

Leafy Green Emoji Submission

To: Unicode Consortium

From: Nicole Wong (nicolekwong8@gmail.com) and Jennifer 8. Lee, Emojination

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Abstract

The current list of vegetable emojis would benefit greatly from the addition of an emoji for leafy greens. For the purposes of this proposal, leafy green vegetables will refer to any green vegetable consumed primarily for its leaves. And we are specifically referring to leafy greens that do not develop a head like cabbages and lettuces. Leafy greens are a diverse bunch in the vegetable group and offer a crucial source of dietary nutrition.¹ As vegan and healthy plant-based diets surge in popularity², leafy greens will continue to be a significant cornerstone in these diets and consumers' emoji vocabulary.

Introduction

From the Himalayas to South America, leafy green vegetables originate from regions all over the world³ and have been part of the human diet for millennia⁴. They are often cited for their excellent and varied health benefits ranging from skin health⁵ to cancer prevention⁶. And versatile in their culinary applications, leafy green vegetables are a fixture in our grocery stores, farmer's markets, kitchens, and culture. As people continue to learn about the environmental

¹http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/24/healthiest-leafy-green-vegetables_n_5697698.html

²<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/nutrition/say-goodbye-kale-superfood-trends-2017-five-new-ingredients/>

³ <https://www.amazon.com/Around-World-Plants-Perennial-Vegetable/dp/1856231410>

⁴ <https://www.ars.usda.gov/plains-area/gfnd/gfhnrc/docs/news-2013/dark-green-leafy-vegetables/>

⁵ <http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/list-dark-green-leafy-vegetables-1647.html>

⁶ <https://www.ars.usda.gov/plains-area/gfnd/gfhnrc/docs/news-2013/dark-green-leafy-vegetables/>

and health benefits of plant-based diets⁷ and the food industry caters to these tastes⁸, nutritious and easy-to-cook leafy green vegetables will remain a highly relevant and frequent topic of social discussion.

Leafy green vegetables are also a centerpiece of the Chinese diet⁹. Thus, adding a leafy green emoji would create a more inclusive emoji lexicon for the Chinese population.

For all of the reasons listed above, leafy green vegetables clearly warrant their own emoji.

Names

CLDR Short Name: Leafy Green Vegetable

Other Keywords: Spinach, Water Spinach, Kale, Collard Greens, Collards, Arugula, Swiss Chard, Chard, Gai Lan, Bok Choy, Mizuna, Mustard Greens, Tatsoi, Sorrel, Dandelion Greens, Turnip Greens, Watercress

Factors for Inclusion

I. Compatibility

Currently, there are no identifiable leafy green vegetable, kale, or spinach emojis in existing systems.

II. Expected Usage

Evidence of Frequency

According to Google Trends, when compared with “broccoli,” which is the only currently existing dark green vegetable emoji, “kale” and “spinach” come close in terms of relative interest over time.¹⁰

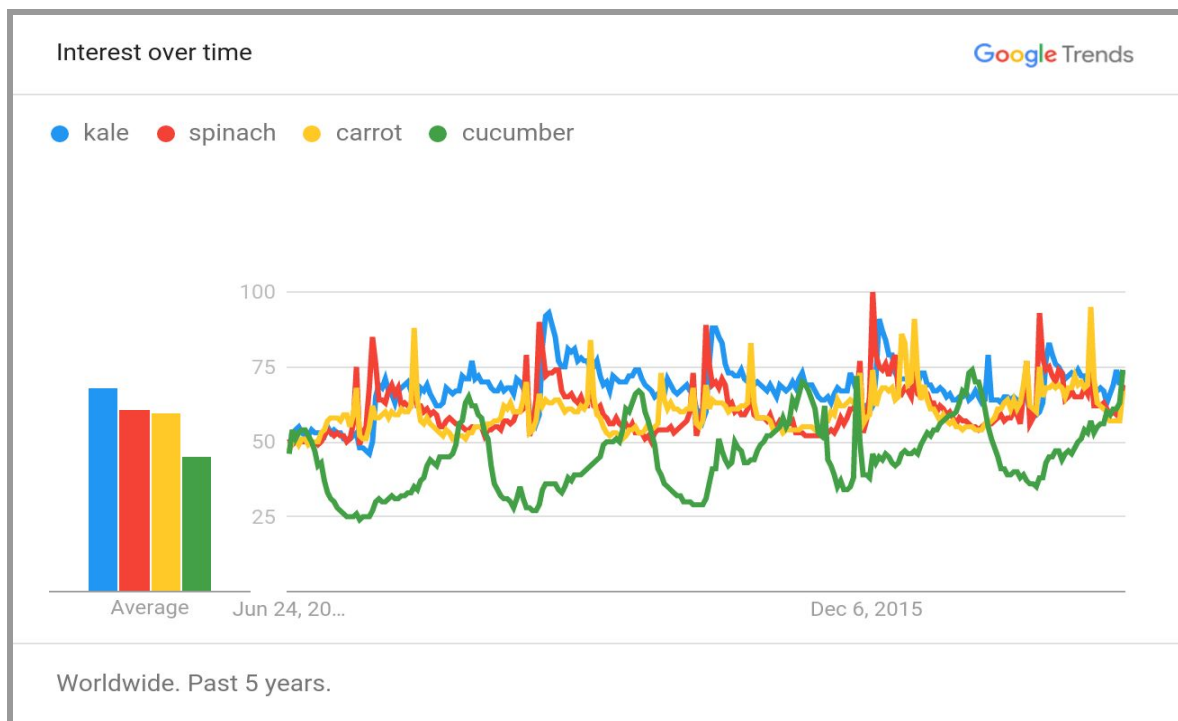
⁷<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/diet-fitness/vegan-eating-would-slash-cut-food-s-global-warming-emissions-n542886>

