



The Fresh Grocer

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Tips From



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Tony Tantillo

SPINACH

Popeye and his legendary bulging forearms may have been the single most successful marketing image ever utilized to extol the virtues of *spinach*. While Popeye's results are exaggerated, the health benefits associated with eating both raw and cooked spinach are anything but cartoon-like. Though raw spinach is an extremely popular leafy substance in many salads, experts suggest eating spinach cooked whenever possible. Cooking seems to make the nutrients and anti-oxidants found in spinach easier for our bodies to absorb.

Selection & Storage

Spinach is sold loose, tied in bunches, and in plastic "cello" bags. Always select spinach exhibiting a deep green color, free from any obvious signs of wilting or yellowing. Leaves should be well developed with minimal bruises or blemishes, and the stems should be on the thin side. Larger, thicker, stems could be a sign of overgrown spinach. Fresh spinach should always have a fresh smell, never sour or musty.

Bagged spinach is more expensive but it is also more convenient. As with spinach sold in bunches, inspect the package to make sure the leaves show no signs of decay, slime or wilting.

When you get bunched

spinach home, untie it, remove any blemished leaves, trim off the stems, and wash thoroughly in cold water. Spin dry in a salad spinner or drain well, then put into clean plastic bags very loosely wrapped with paper towels. It will last only two to three days, so plan on eating your rinsed spinach right away.



Preparation

I generally like to remove the stems of spinach by hand before cooking. Try steaming the freshly washed and stemmed spinach by placing the spinach with its clinging water droplets into a large pot or wok. Cover and cook, stirring regularly. You can also cook spinach in a steamer over boiling water for 5 - 8 minutes. When finished, you can complete the preparation process a number of different ways. If the spinach is to be used later in a more complex dish, you may want to blanch it in a large amount of water just until it wilts, then submerge in ice water to preserve its color.

Microwaving is one of the healthiest ways to cook spinach, as almost 100% of the nutritional value will be retained. Of

course uncooked, thoroughly

washed and stemmed spinach is wonderful in salads, especially when combined with fresh mushrooms, a light bacon dressing mixed with a quality red-wine vinegar.

You can also sauté spinach in a small amount of oil, or stock. It is important that you toss the leaves frequently, and should expect to add more stock if you observe too much evaporation. Cooked and chopped spinach is excellent as a healthy filling for pasta, or as the featured ingredient in a soufflé.

Nutrition

One serving of fresh spinach (1½ cups, 85g) contains only 40 calories, 10g of carbohydrates, 5g of dietary fiber, 70% of the DV for vitamin A, 25% of the DV for vitamin C and 20% of the DV for iron and folic acid. Spinach is also rich in beta-carotene and lutein, two important cancer-fighting anti-oxidants.

Tony's Tip — Spinach reacts adversely to a lot of metals, so **don't** chop it with a pure carbon-steel blade; cook it in aluminum, or serve it on silver.



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Spinach and Pimento Omelet

Serves 4

- 2 lb. fresh spinach, cleaned and trimmed
- 1 cup pimentos, chopped
- 1 teaspoon thyme, dried
- 1/4 cup scallions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons mozzarella cheese, shredded part-skim
- 8 fresh eggs
- 8 tablespoons cream or milk
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 1/2 cup tomatoes, diced



1. Cut spinach into 1/2" strips; place in medium bowl and add pimentos and thyme.
2. Put scallions and spinach mixture in a large non-stick frying pan and sauté in oil over medium heat until the scallions are soft and the spinach is wilted; about 5 minutes. Return to the bowl, add the mozzarella; set aside.
3. In another medium bowl, whisk together eggs and cream or milk. Place the frying pan over medium-high heat and let stand for about 2 minutes.
4. Add 1 tsp. margarine and swirl the pan to distribute it. Add half the eggs. Lift and rotate the pan so that the eggs are evenly distributed. As the eggs set around the edges, lift them to allow uncooked portions to flow underneath.
5. When the eggs are mostly set but not dry (2 - 3 minutes), spread half of the spinach mixture over eggs. Use a spatula to fold the omelet in half. Cut in half and transfer to individual dishes. Repeat with the remaining 1 tsp. margarine, eggs and spinach mixture. Sprinkle each serving with about 2 Tbsp. tomatoes.

Courtesy of the Produce for Better Health Foundation



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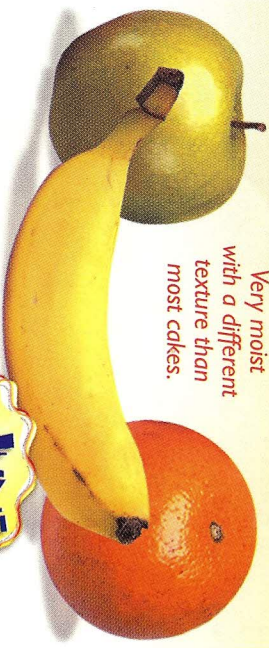
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Blanche Silberberg,
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for June.

1. Chop apple, banana, and orange.
2. Cream sugar, eggs, and margarine together until smooth.
3. Sift dry ingredients together. Add with chopped fruit to the margarine mixture. Mix thoroughly.
4. Stir in chopped nuts.
5. Bake in greased bundt pan at 350° for 50 minutes.

Depending on their availability, Tony says the following varieties are some of the best when it comes to baking: Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonagold, Cameo, Newtown, Pippin, and Elstar.

