

Recipes... SPINACH



NOTES & TIPS: Don't bother "cooking frozen spinach according to package directions" when a recipe directs you to. Simply lay it out early in the day or defrost in cold water (still in the package) and then carefully squeeze as much liquid from the vegetable as you can...while being cautious of splatters! Since fresh spinach shrinks when it is cooked, count on one pound of the fresh leaves yielding about 1 1/2 cups cooked. Iron and calcium in plant foods are not highly absorbed by the body. Spinach contains a chemical called oxalic acid, which binds with iron and calcium and reduces the absorption of these minerals. To improve iron absorption, spinach should be eaten with vitamin C-rich foods such as orange juice, tomatoes, or citrus fruit. Approximately 10 ounces of frozen, cooked spinach will result in the same amount as one pound of fresh, trimmed and cooked spinach.

Baked Creamed Spinach

1/4 c Butter or margarine
3/4 c Chopped onion
1/4 c Flour
Salt to taste
1/8 ts Pepper
2 c Milk
3 Eggs
Tabasco
4 pk (10-oz) frozen chopped spinach; thawed and drained

In a saucepan over medium heat, cook onion in butter until tender (about 5 minutes). Stir in flour, salt and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in milk. Cook, stirring constantly, until sauce is thickened. In a small bowl, beat egg slightly with fork. Add Tabasco to taste. Slowly pour egg mixture into cream sauce, stirring rapidly to prevent lumping. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is thickened. Do not boil. Add spinach. Stir until blended. Pour mixture into a 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until firm in the center. Cut into servings. Yield: 12 to 15 servings.

Spinach and Garlic Penna Pasta

1 (16-ounce) package uncooked penna pasta
8 slices bacon, diced
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2 tablespoons butter
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound fresh spinach, washed, dried, stemmed, and shredded
Freshly grated parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and return to pan to keep warm. Learn How To Cook Pasta Properly.

In a large frying pan over medium-high heat, fry bacon until crisp; remove bacon to a plate with paper towels to drain. Remove and discard all but 2 tablespoons of bacon fat.

Reheat frying pan; add butter and olive oil and heat. Stir in garlic until aromatic. Add spinach, stirring until spinach is cooked. Add pasta and stir until blended. Remove from heat and transfer onto individual serving plates. Scatter bacon over top and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

Makes 4 servings.

Spinach Salad With Strawberries and Honey Dressing

2 bunches fresh spinach leaves, washed, dried, and chilled

Recipes... SPINACH



1 cup thickly sliced fresh strawberries
1 tablespoon sliced almonds or sesame seeds, toasted
1 small red onion, thinly sliced (optional)

Prepare Honey Dressing (recipe below) set aside.

Remove stems and veins from spinach and tear into bite-sized pieces; place into a large salad bowl. Toss spinach with 1/4 cup of Honey Dressing for every 6 cups of spinach greens; toss gently. Add strawberries, sliced almonds or sesame seeds, and onion; toss again and serve.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

HONEY DRESSING:

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons rice vinegar
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon honey
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
Coarse salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste

In a small jar with a lid, combine balsamic vinegar, rice vinegar, honey, Dijon mustard, salt, and pepper; cover securely and shake vigorously. Store, covered, in the refrigerator. Serve at room temperature.

Spinach Torte with Potato Crust

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons Italian Seasoned bread crumbs, divided
2 large russet (baking) potatoes sliced into 1/4 inch slices
3 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil plus a little extra, divided
1/2 medium-size onion, minced
1 egg
2 egg whites
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 (7 ounce) can roasted red peppers, peeled (about 2 peppers if you're roasting your own)
1/2 pound shredded Mozzarella cheese
1/4 pound smoked turkey breast, sliced 1/8-inch thick and 1/2-inch wide (can substitute high-quality smoked ham)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Spray sides and bottom of a 9-inch springform pan with nonstick cooking spray. Dust the entire inside of the pan with 2 tablespoons of bread crumbs; set aside.

In a large pot, steam potatoes until barely tender, about 7 to 10 minutes (watch them carefully so that they don't get too soft). Remove from heat and drain; set aside.

Cook spinach according to package directions just until completely thawed (or thaw overnight in refrigerator). Drain spinach in a colander and rinse under water to bring to room temperature. Drain spinach again. Squeeze handfuls of spinach tightly to wring out excess moisture. The spinach should be almost completely dry; set aside.

In a small frying pan, heat 1 tablespoon oil; saute the onion until it becomes translucent. In a bowl, mix the spinach, sautéed onion, egg and egg whites, Parmesan cheese, 1/4 cup of bread crumbs, salt and pepper; set aside.

