Spinach

Spinach is available spring and fall.

**Nutrition Facts:**
- Serving Size = 1 c raw
  - Calories – 6.6
  - Proteins (g) – 0.9
  - Carbohydrates (g) – 1
  - Fiber (g) – 0.8
  - Fat (g) – 0.1
  - Vitamin A (I.U) – 2015
  - Vitamin C (mg) – 8.4
  - Folate (mcg) – 58
  - Iron (mg) – 0.8
  - Potassium (mg) – 157

Fresh spinach is a good source of vitamins A and C and iron. Cooked spinach provides an excellent source of the carotenoids carotene, lutein, and zeaxanthin.

Spinach is a cool season vegetable and a close relative to Swiss chard and beets. It may be eaten raw or cooked and is one of the first vegetables available at market in the spring.

The first spinach was cultivated in Persia 2000 years ago and became popular in Italian and French cooking in the Middle Ages.

Spinach contains oxalic acid and may prevent the absorption of calcium if eaten in large quantities.

The types of spinach grown for market include smooth or savoy (crinkled).

**What to Look for When Purchasing**
Spinach may be sold loose or bagged. If purchasing loose spinach, select small leaves with a bright, deep green color. Avoid leaves that are leathery or yellow.

**Storage Tips**
Unwashed spinach can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to one week.
Spinach may be frozen for long term storage and future use in cooked dishes. Blanch the spinach for 1-2 minutes and then rinse with cold water and drain before packing in air-tight containers.

**Cooking Tips**
Remove any roots or stems from loose spinach and discard them. Before using, wash spinach leaves well to remove the grit. Pat dry or spin dry in a salad spinner.
Spinach cooks quickly and it’s important not to over cook it.

**Uses**
- Use fresh leaves in salads.
- Add to soups, stews, stir-fries, or casseroles.
- Sauté with onion, garlic, and curry spices.
- Combine with mint and feta cheese and stuff into chicken breasts.

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