




REACT  
GREEN



# The newbie's guide to microgreens

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We are Saša and Boštjan, and we come from a small European country called Slovenia. It is a beautiful land with an abundance of mountains, where you can escape from the fast pace of the present, from working days and nine to five jobs. Here, you can not only enjoy gorgeous lakes all over the country but also the clear Adriatic sea, with peaceful spots for meditation, yoga or just relaxing and switching off your mind. We believe that everyone can find something special just for themselves, to raise their awareness and vibration.



In 2013, when I was pregnant with our daughter Inja, I needed rest all the time. In order to spend my time more wisely, I decided to search for something that will spark joy in our minds, and that could become a business into which we would put all our passion and drive. I kept browsing the internet, knowing that something out there will find me. And that is what happened. I came across a lovely couple, Maya and Jerry, originally from Slovenia, but who back then lived in New Zealand and who started a small yet sustainable business in microgreens. When I first saw what they were doing I was blown away. I could not imagine how these small, tiny and lovely plants could enable anyone to create a business utilising them. But I fell in love.

As I had previously already conceived several ideas from my all-day browsing, I was a bit anxious in presenting this one to my lovely partner Boštjan. Yet he always said, “When you find something that will fit us, we will go for it”. His reaction when he heard about microgreens was “This is it! This could work for us!”. In all these years of growing microgreens indoors, we gained so much knowledge and experience and now, we feel it’s time to share our love with likeminded people and everyone looking for a healthy addition to their diet.







Microgreens are exceptionally tender young greens, also called »vegetable confetti«. They are harvested when the embryonic first leaves (cotyledon leaves) and young plant stems reach the length of five to seven cm (two or three inches, depends on variety), or when the first true leaves start popping up.

Though tiny in size, they are mighty in taste, brilliant in color and loaded with nutrients. That is why they are increasing in popularity and add a unique flair to every meal of the day. Microgreens are quickly grown, and the fastest ones can grow tall enough in just one week.







Microgreens are perfect for home chefs, both parents and kids, and for those with a limited indoor growing space. They need as little as a few square centimeters and can grow fine under indirect light or on a sunny windowsill. A crop of microgreens is packed in a small, highly nutritious package, but with a distinct flavor of a mature plant.

They are perfect for growing at home since they provide fresh, mini salad greens year-round. Kids will love them as a little project to take care of that brings fast and rewarding results. In this way, they connect with nature and can learn a lot about food in general - where does it come from and how it is grown. They can even make their own simple dish from scratch – from seed to pizza. To start microgreens with (your) children you give them an opportunity to get in touch with nature and literally their hands in the earth which can quickly become a game they will love.







Try them. Try to grow some of the varieties first at home; in your basement, kitchen, or wherever you have space and some daylight. Test different growing mediums, so that you'll understand the difference and why you will choose, what will you choose ;) That being said, we tested and tested and having the right soil was everything. But there are perhaps some other benefits, why people choose other mediums. If you want to add more nutrients, more taste, more diversity into your daily meals, then microgreens are definitely for you. With microgreens, you will experience new tastes and new ways of nutrition for yourself. As the good old saying goes, If you never try, you will never know. So basically you just need to take action and start to grow some microgreens for you and your family.







The nutritional potency microgreens have is huge. There are big benefits of microgreens when it comes to nutrition. Many studies have shown that microgreens contain up to 40 times higher levels of vital nutrients than their mature versions. Microgreens are also easy to digest and are a low-calorie addition to any of your meal. Health benefits of microgreens do not begin and end with the consumption. Watching your greens grow can be relaxing and when you take care of your microgreens, putting your hands in the soil, spread seed, you connect with the food you just made and nourished. You become a part of the big picture and connect with your food. The health of your mind must not be overlooked. Being a part of something fundamental as the life cycle of a plant can give you this opportunity.





Know the  
difference.

Sprouts vs.  
microgreens.



Major thing is in how they are grown. Sprouts flourish in water and microgreens are commonly grown in soil or some other growing media (peat moss, coco fibers,...).