⁸<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/us-plant-based-foods-industry-tops-5-billion-in-annual-sales-2017-03-06>

⁹ <http://www.serious-eats.com/2014/05/chinese-greens-101-stir-fry-choy-sum-minced-garlic.html>

¹⁰ <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=kale,spinach,broccoli>

And compared with other kinds of vegetables such as “cucumber” and “carrot” (which each have their own emoji), “spinach” and “kale” are searched more frequently over time.¹¹



Additionally, both “kale” and “spinach” have been hashtagged more frequently on Instagram than “broccoli.”

¹¹ <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?q=kale,spinach,carrot,cucumber>

Vegetable Name	Spinach	Kale	Broccoli
Total Hashtag Count	3,691,256	2,691,651	2,298,710
Percent Frequency Compared to Broccoli	160.6%	117.1%	—

Multiple Uses

Not only can the leafy green emoji represent a wide diversity of leafy vegetable crops, but leafy green vegetables are often heavily associated with nutrition and healthy eating. In recent years, kale in particular has become a unifying symbol and poster child for the food movement, representing those who care about where their food comes from and support local, sustainably produced food.¹²

Fans of the cartoon character Popeye the Sailor, any athletes interested in working out, or people who want to symbolize iron may also use the leafy green vegetable emoji to represent spinach. This is because Popeye popularized the myth that spinach has a high iron content and therefore can help build muscle mass.¹³



I wish there was a spinach emoji 🍷👤🚢
[#Popeye](#) [#totesgainzbro](#) [#amibigyet](#)



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Uses in Sequences

¹²<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/people-and-culture/food/the-plate/2016/08/who-owns-kale-/>
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=219368062>

¹³

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2354580/Popeyes-legendary-love-spinach-actually-misplaced-decimal-point.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/childrens-books/popeye-10-things-you-never-knew/>

¹⁴<https://twitter.com/scottdemarcoxxx/status/667059062555680773>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/362187995006583739/>

The leafy green emoji will plausibly play an important role in any emoji sequence related to nutrition, healthy lifestyles, farming, or vegetables.

III. Image Distinctiveness

The darker green color and rounded as opposed to pointed leaves distinguish the leafy green emoji from other similar looking plant emojis, particularly the herb emoji. Also, unlike the herb emoji, the leafy green vegetable emoji is especially distinct because it has multiple stems growing outwards from the same location on a commonly shared base.

