

SPINACH



Spinach is often served raw in salads or sandwiches. It is also enjoyed cooked or sautéed in soups, pastas, and dips.

Spinach is a **DARK GREEN** vegetable. Spinach is high in vitamin A, vitamin K, and is a good source of vitamin C and folate. And for all that goodness, it's very low in calories—one cup of raw spinach only has about 6 calories!

FUN FACT :

Iran was the first place to cultivate spinach, and that was over 2,000 years ago. The popularity of spinach began in the early 1800's in the United States, and the spinach industry also saw a surge in consumption after the cartoon Popeye the Sailor Man was developed in the 1920's. Spinach likes to grow during cool weather and only takes about 4-6 weeks from seed to harvest, so it is a good crop for school gardens.



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Safety:	<p>Wash spinach before use and preparation. If it is prepared before being served, store spinach in damp paper towel in a plastic bag and keep refrigerated at 41° F or below for no more than 3-5 days.</p> <p>Purchase or obtain spinach from a trusted source. Avoid spinach that may have been exposed to fresh animal manures during growing or harvest.</p> <p>Use gloves in handling produce that will be served raw.</p> <p>Always use a different cutting board for vegetables than for meat to prevent cross-contamination.</p>
Yield:	<p>For 100 ½ cup servings of cooked spinach, purchase 26.4 lbs of ready-to-use fresh spinach leaves.</p> <p>For 100 1 cup servings of raw spinach (NSLP ½ cup credit) purchase 16 lbs of ready-to-use fresh spinach leaves.</p>
Quality:	<p>Look for spinach without damage from insects and other environmental sources. Spinach is often picked or bought in large green bunches; choose ones that are fresh, crunchy, and ones that retain its earthy dark green color. Reject bunches that are yellowed.</p>
Storage:	<p>Dampen a paper towel and loosely wrap Spinach. Spinach can be stored in a plastic bag for a maximum of 3 to 5 days in refrigeration.</p>
Preparation	<p>Spinach should be washed several times before use to rid of any material like dirt and sand. Spinach stems should also be trimmed to a desired length. Discard any unused part of the vegetable.</p>
Seasonings:	<p>Spinach can be enjoyed by sautéing with simple ingredients such as, lemon, garlic, and olive oil. It is also delicious fresh in salads with vinegar based dressings.</p>

