

MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT

A Publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County

Spotlight on Spinach

Spinach is a nutritional power house because of its rich nutrient content in addition to its low calorie count. Here are some ideas to try.

Spinach Squares

- 1-10 ounce package frozen chopped spinach (thawed and drained)
- 8 ounces low-fat Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/8 cup diced onion
- 1/2 cup egg liquid substitute (or 2 eggs)
- 1/2 cup skim milk or 1/2 cup water and 2 Tablespoons non-fat dry milk crystals
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

Thaw frozen spinach (microwave for 3-4 minutes). Drain well. Shred cheese. Dice the onion. In a bowl, mix egg substitute and milk. Mix flour and baking powder and add to milk mixture. Stir. Then add spinach, cheese, and onion. Pour into lightly oiled 8" x 8" square pan or medium casserole dish. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes* or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool 15-20 minutes. Cut into squares and serve.

**Note:* Recipe can be doubled and baked in 9" x 13" pan for 30-40 minutes.

Yield: 16 servings; serving size 2-inch square (70 calories, 3 grams fat, 10 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium)

Spinach Orange Salad

- 6 cups fresh spinach, torn
- 2 cups other greens (romaine, escarole, or leaf lettuce)
- 1-11 ounce can mandarin orange sections, OR 1 cup fresh orange, sliced
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced (optional)
- 1 small red onion, sliced and separated into rings (optional)

In large bowl, combine all the ingredients. Toss with favorite low-calorie dressing or try Dijon dressing below.

Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1 cup (20 calories; 0 grams fat; 0 mg cholesterol, 20 mg sodium)



Dijon Dressing

- 1/4 cup nonfat mayonnaise
- 2 Tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 Tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Whisk mixture vigorously until blended.

Yield: 4 servings; serving size 2 Tablespoons (50 calories, 2 grams fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 190 mg sodium)

Spinach Snacks

- 1-10 oz package frozen chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1-1/2 cups bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 1 egg
- Vegetable oil or spray

Preheat oven to 350° F. Defrost frozen spinach and squeeze to remove excess water. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Shape into 20 one-inch balls. Cover and refrigerate or freeze until ready to bake. Bake on lightly oiled or sprayed cookie sheet at 350° F until light brown, 10-15 minutes. Can also be microwaved on high for 2 minutes; reduce to 50% power for 5 to 6 minutes until hot.

Yield: 5 servings; serving size 4, 1-inch balls (200 calories; 7 grams fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 340 mg sodium)



Food Safety Tips

Separate: Don't Cross-Contaminate

Cross contamination is the scientific word for how bacteria can be spread from one food product to another. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry and seafood, so keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods like spinach and salad greens.

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator.
- If possible, use a different cutting board for raw meat products and fresh vegetables for salads.
- Always wash hands, cutting boards, dishes and utensils with hot soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry and seafood.



Spinach Tips

Selection: At the supermarket, you can find spinach packaged fresh, canned, or frozen. Fresh spinach is usually found loose or bagged. For the best quality, select leaves that are green and crisp, with a nice fresh fragrance. Avoid leaves that are limp, damaged, or spotted. If you are in a rush, grab a bag of fresh, pre-washed spinach. The ready-to-eat packaging make it easy to be on the go and still stay healthy.

Storage: Fresh spinach should be dried and packed loosely in a cellophane or plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator crisper. If stored properly, it should last 3 or 4 days.



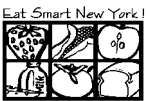
Ideas to use:

- Use fresh spinach to make a tasty, healthy salad.
- Add some other colorful fruits or vegetables, along with your favorite low-fat salad dressings
- Add chopped spinach to lasagna and soup.
- Stir yogurt into chopped or pureed spinach for a low-fat version of creamed spinach.
- Try stir-frying spinach with garlic, onion, and chopped red bell peppers for a colorful tasty side dish.

Hints. . .

- Don't bother "cooking frozen spinach according to package directions" when a recipe directs you to. Simply defrost the package in the microwave oven and then carefully squeeze as much liquid from the spinach as you can.
- Since fresh spinach shrinks when it is cooked, count on one pound of the fresh leaves to yield about 1-1/2 cups cooked.
- If spinach is to be eaten raw, dry it completely by using a salad spinner or by blotting it with paper towels. Slightly damp spinach can be steamed or microwaved without adding any additional water.

Free Nutrition Education Programs



Nutrition staff are available to help limited income families and individuals throughout Herkimer County stretch their food dollars to feed themselves and their families better.

Lessons can take place in participants homes or worksites as well as at community centers. Newsletters and other resources are also available by mail.

Topics include:

- Budgeting and stretching food dollars.
- Basic nutrition and menu planning.
- Preparing low cost, easy recipes and menus.
- Preserving, storing and preparing food safely.

Contact: Cornell Cooperative Extension
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Need help paying your grocery bill? Food Stamps can help!
Call (315) 894-9917 today.

Nutrition Outreach & Education Program of Catholic Charities of Herkimer County
To view past issues of "Make Your Food Dollars Count" newsletter on line see:
<http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer/esnynewsletters.htm>

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