

by Jennifer Meleana Hee

When our very own Domestic Diva submitted recipe options for Issue 2, I high-fived her double-pork recipe. Something about how it used two completely distinct forms of pig seemed really dirty and wrong, and I love dirty and wrong like Amish love clean linens. Let's run the double pork, I said, but we'll need to balance out the decomposing dead meat times two with something vibrant and soulless, like kale. I was kidding, but our Managing Editor hasn't gotten the hang of my sense of humor yet, so here we are.

Much like the diva and her pork, my love affair with kale began recently. A few years ago, I heard that you could put greens such as kale, beet greens, and spinach in a smoothie and drink them, but as much of a health freak as I am, that seemed about as appealing as a SPAM smoothie. My sister, already a convert to the cult of the blended green, even bought me the book *Green for Life* by Victoria Boutenko, the green-smoothie bible, but when I opened the book, it read, "To my beloved husband Igor," and thusly I let it sit at the bottom of my bookshelf for two years. Much like watching *The Passion of the Christ* while on Quaaludes or baking to Michael Bublé, I didn't know what I was missing. But as fate and a bad economy would have it, I began working for a natural-foods market and had to develop a menu for a detox program because the recession was making us all want a good cleanse, hoping a clean colon would give us a fresh start on life. Or at least a clean colon.

Forced to create kale smoothies—experimenting and sampling as I finalized recipes—I finally came to understand what all the hype was about, and I began to fanatically pour green smoothies down the throats of everyone who ever trusted me.

Green-smoothie breakfast, green-smoothie happy hour, postdinner green-smoothie dessert—welcome the kale smoothie into your life, and soon you will be singing my praises. Preferably to the tune of a Lady Gaga and Mozart mashup.

Let's talk ingredients:

KALE A superfood with super anti-inflammatory and antioxidant power, containing phytonutrients that help protect against cancer. According to the World's Healthiest Foods website (whfoods.org), kale's phytonutrients also "initiate an intricate dance inside our cells in which gene response elements direct and balance the steps among dozens of detoxification enzyme partners, each performing its own protective role in perfect balance with the other dancers." I don't know about you, but I want this to happen inside my body. Studies show you only need less than one cup of kale a day to benefit from its anticancer effects. Drink a green smoothie a day and that one



photo by Ryan Matsumoto

cup of kale goes down smooth like a shot of Patrón. With kale in it. Kale is also loaded with calcium, fiber, vitamins K, A, C, E, and vitamin awesome.

ALMOND BUTTER Contains vitamin E, magnesium, fiber, and protein—the last being key for us non-pig eaters out there.

BLUEBERRIES Two superfoods, one smoothie. Don't ever tell us *HWJ* didn't try to improve your mind *and* body. Blueberries, according to Web MD's superfood list, help lower your risk of heart disease and cancer.

AGAVE NECTAR OR LOCAL HONEY You only

need a touch of one of these sweeteners and you can even do without, provided that your banana and blueberries are superripe. Local honey is always an ecofriendly alternative to refined sugar. Agave nectar is low on the glycemic index, which means it won't cause a sugar high or crash. Recent health food buzz is that agave is evil, but until I hear from Oprah that it's not one of her favorite things, then I'm still down with agave.

If you don't own a Vitamix, don't be ashamed. We can't all be highly evolved and/or work in a natural-foods deli. However, if you have a blender that couldn't puree a superripe banana, consider not making green smoothies (or anything involving a blender) until you purchase a better one. And if you have to spend the money on a new blender, why not get one that could pulverize a femur in less than ten seconds? While a Vitamix turns kale into drinkable manna in seconds, crappy blenders will just chop and swirl it around and you'll be stuck chewing on cud-like nastiness. If you own a semidecent blender, first add the juice and kale and blend that shit together until the kale is as pulverized as possible before adding the remaining ingredients. If you are a superior person and own a Vitamix, just throw everything in that bad girl, blend, and enjoy. ❖

HWJ's Morning-After-Double-Pork-Injection Smoothie

- 1 cup fruit juice
(I use Mixed Berry or Concord Grape)
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen organic blueberries
- As much kale as you can handle
(I use 2–3 huge leaves with the thickest part of the stem removed)
- A gentle squirt of agave nectar or local honey
- 1 tablespoon almond butter
- 2 handfuls of ice

Five Tips on How to Go from Smoothie Amateur to Smoothie Badass:

1. Whenever you have overripe bananas, peel them, break them into small pieces, and freeze them for future smoothie use. This may also allow you to skip the addition of ice.
2. Give your smoothies names, such as "Walking in a Winter Wonder CHAI" or "The Incredible Bulk" because this makes you seem like a dynamic and creative person to people who don't know you. My five-year-old nephew and I always name our smoothies before we drink them. His names are limited—"Mango

Smasher," "Peanut Butter Banana Smasher," or the ever-popular "Strawberry Smasher"—but I don't mock his ability to think outside the "Smasher" box in naming smoothies because I am a good auntie. Also because he is only five.

3. One of my favorite smoothie boosts is a packet of Emergen-C. Are you on your death bed? Make the same basic smoothie, substituting in a packet of orange Emergen-C and a whole peeled orange (leave the pith and seeds, it's all good) for the almond butter—and heal thyself.

4. Did I mention you should really get a Vitamix?

5. Protein takes many forms, not only the form of something dead. Soy protein, whey protein, egg-white protein—the protein powder aisle at your local natural foods store overfloweth with options to turn any smoothie into a power smoothie. I drink a smoothie with soy protein every day; it maintains my natural-foods-deli-running and editing muscles. Not to mention the metaphorical muscle of my inner rage.