Layer half of the potato slices in the bottom of prepared springform pan. Spread half the spinach mixture on top of the potatoes, followed by half of the red peppers, half of the the mozzarella cheese, and half of the turkey. Repeat

Recipes... SPINACH



with another layer, topping with a layer of potatoes arranged in overlapping circles. Brush potato layer lightly with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Bake for 40 minutes. Remove from pan and cut into wedges. May be served warm or at room temperature.

Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Spinach Rockefeller

2 (10-ounce) packages frozen spinach
3/4 cup herb-seasoned stuffing mix
1/2 cup butter
2 small onions, finely chopped
1/2 cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese, divided
2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon dried thyme
Tabasco sauce to taste
6 firm (1/2-inch-thick) beefsteak tomato slices
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
Salt to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Cook the spinach using package direction; drain. In a large saucepan over low heat, combine the spinach, stuffing mix, butter, onions, 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, eggs, garlic powder, thyme, and Tabasco sauce. Cook for approximately 25 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and cover to keep warm.

Sprinkle both sides of the tomato slices with pepper and salt. Arrange in a single layer in a large baking dish. Bake 10 minutes; remove from oven. Transfer tomato slices to individual serving plates. Using an ice cream scoop, mound some of the spinach mixture on top of each tomato slice. Sprinkle additional Parmesan cheese over the top. Serve immediately.

Makes 6 servings.

Favorite Spinach Salad

2 bunches fresh spinach leaves, washed, dried, and chilled
4 to 6 bacon slices, crisply fried and crumbled
1 (8-ounce) can sliced water chestnuts, drained
4 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
4 to 6 green onions, chopped
Sliced almonds
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
Italian salad dressing (store bought is fine)
Remove stems and veins from spinach and tear into bite-sized pieces; place into a large salad bowl.

Add bacon, water chestnuts, eggs, green onions, almonds, and mushrooms.

Use 1/4 cup Italian salad dressing for 6 cups of spinach greens; toss gently and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Creamy Spinach and Tortellini

Recipes... SPINACH



1 (16-ounce) package fresh or frozen uncooked cheese tortellini
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup chopped onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 (9-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed
1 large tomato, cubed
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 cup heavy cream or whipping cream
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Cook tortellini according to package directions; drain and return to pan to keep warm. Learn How To Cook Pasta Properly.

In a large frying pan over medium heat, heat olive oil. Add onion and garlic; sauté 4 minutes or until lightly browned. Stir in spinach, tomato, basil, salt, and pepper; cook another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in heavy or whipping cream and parmesan cheese.

Cook until mixture must comes to a boil. Reduce heat to low and mix in tortellini; cook an additional 4 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Remove from heat, transfer onto individual serving plates, and serve with additional parmesan cheese.

Makes 4 servings.

German Creamed Spinach

This dish is absolutely wonderful! It's a family favorite at our house for all holidays and special occasions. Even children like this spinach dish!

This is one of those recipe where I normally buy a large amount (and I mean large amount) of spinach, and then decide how much Cream Sauce we will need to make. Be flexible! Once you make this recipe the first time, you will understand why I just do it and don't usually follow a recipe.

Serves 4

1 large bunch fresh spinach leaves
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Hard-cooked eggs, for garnish*
Cream Sauce (see recipe below)

Wash spinach leaves thoroughly.

I fill my sink with cold water and place the spinach leaves in to soak a few minutes. Punch down to wet all the leaves then grab handfuls of spinach (not drained) dripping with the water into your cooking pot. This will provide enough water so that you do not need to add more.

In a large pot, covered, cook spinach until tender.

As soon as spinach is thoroughly wilted, remove from heat, and drain in a colander or strainer, pressing with the back of a kitchen spoon to squeeze out excess liquid. (This step is very important.)

Recipes... SPINACH



Transfer drained spinach to a cutting board and chop spinach very fine.

NOTE: Up to this point, the spinach can be prepared in advanced and stored in the refrigerator, covered, 1 to 2 days.

When ready to serve, prepare Cream Sauce. This may make more sauce than you want so I start with half a cream sauce batch and then make more if I need it.

CREAM SAUCE:

4 tablespoon butter

4 tablespoon finely chopped onion

4 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

3 to 4 cups milk*

* Depending on how thick you want the sauce will determine how much milk to use.

In a large frying pan or large pot over medium-low heat, melt butter. Add onions and cook until they are translucent and soft (about 10 to 15 minutes). NOTE: Sautéing the onions in the butter is the secret to this delicious sauce. DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP.

Add flour to the butter/onion mixture and blend thoroughly. When perfectly blended, smooth, and free from lumps (but not in the least browned), add salt and pepper. Gradually stir in the milk; reduce heat to low and cook, stirring constantly, until sauce boils (may use some spinach juice in place of milk). Remove from heat.

In a medium bowl, mix together Cream Sauce and chopped spinach.

Season with salt and pepper and garnish with hard-cooked egg slices. Serve warm.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.