IV. Completeness

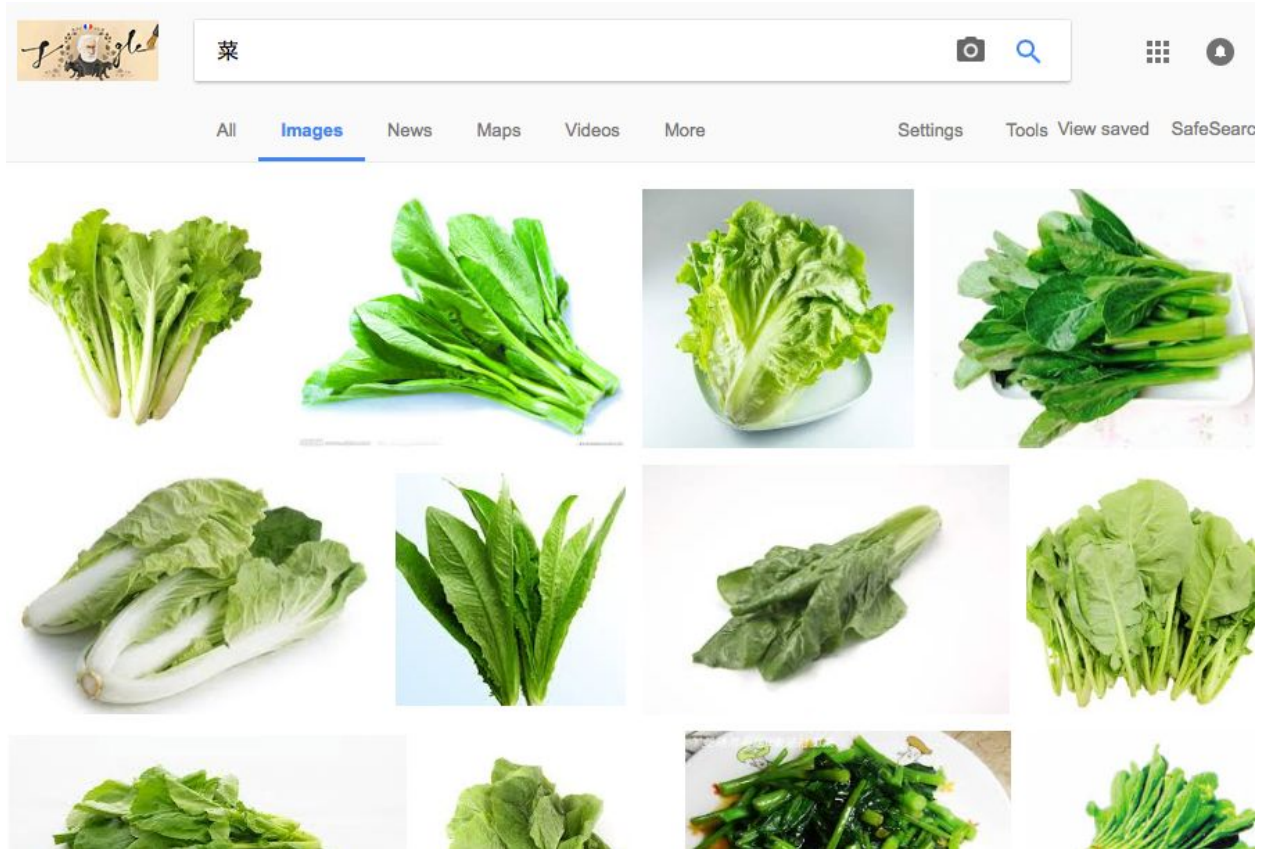
Currently, the select few vegetable emojis available come mostly from what the United States Department of Agriculture calls the “starchy” and “red and orange” vegetable subgroups. Noticeably, broccoli is the only existing vegetable emoji from the “dark green vegetable” category. Adding the leafy green vegetable emoji would not only make the emoji representation of dark green vegetables more complete, but it would also significantly expand the range of vegetables a user can express through emoji. This is because the leafy green emoji represents an incredible diversity of leafy green vegetables including chard, collard greens, mizuna, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale, spinach, arugula, watercress, sorrel, dandelion greens, a long list of Asian greens¹⁵, and many more.

Additionally, a leafy green emoji would broaden the cultural relevancy of the current handful of vegetable emoji. This is because leafy greens are central vegetables in the Chinese diet and in any Chinese meal¹⁶. Indeed, a Google image search of the Chinese character for vegetable, 菜, predominantly turns up pictures of leafy greens.

¹⁵ <http://www.seriousseats.com/2014/05/asian-green-guide.html>

¹⁶ http://international.zzu.edu.cn/en/pages_index?cid=31&pid=16&spid=4

<http://www.seriousseats.com/2014/05/chinese-greens-101-stir-fry-choy-sum-minced-garlic.html>



V. Frequently Requested

Posts on social media outlets like FaceBook and Twitter indicate a high demand for a leafy green vegetable emoji.

