



Spinach

Growing and Harvest Information

As a cool weather crop, spinach grows well in early spring or late fall. Spinach grows best with ample moisture and well-drained soil. It can withstand low temperatures but does not tolerate hot weather and begins to bolt. Chill seeds for summer or fall planting in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks before planting. For raised beds, plant spinach 4" apart with 4-6" between rows.

If you want to keep plants producing, harvest by pinching off the outer leaves when they large enough to use. Don't harvest more than 50 percent of the leaves from a plant! To harvest the entire plant, cut at the base and remove the older leaves.

Greens do not store well, but may be kept in plastic bags in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days.

Introduction

Spinach is a dark-colored green leaf with a slightly bitter taste and is one of the most protein-rich vegetables - about 5 grams of protein per cup (when cooked)! Spinach is full of vitamins and minerals like vitamin K, A, magnesium, iron, and potassium.

During the 1920's in America, spinach consumption was popularized with the promotion of the cartoon, Popeye the Sailor man.

Preparation & Storage

Vegetable Prep:

- Select bunches with crisp, dark leaves and avoid limp bunches with yellowing leaves or insect damage. Fresh spinach should have a sweet smell, never sour or musty.
- Wash thoroughly under clean, running water to remove any soil particles.

Fresh Storage:

- Store fresh spinach in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Freezing:

- Although spinach may be canned, it is best enjoyed frozen.
- Select young, tender green leaves and wash thoroughly, removing any woody stems.
- Blanch for 2 minutes; 1 1/2 minutes for younger leaves. Let cool and drain before packaging in tightly sealed container and freezing.

Nutritional Benefits

| Source | Rating |
|----------|-----------|
| Vitamins | EXCELLENT |
| Minerals | EXCELLENT |
| Fiber | GOOD |

Use By Guide

| Vegetable State | Use by |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Raw | 2-3 days |
| Frozen | 1 year |
| Pickled | 8-12 months |



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Fun Fact:

Dishes that end in "a la Florentine" have spinach as a key ingredient.

Prepare Spinach Like This:

Baked
Braised
Raw
Roasted
Sautéed
Slow-Cooked
Steamed

Try Spinach In:

Casseroles
Gratins
Omelets
Pastas
Pizza
Salads
Smoothies
Soups
Stir-frys

Preparation

Recipe 1: Garlic Sautéed Spinach

Serves 6, Prep and Cook Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds baby spinach leaves
- 2 tbs. chopped garlic (about 6 cloves)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 3/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 tbs. unsalted butter
- squeeze of lemon
- 2 tbs. olive oil

Directions

1. Rinse spinach well in cold water, spin in salad spinner or pat dry with paper towel
2. In large pot, heat the olive oil and saute the garlic over medium heat for about 1 minute (but not until its browned!)
3. Add spinach, salt, pepper to the pot and toss with garlic and oil. Cover the pot and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Uncover pot, turn heat on high and cook spinach for another minute, stirring until spinach is wilted.
5. Top with butter, squeeze of lemon, sprinkle of salt. Serve hot!

Recipe 2: Spinach Salad with Apples & Walnuts

Serves 4, Prep time: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 bunch spinach
- 1 red apple, diced
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/2 cup goat cheese (optional)
- Honey mustard dressing (or for homemade dressing, whisk together: 1/4 cup olive oil, 3 tbs apple cider vinegar, 1 tsp. dijon mustard, 1 tbs. honey, salt to taste)

Directions

1. Place washed and dried spinach in a large bowl. Top with apples, cranberries, walnuts, and goat cheese.
2. Pour dressing over salad just before serving, toss to coat. Enjoy!