# These are the six most nutritious vegetables on earth. BOOM!



The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently unveiled its ranking of "powerhouse" fruits and vegetables (PFV), with watercress emerging as the surprising leader, scoring a perfect 100 in nutrient density. This [study](https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0390.htm#table2_down), as reported by [Plant Based News](https://plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/health-and-fitness/cdc-top-nutritious-vegetables-after-watercress/), evaluated 47 different fruits and vegetables, assessing the levels of essential nutrients available in their raw, unprocessed forms.

The motivation behind this ranking is to highlight the potential of these foods to decrease the risk of chronic diseases, while also recognising the current lack of a precise definition or classification for PFVs. By listing these foods according to their nutrient density, the CDC aims to aid individuals in planning a balanced and nutrient-rich diet.

To qualify, most of the foods on this list contained at least 10% of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of a variety of vitamins and minerals. However, some entries boasted significantly higher values. For instance, watercress, the top contender, offers 106% of the RDA for vitamin K per cup, alongside ample amounts of vitamins C and A.

The top five foods following watercress achieved impressive scores, all exceeding 73.36. Here’s a look at the top five contenders, just behind watercress:

* Chinese Cabbage: Claiming second place with a score of 91.99, Chinese cabbage encompasses different Brassica Rapa subspecies, including bok choy, tatsoi, and napa. While exact nutrient densities vary across these subspecies, they are collectively rich in nutrients. According to Healthline, a cup of shredded bok choy delivers 27% of the RDA for vitamin K and 35% for vitamin C, along with smaller amounts of nutrients such as folate, manganese, potassium, magnesium, calcium, and iron.
* Chard: Securing the third position, chard scored 89.27. The USDA indicates that 100g of Swiss chard can deliver about half of the RDA for vitamin C and a fifth for magnesium, plus iron, vitamin B6, and potassium.
* Beet Greens: Coming in fourth with a score of 87.08, beet greens are highlighted by the USDA for providing 50% of the RDA for vitamin C, 14% for iron, and 17% for magnesium in a 100g serving. They also contain calcium and vitamin B6.
* Spinach: Scoring 86.43, spinach ranks fifth. The USDA notes that spinach comprises 46% of the RDA for vitamin C, 19% for magnesium, 15% for iron, and 10% for B6, with 2.9g of protein per 100g.
* Chicory: In sixth place, chicory earned a score of 73.36. Healthline states that two cups of Italian chicory, or radicchio, provide 170% of the RDA for vitamin K and 30% for copper, along with vitamin C, potassium, zinc, iron, phosphorus, and B6 in smaller measures.

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The CDC’s rankings not only recognise the standout nutritional offerings of these foods but also serve as a useful guide for anyone looking to enhance their diet with nutrient-heavy fruits and vegetables.

## References

* <https://plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/health-and-fitness/cdc-top-nutritious-vegetables-after-watercress/> - Corroborates the CDC's ranking of 'powerhouse' fruits and vegetables, with watercress scoring 100 in nutrient density, and details the top five runners-up.
* <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23516/cdc_23516_DS1.pdf> - Provides the CDC's study on defining powerhouse fruits and vegetables, including the nutrient density scores and the criteria used for classification.
* <https://aru.usc.edu/blog/powerhouse-fruits-and-vegetables-pfv/> - Explains the CDC's classification scheme for powerhouse fruits and vegetables, highlighting their association with reduced chronic disease risk and the nutrients analyzed.
* <https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0390.htm> - Details the CDC's study on defining and ranking powerhouse fruits and vegetables based on nutrient density, including the list of foods that satisfied the powerhouse criterion.
* <https://www.seniorlifestyle.com/resources/blog/cdc-ranked-powerhouse-fruits-vegetables-top-15-green/> - Lists the CDC's rankings of powerhouse fruits and vegetables, including the top scorers and the criteria for qualification as a 'powerhouse' food.
* <https://plantbasednews.org/lifestyle/health-and-fitness/cdc-top-nutritious-vegetables-after-watercress/> - Provides specific nutrient content details for Chinese cabbage, including its subspecies and nutritional benefits.
* <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23516/cdc_23516_DS1.pdf> - Supports the nutrient density scores for chard, beet greens, spinach, and chicory as part of the CDC's powerhouse fruits and vegetables list.
* <https://aru.usc.edu/blog/powerhouse-fruits-and-vegetables-pfv/> - Corroborates the nutritional benefits and rankings of chard, beet greens, spinach, and chicory within the CDC's classification scheme.
* <https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0390.htm> - Details the specific nutrients and their percentages of the RDA for chard, beet greens, spinach, and chicory based on the CDC's study.