cool, about 15 seconds. Drain and place on paper towels to dry. (If using in this pasta recipe, stop here and continue with that recipe's instructions.)

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in the garlic and cook for 30 seconds, then stir in the red pepper flakes. Add the broccoli rabe and sauté, shaking the pan and gently tossing so that it cooks evenly, until tender, especially the stems, for 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the pan and drain off any excess liquid. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve as a side dish with a squeeze of lemon.

# Broccoli Rabe and Provolone Grinders

*from Bon Appétit*

## **Ingredients:**

6 tablespoons olive oil, divided

3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

15-ounce can cannellini beans with liquid

Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

4 bunches broccoli rabe (rapini, 4–5 pounds), ends trimmed

Kosher salt

1/2 cup olive oil, divided, plus more

1 head of garlic, cloves peeled and thinly sliced

1 1/2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes

3 tablespoons (or more) fresh lemon juice

Freshly ground black pepper

8 6'–8'-long French rolls, split lengthwise

8 ounces thinly sliced provolone piccante or other aged provolone cheese

1 jalapeño, seeded, very thinly sliced

## **Directions:**

### **WHITE BEAN PURÉE**

Heat 3 Tbsp. oil in a small saucepan over medium-low heat; add garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring often, until garlic begins to turn golden, about 4 minutes. Add beans with liquid. Bring to a simmer; cook, stirring often, until liquid thickens, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a food processor; add 3 Tbsp. oil. Process until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

### **SANDWICHES**

Cook broccoli rabe, 1 bunch at a time, in a large pot of boiling salted water for 2 minutes (return to a boil between batches). Transfer broccoli rabe to a baking sheet; let cool. Squeeze dry; coarsely chop.



Heat a large pot over medium heat; add 1/4 cup oil, garlic, and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring often, until garlic is fragrant and beginning to turn golden, 2–3 minutes. Add broccoli rabe; cook, stirring often, until stem pieces are just tender, 4–5 minutes. Add remaining 1/4 cup oil and 3 Tbsp. lemon juice. Season with salt, pepper, and more juice, if desired. Spread out on a rimmed baking sheet and let cool. DO AHEAD: Can be made one day ahead. Cover and chill.

Arrange racks in top and bottom thirds of oven; preheat to 400°. Open rolls and arrange on 2 rimmed baking sheets. Drizzle generously with oil. Spread bean purée on one side of each roll; add broccoli rabe. Top with cheese, then chile. Toast, rotating pans after 5 minutes, until cheese is melted, 7–10 minutes. Top, slice, and serve.

# Broccoli Rabe Pesto

*from [www.HearthandVine.com](http://www.HearthandVine.com)*

## **Ingredients:**

1 bunch fresh broccoli rabe

2 cloves fresh garlic

1/3 cup pine nuts - roasted

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese grated

1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes, optional

## **Directions:**

Wash and trim the broccoli rabe.

Blanch broccoli rabe in boiling water for 5 minutes or until slightly softened. Remove to paper towels to dry and cool slightly. Roughly chop.

In a food processor combine garlic, Parmesan cheese, peppers, and pine nuts. Pulse.

Add broccoli rabe and pulse.

While the processor is going slowly add the olive oil through the top.

Remove to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 1-2 weeks or freeze for future use.