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# Spinach

## Food \$ense Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

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**Purchasing and Selection Criteria:** Spinach is available year round in many different forms. Fresh spinach is available in the produce section of grocery stores either bagged or loose. Avoid selecting yellowing or limp leaves. Spinach is also available frozen or canned.

**Cleaning:** For best quality, do not rinse spinach until ready to use. Rinse fresh spinach leaves well with water and pat dry. Make sure that dirt is rinsed from under the leaves.

**Storing:** Store fresh spinach loosely in an open bag in the refrigerator crisper. Fresh leaves should last 3 to 5 days. Bagged spinach can be stored in the refrigerator for 7 to 10 days, or until date printed on the bag.

Frozen spinach will keep best for about 10 to 12 months. Once frozen or canned spinach is opened, refrigerate leftovers in a covered container for up to 4 days. Canned spinach can also be frozen or refrigerated after opening. Remove spinach from the can and place in an airtight container or bag and refrigerate up to 4 days, or freeze and store up to 2 months.

**Preparation Techniques:** Spinach can be prepared in many ways. Fresh spinach can replace lettuce in salads and on sandwiches. Chopped spinach can be added to lasagna, soup, pasta, quesadillas, burritos and many other main dishes. It can also be added to omelets or stir-fried with garlic, onion and red bell peppers, or other vegetables.

To sauté, simply remove the stems, tear leaves into large pieces, rinse and squeeze out extra liquid. Heat a large skillet, and add about a tablespoon of olive oil with a clove of crushed garlic. Add spinach by the handful and cook until it is slightly wilted. Serve warm. Add some red chili flakes for a spicy kick, lemon juice for a citrus zip, or some diced tomatoes and a bit of Parmesan cheese for an Italian flavor.

**Nutrition:** Spinach is an excellent source of many vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, such as: Vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin K, magnesium, folate, iron, vitamin B6, calcium, potassium, protein, omega 3 fatty acids, and more. These vitamins and minerals help the body in many ways. Because of all these nutrients packed in this plant, spinach is commonly found on lists of top “super foods” that help prevent chronic diseases, such as some forms of cancer and heart disease.

**Preservation:** To freeze fresh spinach, wash spinach thoroughly and cut off woody stems. Blanch (or dip) in boiling water for 2 minutes and immediately chill in ice-cold water. Drain off excess moisture and pack into airtight freezer containers or bags, labeled and dated, and place in freezer immediately. Spinach can also be canned. A pressure canner must be used. For procedures and processing times, consult the *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning*. The publication can be downloaded from <http://homefoodpreservation.com> (click on “publications” in middle of page). Direct link to spinach instructions available here:

[http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can\\_04/spinach\\_greens.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/how/can_04/spinach_greens.html)

## References

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<http://extension.usu.edu/fsne>
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## Spinach Smoothie

6-8 ounces yogurt, any flavor  
1/2 cup skim milk  
1/2 fresh or frozen banana  
1/2 cup fresh or frozen fruit  
1 packed cup fresh spinach

Blend well in a blender. If your kids don't like the color, try adding darker fruits like berries.

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## Turkey, Spinach and Apple Wrap

1 Tbsp reduced-fat mayonnaise  
2 tsp honey mustard  
2 whole-wheat lavash wraps or flour tortillas  
2 cups (washed and dried) baby spinach leaves, loosely packed, or two large leaves of a soft leafy green lettuce  
4 thin slices turkey breast (4 ounces)  
1/4 Granny Smith apple, sliced paper-thin

Combine mayonnaise and mustard. Lay out both wraps. Spread the edges of each with the mayonnaise mixture. Leaving a margin free on the side closest to you, arrange a layer of greens on top of wraps. Top each layer with half the turkey. Evenly divide apple slices and lay lengthwise across turkey. Fold over the end of the wrap closest to you, then the two sides. Roll the wrap as tightly as possible toward the opposite side. Cover each wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate, seam side down, up to 4 hours before serving. When ready to serve, remove plastic wrap and cut each wrap in half, at an angle. Makes two wraps, or 2 servings. Recipe from American Institute for Cancer Research. For nutritional information, visit: <http://www.aicr.org>

## Spinach Dip

 From the *Harvest of the Month* Program

1 (10-ounce) package of frozen chopped spinach, thawed  
1/2 cup mild white onion, finely chopped  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 cup raw red pepper, finely chopped  
1/2 cup lowfat sour cream  
1/2 cup lowfat mayonnaise  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
5 cups assorted, colorful raw vegetables for dipping

1. Squeeze water out of spinach.
2. Place into a mixing bowl and add all remaining ingredients.
3. Let the dip sit at room temperature for a half-hour to let the flavors mix.
4. Stir again before serving. This dip will stay good up to 1 week when covered and kept in the refrigerator.