Facebook:

"I would use the kale emoji or even generic leafy greens" ¹⁷

"Lunch time is approaching. Everyone needs a cheeky Kale emoji! We want it. Do you!?" ¹⁸

Twitter:

"I wish there was a spinach emoji" ¹⁹

"THERE ISN'T A SPINACH EMOJI"²⁰

"Why is there no kale emoji?" ²¹

"No kale...get it together Unicode Consortium" ²²

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/AriasKitchen/posts/346073922261577>

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/wantedemojis/>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/scottdemarcoxxx/status/667059062555680773>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/renaedougherty/status/710835744395366400>

²¹ <https://twitter.com/maggiepenman/status/779344531997286400>

²² <https://twitter.com/maggiepenman/status/779344531997286400>

“Still no :kale: emoji 🙄”²³

“We really need a leafy green #emoji. Maybe kale, spinach or even a collard green! #holistic #healthcoach #eatyourgreens”²⁴

Even news outlets advocate for a leafy green emoji. *Business Insider* included kale as one of the “19 Emoji That Really Should Exist.”²⁵ And after embarking on an “all-emoji diet” for a week, *The Atlantic* writer Kelsey Rexroat highlights how the foods she eats most frequently lack emoji representation. She comments, “I now have lots of recommendations for new food emoji, from my typical cooking staples like garlic, onion, and *spinach* to snacks like chips, cheese, and popcorn.”²⁶

Factors for Exclusion

I. Overly Specific

The leafy green vegetable emoji is not overly specific because its generic leaf shape and particular growth structure enable users to represent a wide array of leafy green vegetables that share this common form.

II. Open-ended

The leafy green vegetable emoji is a new addition to the vegetable section and its leaves distinctly differentiate it from the other available vegetable emoji.

III. Already Representable

Currently, the leafy green vegetable emoji is not representable by any other existing emoji. Due to the particular arrangement and color of their leaves, other plant emojis (specifically seedling, herb, and four leaf clover) do not resemble leafy green vegetables.

Although some may argue that the green salad emoji already provides adequate representation for leafy green vegetables, we argue that the leafy green vegetable deserves its own distinct emoji. A salad is by definition a mixture of many vegetables that may include leafy green vegetables among them but also may contain other items like tomato and onion. Therefore, the green salad emoji does not directly refer to any one leafy green vegetable. To say this were the case would be to say that the pizza emoji could be used as a stand-in for the cheese wedge emoji. Thus, the green salad emoji cannot accurately symbolize leafy green vegetables like spinach, kale, or Asian greens.

²³ <https://twitter.com/ProductHunt/status/823422209611874304>

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/biancapattrson/status/667425154998411264>

²⁵ <http://www.businessinsider.com/19-emoji-you-wish-existed-2014-1>

²⁶ <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/08/my-week-on-the-emoji-diet/375484/>

Lastly, although the green salad emoji may sufficiently represent vegetables for the average Westerner, it is not a universal vegetable symbol. For Chinese people, a leafy green vegetable emoji would be the most culturally appropriate and perhaps popular vegetable symbol because Chinese diets typically emphasize cooked leafy greens and exclude raw salad²⁷.

IV. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities

The leafy green vegetable emoji is generic enough that it does not overlap with any particular company, signage, or icons.

V. Transient

Although the kale fad is transient,²⁸ the emoji we are proposing is general enough to represent *all* the leafy green vegetables that people may eat on a regular basis. Due to their nutritional benefits and widespread cultivation²⁹, leafy green vegetables will likely continue to remain an essential part of people's diets, ensuring that the leafy green emoji remains relevant for a long time to come.

VI. Faulty Comparison

In their own right, leafy green vegetables merit emoji representation because there are currently no emojis that can show the diversity of leafy green vegetables people consume.

²⁷http://international.zzu.edu.cn/en/pages_index?cid=31&pid=16&spid=4

<http://www.seriousseats.com/2014/05/chinese-greens-101-stir-fry-choy-sum-minced-garlic.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/healthy-living/use-your-noodle-the-real-chinese-diet-is-so-healthy-it-could-solve-the-west-obesity-crisis-873651.html>

²⁸<http://www.wsj.com/video/the-next-kale-how-superfood-trends-are-made/C63228B6-7FD3-4569-9168-1E4D323DE700.html>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=219368062>

²⁹<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-05-09/farmers-are-growing-a-lot-more-kale-now-a-census-reports>

<http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/spinach/>