



March is Spinach

Nutrition & Health Benefits

- **Vitamin A** - Keeps skin and bones healthy, resists and fights infection, and maintains good eyesight.
- **Vitamin C** - Helps wounds heal, is important for the immune system, and is an antioxidant, which protects our cells from damage.
- **Iron** - Helps to build red blood cells
- **Potassium** - Helps to maintain normal blood pressure.

Preparation & Cooking Tips

Select - Choose spinach that is a bright green color with tender leaves.

Store - Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3-5 days.

Prepare - Rinse then tear or chop the leaves.

Did you know?

- Spinach was the first frozen vegetable sold in North America.
- Spinach is a type of green, which is a category of leafy vegetables.
- During medieval times, the green pigment extracted from spinach was used as ink for artwork.

Fun Facts

- Fresh spinach grown in Wisconsin is available from May through October.
- Spinach is native to central and western Asia.
- The average American eats 1.5 pounds of spinach a year.
- California is the top producer of spinach in the United States.

TASTE



Nutritious,
Delicious,
Wisconsin!

taste testing

Taste test a few varieties of "super green" leafy vegetables. "Super green" refers to dark green vegetables that contain extra amounts of key nutrients like vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber. These dark green vegetables are important to eat often to grow and stay healthy. Try a variety of "super green" vegetables including spinach, Swiss chard, kale, collard greens, romaine lettuce, watercress, bok choy, and mustard greens. Encourage kids to use their five senses to observe, smell, feel, listen, and taste the "super green" leafy vegetables. Ask which ones they like best.

— Adapted from: *Got Veggie? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum*



fit families

Eat healthy • Be active • Your kids are watching

FUN



activity: Leafy Green Mystery Bags

Objective: Kids will identify a variety of leafy green vegetables.

Supplies: Boxes with fitted lids, paper bags, or other non-see-through containers. A variety of leafy green vegetables (curly kale, spinach, Swiss chard, collard greens, Lacinato kale, or lettuce).

Procedure: First, make several mystery boxes out of cardboard boxes. Cut a hole in the side of the box, 4 inches in diameter, large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck. Instead of boxes, you can also use a small paper bag. Select a few different leafy greens and place one type in each mystery box/bag. One at a time, ask each kid to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. Ask each kid to quietly describe to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the leafy greens. Talk about the greens.

- Do the leaves feel thick or thin?
- Are they light or heavy?
- Are they soft or hard?

This activity can also be done with a variety of different vegetables. A fun variation is to choose a vegetable from each of the six plant parts (root, stem, leaves, flower, fruit, seed).

— Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Team Nutrition. USDA does not endorse any products, services, or organizations. Provided by FoodWise.

This activity can be done in multiple settings: classroom, outdoors, garden, or virtual.

Tips for adapting to virtual learning: Share pictures of different leafy green vegetables. Ask kids to observe the leaves and note ways they are similar and different. Have kids guess the name of each vegetable.

Share pictures and engage with the Wisconsin Harvest of the Month community by using #WIHarvestoftheMonth on social media.



READ



books

- *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons
- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French
- *Plants on My Plate* by Cathy Smith
- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- *Sylvia's Spinach* by Katherine Pryor
- *Sneaky Spinach* by Alexis Schulze

Find out more at <https://www.wiharvestofthemoth.org>



Blueberry Spinach Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 1 cup loosely packed spinach
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 cups frozen blueberries
- 1 ripe banana
- dash of cinnamon

Preparation:

1. Combine spinach, milk, and yogurt in your blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add remaining ingredients and blend again.
3. Taste. Add extra milk or water if a thinner consistency is desired.
4. Enjoy!

Source: <https://thenaturalnurturer.com/blueberry-spinach-smoothie/>

Information adapted from Wisconsin Harvest of the Month.

