



## Spinach:

### Nature's Most Nutrient Dense Vegetable

Spinach is part of the same family as beets and chard and shares similar bitter and salty flavors. Its prime growing seasons are from March to May and September through October. It is important to wash this leafy green carefully due to collection of soil and sand within the leaves and stems.

**What's so great about Spinach?** This leafy green is an excellent source of vitamin K (1110.6%), vitamin A (377.8%), manganese (84%), folate (65.7%), magnesium (41%), iron (35%), vitamin C (30%), vitamin B2 (25%), calcium (23%) potassium (22%), and vitamin B6 (20%). It's also a

very good source of protein, phosphorus, vitamin E, zinc, dietary fiber, and copper. Finally, it's a good source of selenium, niacin, and omega-3 fatty acids.

#### **Storage & Selection**

When choosing fresh spinach, the healthiest will be a deep green and have a crisp texture. Avoid leaves with a yellowish color that may be wilting. If you purchase spinach and yellows after purchase, it is still safe to boil, sauté, or bake. To avoid premature yellowing or wilting, store spinach in the refrigerator.

#### **Preservation & Preparation**

Spinach is very versatile. It can be eaten raw in a salad,

boiled or sautéed, or even added to create a nutritious smoothie. It can easily be frozen by boiling the spinach until tender and then bagging in freezer bags. There is also the option of drying spinach using a dehydrator for use in pasta making or other recipes.

Spinach has the highest density of nutrients per calorie across all vegetables. It can replace iceberg lettuce in any salad as a more nutrient dense green or can be sautéed in olive oil with garlic for a side dish to any meal. Following are recipes that showcase this delicious and healthy vegetable.



## More Recipes full of Spinach

“He’s strong to the finish ‘cause he eats his spinach...”

-Popeye the Sailor Man



## Garlic Sautéed Spinach

- 1 ½ lbs. spinach
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 6 cloves chopped garlic
- 2 tsp. salt
- ¾ tsp. black pepper
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Lemon

Rinse the spinach well in cold water to make sure it's very clean. Spin it dry in a salad spinner. In a very large pot heat the olive oil and sauté the garlic over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add all the spinach, the salt, and pepper to the pot, toss it with the garlic and oil, cover the pot, and cook it for 2 minutes. Uncover the pot, turn the heat on high, and cook the spinach for another minute, stirring with a wooden spoon, until all the spinach is wilted. Put spinach in a serving bowl and top with the butter and a squeeze of lemon.



## + Ingredients

- 1 (16-ounce) package gnocchi
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 2 tbsp pine nuts
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 ounces fresh spinach
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

## Brown Butter Gnocchi with Spinach and Pine nuts

Prepare a quick salad to accompany the gnocchi: Combine 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, 1 teaspoon brown sugar, ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, and ¼ teaspoon salt in a large bowl; stir with a whisk. Add 6 cups gourmet salad mix to bowl; toss gently to coat. Sauvignon blanc will pair enticingly with this dish.

**Yield:** 4 servings (serving size: 1 cup gnocchi mixture and 1 tablespoon cheese)

### Preparation:

1. Cook gnocchi according to package directions, omitting salt and fat; drain.
2. Heat butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add pine nuts to pan; cook 3 minutes or until butter and nuts are lightly browned, stirring constantly. Add garlic to pan; cook 1 minute. Add gnocchi and spinach to pan; cook 1 minute or until spinach wilts, stirring constantly. Stir in salt and pepper. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Recipe from: Jackie Mills, MS, RD, *Cooking Light*, January 2009



## Spanish Spinach Omelette

### Ingredients

Spinach leaves

3 tbsp olive oil

1 large onion, finely sliced

2 large potatoes, peeled and sliced

10 eggs

Tip the spinach into a large colander and bring a kettleful of water to the boil. Slowly pour the water over the spinach until wilted, then cool under cold water. Squeeze all the liquid out of the spinach and set aside.

Heat oven to broil. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and gently cook the onion and potato for about 10 mins. until the potato is

soft. While the onion is cooking, beat the eggs together in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Stir the spinach into the potatoes, then pour in the eggs and cook, stirring occasionally, until nearly set, then flash the omelette under the broiler to set the top. Ease the omelette on to a plate, then flip over back into the pan. Finish cooking the omelette on the

underside and turn out onto a board. Serve cut into wedges.

### Take it for lunch

For lunch the next day make omelette sandwiches - a delicacy in Spain. Spread ciabatta rolls with mayo and fill with the omelette and sliced tomato.

Recipe from *Good Food Magazine*, September 2007



## Dijon Walnut Spinach Salad

9 ounces fresh baby spinach

4 ounces crumbled feta cheese

½ cup dried cranberries

1 cup walnut halves, toasted

½ cup honey Dijon vinaigrette

In a large salad bowl, combine the spinach, feta cheese, cranberries and walnuts. Drizzle with vinaigrette; toss to coat. Serve immediately.

**Yield:** 10 servings.

Recipe from: *Simple & Delicious* July/August 2005