

5-30-2011

# Spinach

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*USU Student Organic Farm*

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## Recommended Citation

Inman, Elisabeth, "Spinach" (2011). *USU Student Organic Farm Newsletter*. Paper 7.  
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# USU STUDENT ORGANIC FARM

## Newsletter

May 30, 2011

Vol. 2 Issue 3



Alanna and Amanda working on the herb garden.

### Conquering the Bounty

*Think you've got so much spinach that you'll never use it all? Spinach can be used in countless ways. To add the great taste and flavor of spinach to your meals, try these simple ideas.*

- ✓ Toss spinach greens with a garden salad. Add dried cranberries, walnuts, and raspberry vinaigrette dressing for a great combination of flavors.
- ✓ Include spinach in omelets and scrambled eggs for breakfast.
- ✓ Add spinach to any pizza. Put chopped spinach and a little extra cheese on pizza with five minutes of baking time left.
- ✓ Add chopped spinach to pastas and pasta sauces for added flavor.
- ✓ Try simply steaming spinach for a delightful side dish. Spinach will lose more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its volume when steamed so don't be afraid to stuff in a little extra. Add butter and a little salt for a flawless dish.
- ✓ Substitute spinach for regular lettuce on sandwiches and tacos.
- ✓ Try sautéing spinach with garlic and olive oil for another simple dish. **See the "Fabulous Flavors" section on page 2.**

*Article by: Elisabeth Inman*

### Featured Vegetable: Spinach

Spinach is believed to originate in Persia – modern-day Iran. It was introduced in China over 10 centuries ago and in America only about 3 centuries ago. Spinach is currently produced year-round in the United States with California being the major producer here. However, China produces about 85% of the world's spinach whereas the United States only produces a mere 3%.

There are two main types of spinach: 1) savoy, which can be identified by the curly or crinkled, dark green leaves, and 2) flat, which have smooth leaves. Flat or smooth-leaved spinach is the type that is typically used in processed foods. Baby spinach is a smaller, flat-leaved variety, which is very tender and often favored for use in salads. Spinach is similar to arugula, beet greens, and chard in texture, flavor, and cooking methods.

*Article by: Elisabeth Inman*

### Spinach Trivia:

- ✓ In the 1930's, U.S. spinach growers credited Popeye with a 33% increase in domestic spinach sales and consumption.
- ✓ The French term "a la florentine" in recipes indicates that the recipe has spinach as a major ingredient.
- ✓ Spinach was the first vegetable frozen and sold commercially. Clarence Birdseye, the founder of Birdseye Foods was the first to offer frozen spinach.

### Simple Spinach Frittata

*A frittata is an egg dish similar to an omelet – only no difficult folding necessary. This recipe is very versatile, perfect for any occasion – breakfast, lunch, or dinner and will become an instant favorite.*

½ cup onion, chopped	½ lb fresh spinach, washed and chopped
2 Tbsp. olive oil	½ cup mozzarella, feta, or other favorite cheese
6 eggs	Salt and pepper, to taste
¼ cup milk	2 Tbsp. Parmesan or other favorite cheese

Preheat broiler. In an oven-proof skillet, sauté onion in oil until tender. In a bowl, beat eggs and milk. Stir in spinach, desired cheese, salt, and pepper. Add to the skillet. Cook over medium heat. As mixture sets, run a spatula around the skillet edge, lifting egg mixture so uncooked portion flows underneath. Continue cooking and lifting edges until egg mixture is almost set. Sprinkle 2 Tbsp. cheese over frittata. Broil 4-5 inches from heat for 1 to 2 minutes or until top is set. Cut into wedges and serve.

*Recipe adapted from Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook*

### Frittata Notes:

- ✓ Spinach can be substituted easily with arugula, beet greens, and chard.
- ✓ Experiment with vegetables, herbs, and spices in your frittata. Try peppers, asparagus, garlic, olives, green onions, basil, corn, tomatoes, zucchini, diced potato, radishes, broccoli, etc. in different combinations.
- ✓ Meats such as chicken, ham, turkey, bacon, and salmon are a great addition to your frittata as well.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHANGE!

**Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>** - Our first CSA BBQ! 5pm at the farm. Bring friends, family, kids, and your favorite dish! Hope to see you there! Please RSVP via email!