NATIONAL RECIPE CONTEST WIN A \$250 SHOPPING SPREE

Send Tony your favorite recipe and you could win a \$250 shopping spree at a Safeway, CARRS, Dominick's, Randalls, Tom Thumb, VONS, or Pavilions store. Each month a recipe will be selected by Tony and the Fresh Grocer newsletter staff. The winning recipe will be featured in a future Fresh Grocer newsletter and on Tony's Web site, www.tonytantalio.com. Submit your favorite soup, salad, side dish, entrée, or dessert recipe that **INCLUDES FRESH PRODUCE** in the list of ingredients. Please include your name, address and phone number with your recipe and send to:

FRESH GROCER RECIPE CONTEST c/o Farm Fresh LLC
800 Charcot Ave, Ste. 106, San Jose, CA 95131



The Fresh Grocer's Reference Shelf



FRUIT NUTRITION REFERENCE CHART

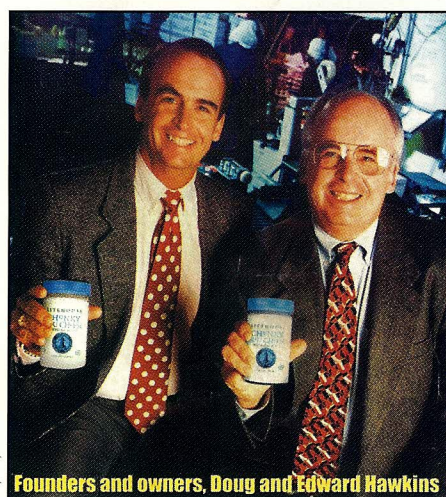
		Serving Size(g)	Total Calories	Calories From fat	Total fat(g)	Sodium(mg)	Potassium(mg)	Total Carbohydrate(g)	Dietary Fiber(g)	Sugars(g)	Protein(g)	% DV Vitamin A*	% DV Vitamin C*	% DV Calcium	% DV Iron
apple	(1 medium)	154	80	0	0	0	170	22	5	16	0	2	8	0	0
banana	(1 medium)	126	110	0	0	0	400	29	4	21	1	0	15	0	2
blueberries	(1 cup)	140	100	10	1	0	105	27	3	10	1	0	15	0	2
cantaloupe	(1/4 medium)	134	50	0	0	25	280	12	1	10	1	100	80	2	2
cherries	(21 cherries; 1 cup)	140	90	0	.5	0	300	22	3	19	2	2	15	2	2
figs(dried)	(2 figs)	38	100	0	0	5	230	29	3	25	1	0	0	4	2
grapefruit	(1/2 medium)	154	60	0	0	0	230	16	6	10	1	15	110	2	0
grapes	(1 1/2 cups)	138	90	10	1	0	270	24	1	23	1	2	25	2	2
honeydew	(1/10 medium)	134	50	0	0	35	310	13	1	12	1	2	45	0	2
kiwifruit	(2 medium)	148	100	10	1	0	480	24	4	16	2	2	240	6	4
lemon	(1 medium)	58	15	0	0	5	90	5	1	1	0	0	40	2	0
lime	(1 medium)	67	20	0	0	0	75	7	2	0	0	0	35	0	0
mango	(1/2 mango)	104	70	5	.5	0	125	17	1	15	0	40	15	0	0
nectarine	(1 medium)	140	70	0	.5	0	300	16	2	12	1	4	15	0	2
orange	(1 medium)	154	70	0	0	0	260	21	7	14	1	2	130	6	2
peach	(1 medium)	98	40	0	0	0	190	10	2	9	1	2	10	0	0
pear	(1 medium)	166	100	10	1	0	210	25	4	17	1	0	10	2	0
pineapple	(2 slices)	112	60	0	0	10	115	16	1	13	1	0	25	2	2
plums	(2 medium)	132	80	10	1	0	220	19	2	10	1	6	20	0	0
prunes	(5 prunes)	42	110	0	0	0	280	25	3	18	1	10	2	2	4
raisins	(1/4 cup)	40	130	0	0	10	310	31	2	29	1	0	0	2	6
raspberries	(1 cup)	125	50	0	0	0	160	17	8	12	1	0	40	2	2
strawberries	(8 medium)	147	45	0	0	0	270	12	4	8	1	0	160	2	4
tangerine	(1 medium)	109	50	0	.5	0	180	15	3	12	1	0	50	4	0
watermelon	(1/18 medium)	280	80	0	0	10	230	27	2	25	1	20	25	2	2

All of us know we should eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, but research continues to show that most of us don't quite hit the mark. Though we are falling a little shy of the five-a-day goal, we are making progress. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the average adult American eats 4.4 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, an increase from 3.9 servings a day when the 5-a-day program began back in 1991. Statistics indicate that when fruit and vegetable consumption increases, cancer occurrences will decrease. It is estimated that one-third of all cancer deaths may be prevented by increasing fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. Besides the well-documented health benefits, fresh fruit is also delicious... the original low fat, natural energy "fast food." Mother Nature's finest work!

Refer to this *Fruit Nutrition Reference Chart* often as you make the commitment to increase the daily fresh fruit intake for you and your family. Start today! Increase your fresh fruit consumption, and you will be on your way to eating fresh and staying healthy!

* Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Produce Marketing Association



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