

## Growing Living Foods in Your Own Kitchen

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Are you wistful for the days when you had your own garden and picked produce right before you ate it? Or have you never had much of a green thumb, but would still like to grow some of your own food? You'd love to grow things but are just too busy to be bothered? Then growing your own sprouts fits this bill nicely. Many of us remember the hippie days of Mason jars filled with soggy mung bean sprouts...no reason to return to that. Sprouts, when grown well, are some of the only truly living foods that we consume; they can still literally be growing right up to harvest in your kitchen. And they're easy and inexpensive to grow.

The sprout itself is simply the earliest version of the plant---the seed, which contains all the nutrients that the plant initially needs to grow, opens up and sends out a root and a leaf stalk. The nutrient content of these sprouts is much higher, in proportion, than in the mature plant. Of course, you might not eat as many broccoli sprouts as you would broccoli, but it's still true that antioxidant vitamins such as Vit C are still higher in the sprout.

The simplest way to start sprouts is to find inexpensive, tightly woven, shallow baskets. Soak a few tablespoons of seeds for at least 4 hours, or overnight, then dump them into the basket in an even layer. Rinse them off with the sprayer in the sink (not too hot or too cold), then tip the basket up in the dish drain for a little while. At this point, place the basket on the kitchen counter atop a few chopsticks in order to provide air space under the basket. Cover the whole thing with a clear plastic bag. Now, twice a day, rinse the basket under the spray in the sink and allow it to drain. As the seeds sprout, their roots will grow down into the basket and take hold, so it becomes easier to rinse without losing the seeds. Make sure you also rinse off the sides and bottom of the basket to help avoid the growth of mold. Depending on the seed type, you'll have sprouts to harvest in 3-7 days. You can keep them growing on the counter as you harvest them, or if you have too much, you can place them, covered, in the fridge.

You can sprout most any kind of seed. The most common are alfalfa, clover and broccoli. However, beans, lentils and many lettuce seeds are also easy and tasty. For larger seeds such as lentils and peas, you can use special bags made of hemp and flax---put the seeds inside, rinse them off, and hang the bag up over a sink to drain. Rinse them twice a day, and as the seeds start to sprout, simply "massage" the bag to make sure the sprouts all get rinsed off.

So what do you do with them? Add them to green salads or add lentil/cabbage sprouts to potato salad or cole slaw. Add them to wraps or sandwiches. Add larger ones (mung bean, lentils) to stir fries. Chop them and add, along with chopped scallions and red pepper, to goat cheese to make a spread.

Resources and further information can be found at [www.sproutman.com](http://www.sproutman.com), [www.isga-sprouts.org](http://www.isga-sprouts.org) and [www.sproutpeople.com/seeds.html](http://www.sproutpeople.com/seeds.html) .