Be sure to come get herbs throughout the week if you want them! Right now we have sage, thyme and chives.

#### Volunteer hours:

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 7am-1pm  
Wednesday, Saturday: 10am-1pm

#### Missed pickup policy:

If you forget to pickup your share for the week at your scheduled time, we are so sorry but you will have to forfeit the share for the week. If you let us know beforehand that you will be gone, we can definitely work something out so you don't miss a share.

## Organic Techniques: Water-Wise Gardening

By: Lora Fitch

Spring has finally managed to make its way to our lovely valley and soon it will be time to plant your gardens if you haven't already. An idea to consider while selecting your plants for this year is to use water-wise plants, or plants that require little water to grow. They are great for saving both water and money. Water-wise plants and information about them can be found at your local greenhouses and online ([extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden](http://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden)).

Some of the water-wise plants are more known like Penstemon, Blanket Flower, and Red Hot Poker, but there are some less-well-known ones that are both fascinating and fun like the Chocolate flower and Hummingbird Fuchsia.

For more information about the USU Student Organic Farm or CSA shares visit:

[www.usu.edu/organicfarms](http://www.usu.edu/organicfarms)

## On the Farm News

Hello! What a wet week we have had! Unfortunately, we have a bit of bad news. Because of all the rain, it has affected next week's share quite a bit. According to schedule, we should have kale, spinach, green onions, and lettuce for you, but since the sun hasn't been out in a while, your plants can't photosynthesize and store energy to grow. This means that everything that should be full size by now has barely grown at all. What this means for you is a small share next week, but come late summer and fall, the abundance should make up for the current scarcity. We are so sorry about this, but sometimes the weather doesn't cooperate with our plans and dramatically affects crops everywhere. We hope you understand. According to the weather forecast, we have a lot of sunny days this week so things are looking up in terms of plant growth. Hopefully scarcity won't be a recurring problem.



On a lighter note, our first CSA BBQ is coming up this next Tuesday and it should be great weather! We will provide the main dish. If all CSA members who pick up on Wednesday could bring a side dish and all CSA members who pick on Saturday could bring a dessert that would be superb! We will all be in for some good food! Please RSVP via email for our sakes. We don't want to spend money on food that won't be eaten.

Veggies to expect next week: Tentatively, we will have lettuce, green onions, and herbs. Of course, this is always subject to change.

## Fabulous Flavors: Tips & Techniques

*Having trouble making your spinach flavorful and fun to eat? Here is a simple idea that will make your spinach greens the life of the party.*

**Sauté** is a French word that means "to jump." Sautéing brings out diverse flavors in spinach when it is mixed with different spices and other vegetables.

**To sauté spinach:** add a small amount of fat in a shallow pan over medium heat. Let the oil get hot before adding your spinach and spices. If you are using butter, do not let it get too hot as butter will burn at a lower temperature than other fats and ruin the flavor of your dish. After adding the spinach and spices to your pan, use a spatula to move the spinach around the pan for 3-4 minutes. Remove from the pan once spinach is wilted and serve immediately.

**Spices to try:** garlic, oregano, scallions, shallots, thyme, rosemary, basil, cayenne, cardamom, chervil, nutmeg, sesame seeds, allspice, coriander, ground mace, mint, and star anise. **Experiment!** Try sautéing a small amount of each one with your spinach until you find your favorite combination.

Article by: Elisabeth Inman

## Washing and Storing your Spinach Greens

*Spinach may grow in sandy soil, so it should be washed thoroughly in order to remove dirt and sand. Here are a few simple steps to prepare your spinach greens for storing and eating.*

- ✓ Separate spinach and gently wash or rinse leaves. Discard any wilted or discolored leaves. Allow to drain in a colander or spin in salad spinner.
- ✓ Wrap in a cloth or paper towel, then refrigerate in a plastic bag in crisper drawer. Protect from freezing. Do not store near apples, pears, or bananas since these fruits release ethylene, a ripening agent that will speed up decay.
- ✓ Greens bruise easily, so handle carefully when preparing.

Adapted from "Viva Vegetables" by Tamara Vitale and Janet Anderson, 2009