Harvesting refers to a stage of plant growth. Sprouts grow really quickly and can be harvested in four to six days. They don't have time to mature into plants. They are essentially eaten as exploded seeds, they are very pale with almost no green as they didn't have the chance to photosynthesise. Since they are water grown they aren't able to absorb nutrients from the sun or soil leading to a very different taste to microgreens. Generally they are mild, and used in the culinary arts for their crunch.



For microgreens, harvesting comes a little later. Generally in one to three weeks, depending on the plant. After the germination phase, you need to expose them to artificial light or daylight. This is the cotyledon growth stage, when the first couple of leaves appear on the plant. The second pair of leaves that appear are called true leaves. You can harvest your microgreens during these two stages.

In terms of flavour, microgreens reveal depths not found in sprouts or their older siblings. For example, if you love cilantro, then micro cilantro is a must for you to grow. The taste is just so much more intense. The same is with arugola.

From 1996, sprouts have gained a 'bad' reputation due to several food borne illnesses associated with sprouts.

If sprouts were not grown in an appropriate environment, bacteria (including Salmonella, Listeria and E.coli) could be present on them. But not to scare you too much, there is a very easy solution – grow microgreens.

The risk of diseases is much smaller if you have really good quality soil (\*link to post about soil) and if the levels of humidity and ventilation in the room that you are growing in are around normal (\*link to).





The kitchen with the window opened at half is suitable. Good quality seeds are also very important. This means that their germination rate is 100% or close. Mould will not occur if you follow these tips. When the seeds germinate, they produce root hairs.

Sprouts don't need any added nutrients, the same goes for fast growing microgreens. But if you are a commercial grower and have a much longer growth cycle (one month or more), some added nutrients are pleasant for microgreens.





Growing microgreens in your apartment or a greenhouse are the easiest to grow. Once you found your spot in your apartment or a house, you should know you must avoid a direct sunlight. Microgreens adore water so that is something you should always keep in mind, to not forget to water them. The best temperature to grow microgreens is a room temperature so around 20-25 degrees and with 50-60 % humidity. That are somehow usual conditions in our apartments/ houses.



With that said, having a sunny windowsill is perfect, but really anywhere on a kitchen countertop (to have them near your cooking area), out on the balcony, under a skylight, or in any other room where you have a bit of shelf space for the trays, will work just as well. Then grab some used containers of food that you are buying in stores (like containers from mushrooms, yogurt, sauerkraut, vegetables,...). Find some soil, we recommend to use organic one, but any potting/seedling mix will do the work for beginning. If you will find growing microgreens further on very enthusiastic and passionate, then you could try some different growing mediums.

Microgreens won't get started, without seeds ;) I cannot stress how important it is to have good, quality, preferably organic seeds. Perhaps this is THE most important thing, when you want to grow microgreens on your own, right after the perfect growing medium. For home growing, it is better to buy in smaller quantities, so that you get fresh seeds every order. Store them in dark, cool and dry place to ensure high germination rates. For beginners and home use, we suggest plants that are easy and fast to grow and have superior taste. Although we all have different tastes, here is our selection. Broccoli, red Russian kale, mustard, garden cress, radish, pea, sunflower (the seeds of the latter two need to be presoaked).





Basically you need just a few tools for home fun. A spray bottle to mist seeds in the beginning, any type of cover (e.g. a cloth, another tray without drainage holes, paper towels...), anything that will help in preserving moisture during the day. Finally, when your microgreens are ready, you will need good scissors or a knife for harvesting them. The best thing about home growing is that you don't need to harvest your entire tray at once, but you can cut as much as you need, and leave the rest to keep growing. On our site [reactgreens.com](https://reactgreens.com) you will get some links to basic tools.









🌱 Cover the bottom of the container/tray that has drainage holes with the potting soil. Flatten and level the soil gently with your hand.


🌱 Spread the seeds as evenly as you can on top of the soil so they are close but not touching or layered. Use a spray bottle to generously mist the soil.

