



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SPINACH



Spinach is a dark green, leafy vegetable that is also called a leafy green. It is a member of the Amaranthaceae family. Spinach is a cool season crop that grows close to the ground. It is thought to have originated in Persia (present day Iran) over 2,000 years ago. Fresh spinach has a mild, sweet flavor and slightly crunchy texture. Cooked spinach has a slightly acidic, earthy flavor and a soft texture. It is eaten fresh, juiced, steamed, boiled, wilted, sautéed, charred, stewed, or stir-fried. Michigan spinach grown indoors is available year-round, while spinach grown outdoors is generally harvested in the spring and fall.



SPINACH IS

- An excellent source of antioxidants vitamins A and C* and a good source of antioxidant vitamin E. In combination with minerals and fiber found in nutrient rich fruits, vegetables, and grains, antioxidants can help prevent a variety of chronic diseases.
- An excellent source of folate. Folate supports the production of healthy red blood cells and is important during periods of rapid growth, like pregnancy.
- An excellent source of vitamin K. Vitamin K is vital for blood clotting and healthy bones.
- A good source of iron*. Iron is important for healthy blood and cells.
- A good source of magnesium. Magnesium helps build strong bones and supports the function of the heart, nerves, muscles, and more.
- A good source of potassium. Potassium helps maintain healthy blood pressure.

**Foods that are high in vitamin C, calcium and/or iron can help protect you from lead absorption.*

MICHIGAN MADE

Spinach is a small production crop in Michigan often grown in smaller family farms, urban farms, and CSA farms. It can be grown statewide in hydroponic container gardens, greenhouses, hoop houses, and on micro farms inside shipping containers. Michigan grown spinach can be found in grocery stores, corner stores, specialty stores, co-ops, farm stands, and farmers markets.

FUN FACTS

- Aspanakh is the name for spinach in the Persian language.
- Clarence Birdseye started Birds Eye Frosted Foods in 1930 and spinach was the first frozen food made available to the public.
- After China, the United States is the world's second largest spinach producer.
- One pound of spinach seeds contains over 40,000 seeds.
- It takes over 600,000 seeds to grow one acre of spinach plants.
- Spinach likes to grow in muck soil which is a type of waterlogged soil with high organic matter.
- Spinach is often used as a natural green dye for food and clothes.
- When the cartoon character Popeye ate spinach, he grew huge muscles that gave him superhuman strength.

BUYING AND STORING



- Select fresh spinach leaves that are dry, green, and crisp. Avoid leaves that are yellow, slimy, limp, or wilted.
- Store fresh spinach in a plastic bag or container lined with paper towel in the refrigerator for up to four to five days. Store prepackaged spinach in the container it came in until ready to use.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using. Rinse unwashed spinach in cool water. Pat dry. If packaged spinach is labeled triple washed, additional washing is not required.



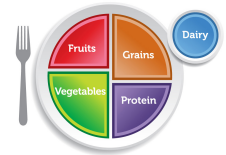
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MORE THAN FRESH

In addition to fresh, spinach is available frozen and canned. Frozen spinach typically does not contain added salt but canned spinach, and many frozen meals and juices that feature spinach, may contain added salt. When buying packaged spinach, be sure to read labels and choose items that are reduced or low-sodium (salt), or no salt added, and low in saturated fat.

EAT WITH MYPLATE

MyPlate focuses on whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and half the plate being fruits and vegetables. Spinach is part of the Vegetable Group. Most people need 2–3 cups of vegetables per day. For more information visit: myplate.gov.



Choose **MyPlate**.gov

IT ALL COUNTS

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% vegetable and fruit juices count toward your daily MyPlate goals.

STRAWBERRY SPINACH SALAD

Time: 5 minutes | Makes: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1¾ cups

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 117, Carbohydrate 15g, Dietary Fiber 3g, Protein 2g, Total Fat 5g, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 364mg

Always wash hands before preparing food. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before using.



INGREDIENTS

- | | |
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| 6 ounces baby spinach | ½ cup balsamic or raspberry vinaigrette |
| 1 pint fresh strawberries, tops removed, sliced thin | 1 teaspoon sugar |
| ½ red or sweet onion, sliced very thin | |

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix vinaigrette and sugar in small mixing bowl.
2. Add spinach, strawberries, and onions to large mixing bowl. Drizzle with vinaigrette, toss to coat.
3. Serve.

CHANGE IT UP

- Add ½ cup feta cheese, ½ cup sliced almonds, and 1 cup blueberries for added flavor.
- Make it a wrap, add 1 cup shredded cooked chicken and roll in flatbread or whole-wheat tortillas.
- Add chopped cucumber and cooked rotini pasta to transform this into a pasta salad.

TRY THIS

- Add fresh spinach to sandwiches, soups, pastas, and pizzas.
- Add sautéed spinach to scrambled eggs, frittatas, omelets, and quiches.
- Sauté fresh spinach with sliced mushrooms, minced garlic, and a little salt and pepper for a flavorful side dish.
- Make a quick salad using spinach, berries, and sliced almonds. Drizzle with lemon juice or vinaigrette.