

Keeping and Cooking Broccoli

The biggest problem with trying to keep broccoli, when you can't use it all at once, is that it wants to continue growing, and what you bought at the peak of perfection can soon be past its best. The key to this is that there is plenty of nourishment for the florets in the thick stem, so to arrest the unwanted continued development, they need to be removed from the stem. If the florets are all cut off the stem, and placed in a sealed box in the fridge, they will last in good condition, if not indefinitely, for a remarkably long time. You should certainly be unable to see any change at the end of a week.

Having kept it in good condition, you then want to serve it in good condition. The advice is always to steam it, rather than boil it, but even steaming doesn't seem to deliver an end product quite as good as one hopes. The solution is the microwave: a device that if ill-used can wreck almost any food, but when appropriately used does wonders for broccoli. Try cooking it in a microwave steamer, with a little water in the bottom to prevent the broccoli drying out, for around 3½ to 4 minutes. The exact time will depend on the power of your microwave, how much broccoli and what else you are cooking with it, and you will have to determine that by experiment, but when you get it right your broccoli will be a really beautiful green colour, and just slightly firm.

It's one of the healthiest vegetables, and cooked this way, one of the most enjoyable.