🌱 Microgreens need a warm dark place to germinate. The best is to use a second growing tray (but you can also use a wet cloth or paper towel), turn it upside down, and place it on top of the first tray creating a mini dark room for the seeds, then wait until the seeds are sprouted. Room temperature is perfect for germination. Mist the seeds with the spray bottle everyday as they should never dry out.



 Around 2-3 days later, the first results can be observed. The seeds split and microscopic roots appear. These are called root hairs and are most visible just before watering. Many people confuse these root hairs for mould, but they are not. At this point the seeds should remain covered.

 When your plants have grown (approx. 1", 2-3 cm) and begin to shed their hulls they are ready for light, so you can move them to a well lighted location. If they are exposed more to sunlight, you should water more frequently. Room light will usually do quite nicely. Put the upper part of the container under the tray with soil and fill it with water. This is the best way to water the microgreens. Do not overdo it, and always pour off any excess water that collects in the drip tray.

 After about 7 to 10 days, your little microgreens should be ready to harvest. Using scissors cut the small greens just above ground level (together with the stems). Microgreens can be eaten immediately, or you can refrigerate them and use within a few days. Properly packaged, they can last for several days in the fridge.

Fresh microgreens should be used raw due to their delicate nature and sensitive nutrients. Mix them in with cooked dishes right before serving. Cooking them is not recommended in order to preserve all the delicate nutrients.







With microgreens there is just one rule – use them without limits. You can use microgreens in every dish you desire. For breakfast, dinner or lunch. In a cocktail, dessert or on a bread. You can set your imagination free.

Salads are a must, when asking yourself, where to add microgreens. And don't forget on burgers. Instead of regular green lettuce for that extra crunchy feeling, try adding your microgreens. It does not only add a perfect flavour to it but it also looks very stylish.



What better and healthier way to start your day! Smoothies are also a great way to blend your microgreens in. Wheatgrass and broccoli are especially popular for smoothies since they contain a lot of vitamins. All mild flavours are suitable for smoothies (like sunflower, kale, kohlrabi, pea, coriander - if you love its strong taste). I will also give you a little hint, when it comes to children and vegetables. If they don't want to eat vegetables, then microgreens are perfect for that. Just put a hand of them into a smoothie, and I guarantee you, that they won't even know, what they are drinking. Sneaky, I know but definitely a way to have your children eat more vegetables

Microgreens are perfect for »that little extra« surprise when it comes to starters. Let your imagination run free as you can add everything you like to your little cold or warm toasts. We guarantee your friends will love it.

Don't be afraid to incorporate them into your daily food. If you have children, include them also in their growing process. Give them scissors to cut micros and have them 'decorate' plates. They will be so stunned, that eating them will be a bonus for them.







So, what are you waiting for? You would like to have your own microgreens garden on your windowsill or countertop. That is so great to hear. Grab some [soil](#) and [seeds](#). Using repurposed containers, which are light, versatile and fit most places in our homes is also very ecological from an environmental aspect. You could also easily grow different varieties at the same time. For example, some herbs (basil, cilantro) and then the easiest and fastest, broccoli and kale. Isn't that awesome?

Using packaging from fresh fruit and mushrooms or containers from hummus, tofu and yogurt will give you the perfect match. You can modify them for gardening microgreens by punching holes in their bottoms. If your containers have lids on them, then just separate them from the container and use them as covering after you fill the containers with soil and seeds.



In a day or less you can start your own journey with these lovely beauties, called microgreens.

We would be very grateful, if you will share some of your 'experiments' with us, so that we can share it with our community. With this, we can encourage and inspire others, to start growing their live garden. And you will be a part of that movement. You will be our microgreen-star ;)

Disclaimer: Some of the products may contain an affiliate link and we may make a commission if you click on it at no additional costs to you.



## Contact us

We would like you to join our free Facebook group, **Microgreens by ReactGreen Tribe**, so that we can exchange ideas, share stories and useful information on Microgreens, Edible flowers and Wild plants. To join, just follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/microgreensbyreactgreentribe/>. We look forward to hear from you in this group.

Feel free to contact us via shared links.

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Wish you all the best, Saša & Boštjan

