

Vegetable Main Dish Recipes Vol. 16

Spinach is a Treasure Trove of Nutrients!

Spinach is classified as a green and yellow vegetable and is one of the most nutritious of them all. It contains a good balance of vitamins and minerals. It also can help you lose weight and prevent lifestyle-related diseases.

By Makiko Hei

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Nutrition of Spinach

Spinach's main nutritional value is its iron content. When you are deficient in iron, less oxygen is carried to the body, leading to fatigue and malaise. The iron in spinach is non-heme iron, which is not easily absorbed, but it can be efficiently absorbed when eaten with vitamin C and animal protein.

Spinach is also rich in vitamin C, which boosts resistance to disease and is a strong ally in the prevention of colds, flu, and other infectious diseases.

Vitamins and iron promote a faster metabolism and fat burning. Another benefit of spinach is its high dietary fiber content. This improves the intestinal environment and suppresses postprandial blood sugar elevation.

Oxalic acid, which gives spinach its characteristic bitterness, can cause stone formation in the urinary tract when consumed in large quantities at once. Because of the water-soluble nature of oxalic acid, boiling and exposing it to water can considerably reduce your intake. As long as you're consuming spinach in moderation as part of a balanced diet, it's nothing to worry about.

How to identify good spinach

- Select spinach with taut leaf tips, thick, fleshy leaves, and dark green color.
- The stems should be moderately thick, and the leaves should be dense and voluminous, especially near the base.

How to store spinach

To refrigerate fresh spinach, make a crisscross cut at the base of the roots and soak in water for 1 hour (this helps remove mud). Then wash, drain, wrap in newspaper or paper towels, place in a storage bag, and store upright in the refrigerator for up to one week.

If you freeze spinach to use later on, prepare it as above for refrigerated storage, and boil for about 1 minute. Soak in cold water, squeeze out the excess water, cut into bite-size pieces, and wrap in plastic wrap. Place in a storage bag in the freezer for up to one month. Use it completely frozen for soups and half-thawed for stir-fries.

To remove the scum from spinach, pre-cook it

Spinach must usually be pre-boiled to remove the scum (oxalic acid). Boil 2 liters of water in a pot, add 1 tablespoon of salt, and boil the spinach that has been treated and washed well as described in the preservation section. First, submerge the stems for 15 seconds. Next, place all of the spinach in hot water and cook for an additional 45 seconds (1 minute total), then place in cold water to cool and squeeze out the water. Use only moderate force to squeeze out the water, so you can retain the umami and subtle flavor.

* Spinach for raw consumption has less scum and does not need to be pre-boiled.

Tuna and Spinach Spaghetti with Lemon

Reduce preparation time by boiling the spaghetti and spinach at the same time!

Cooking time: 25 minutes

*Excluding preparation time to soak spinach

[Ingredients] 2 servings

200g spaghetti (dried)
2 liters of water for boiling spaghetti
1 tablespoon salt
1 large can tuna (discard oil, 100-120g net)
150g spinach
1 garlic clove (sliced)
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 quarters of a lemon



[Preliminary arrangements]

Cut a crosswise slit in the base of the spinach, soak in water for 1 hour, wash thoroughly and cut in half (or into thirds if the spinach is long).



[How to cook]

1. Put 2 liters of water in a pot over high heat and when it comes to a boil, add salt to the water and cook the spaghetti.
2. Put olive oil and garlic in a frying pan and heat slowly over low heat, and once browned all over, remove it before it burns. Add the tuna, break it up gently, add about 50 ml of the spaghetti cooking water, turn the heat to medium, and mix them all together. * Oil, moisture, and air will thicken when well mixed.
3. When there is 1 minute left until the spaghetti is cooked, add the spinach roots in the pot (1) and when there are 15 seconds left, add the leaves.
4. Move the cooked spaghetti and spinach from the pot to the pan (2). Add another 50 ml of the cooking water and mix spaghetti with sauce over medium heat so that the spaghetti absorbs the sauce.
5. Place the spaghetti in a bowl, drizzle with a little olive oil (not included in the ingredients above), and top with the garlic cloves. Garnish with lemon and serve with lemon juice.



Tips

- Thick noodles are recommended. The photo shows 1.9 mm thick spaghetti boiled for 12 minutes.
- When you remove the garlic from the pan (2), place it on paper towels to absorb the oil before using it. It improves the texture.

Spinach and Egg Cream au Gratin

Just put the ingredients in a dish and bake!

Cooking time: 35 minutes

*Excluding preparation time to soak spinach

[Ingredients] 2 small gratin baking dishes
(Each with a capacity of about 250 ml)

150g spinach
2 large mushrooms
2 slices (50g) bacon
2 eggs
90 g fresh cream
40 g shredded cheese
10g butter
Black pepper to taste
Baguette or other bread of your choice (if available)

[Preliminary arrangements]

- Cut a crosswise slit in the base of the spinach, soak in water for 1 hour, wash thoroughly.
- Preheat oven to 220°C.



[How to cook]

1. Add 1 tablespoon of salt (not included in the ingredients above) to 2 liters of hot water. Put in the spinach stalks standing up, and after 15 seconds, add all of the spinach. Boil for about 1 minute. Soak the spinach in cold water, squeeze out the water, and cut it into bite-size pieces. Cut bacon into 1 cm pieces and mushrooms into 5 mm pieces.
2. Spread 5g of butter on the inside of each baking dish, layer spinach, mushrooms, and bacon in that order, and make a hollow in the center. Crack an egg into the hollow and sprinkle the dish with cheese. Pour the cream from the edge of the dish.
3. Bake in a preheated oven at 220°C for about 10 minutes until browned.
This is delicious with creamy sauce on bread.

2-1



2-2



Tips

- Be careful not to put the cream too close to the rim of the dish or it will spill during cooking.

Profile

Makiko Hei

I love vegetables. I try to handle them with care and cook them simply but luxuriously, with the motto “Let’s make our daily meals delicious regardless of the genre of the dishes.”

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