

August 2014 | foodfacts.mercola.com | Dr. Mercola | Nutrition

[NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.]

The Scoop on Spinach

Botanical name: *Spinacia oleracea*

Obscurely referred to for years in England as "the Spanish vegetable," the name of this leafy green veggie was later shortened to the name we call it today. It's thought to have originated in ancient Persia. Spinach cultivation spread to Nepal, and by the seventh century, to China, where it's still called "Persian Greens." The Moors introduced it to Spain around the 11th century.

According to the USDA, Americans consume nearly 2½ pounds of spinach per year per capita. This easily quadruples the amount eaten 40 years ago, possibly because the boiled-and-canned-to-resemble-seaweed dish once served in school lunches is much improved. Now greener, tastier and crisper by freezing, spinach fresh from the garden is often used for salads and in place of lettuce on sandwiches.

No mere vegetable ever gained the fame that spinach did in the 1960s through the cartoon character Popeye. Often in vain, parents encouraged their children to eat their spinach so they would grow up to be big and strong.

There's actually some truth to that...

Health Benefits of Spinach

Low in fat and even lower in cholesterol, spinach is high in niacin and zinc, as well as protein, fiber, vitamins A, C, E and K, thiamin, vitamin B6, folate, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, copper, and manganese. In other words, it's loaded with good things for every part of your body!

Abundant flavonoids in spinach act as antioxidants to keep cholesterol from oxidizing and protect your body from free radicals, particularly in the colon. The folate in spinach is good for your healthy cardiovascular system, and magnesium helps lower high blood pressure. Studies also have shown that spinach helps maintain your vigorous brain function, memory and mental clarity.

In order to retain the rich iron content of spinach while cooking – lightly – add lemon juice or vinegar.



Spinach Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: One cup (30 grams)

% Daily Value

Amt. Per Serving

Calories 7

Sodium 24 mg 2%

Carbohydrates 1 g

Fiber 1 g 8%

Protein 1 g

Potassium 167 mg

Calcium 29.7 mg

Magnesium 23.7 mg

Folate 58.2

Betaine 165 mg

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