



Produce Spotlight on **SPINACH**



Spinach is a tasty early summer crop that thrives in cooler temperatures. It is available year round and can be bought fresh or frozen. Spinach provides us with vitamins A, C, and K, iron, fiber, and folate. These nutrients keep our cardiovascular system healthy.

Serving Ideas

- Use fresh spinach in salads, wraps, or smoothies.
- Add chopped frozen spinach to sauces, casseroles, or soups.
- Stir-fry fresh spinach. Add garlic, onion, chopped bell peppers, carrots, or other favorite vegetables for a colorful side dish.

Spinach Math

1 pound of fresh spinach leaves =
10 to 12 cups of raw spinach or 1 cup
of cooked spinach

1 10 oz. package of frozen spinach =
2½ cups of frozen spinach or 1½ cups
of cooked spinach

Shopping for Spinach

Choose bright green, crisp, whole leaves. When purchasing in a bundle, a small piece of root should be holding the bunch together. A bunch of loose-leaf spinach will cost less than prepackaged spinach. However, prepackaged spinach may save time since it is often prewashed. Frozen spinach is an option that is available year round and may cost less than fresh spinach.

Common Types

Flat or smooth leaf – smooth leaves; typically canned or frozen

Savoy – wrinkled, curly leaves; usually available fresh

Semi-savoy – slightly curly leaves

Baby spinach – harvested young when leaves and stems are tender

Storage and Preparation

- Wash fresh spinach before eating. Swish leaves in a bowl of cold water to release any dirt. Repeat in clean water until no grit is visible. Lift the leaves out of the water and pat dry. Avoid storing spinach wet because moisture will cause the leaves to spoil quickly.
- Washed fresh spinach can be refrigerated in a plastic bag for up to five days, and prewashed packaged spinach can be stored for up to seven days.
- If you have more spinach than you can eat in a week, freeze it. Blanche the leaves (cook quickly) and blot dry with a clean dish towel or paper towel. Place the spinach in a labeled freezer-safe bag. Press out as much air as possible before freezing. The spinach will last for 10 to 12 months in the freezer.

Using Locally Grown Produce

Visit the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program's [website](#) featuring recipes using fruits and vegetables. To locate places to buy local produce, visit www.mass.gov/massgrown.

