



Media Script

KENTUCKY SPINACH

CONTACT INFORMATION:

When you think of vegetables, do you think of your garden, a local farmers market, or the grocery store? We hope that many individuals are thinking about their own garden. If you do not have the time or space to grow your own produce, you can still get the freshest produce available at your local farmers market. Shopping at the local farmers market has numerous benefits for you, your family, local farmers and the community. Did you know that fresh vegetables are naturally cholesterol-free and low in fat?

Spinach has been a versatile and commonly used vegetable in the United States since the early 19th century. Eating and preparing spinach is simple and easy, since it tastes good raw or cooked. Spinach can be found fresh, frozen, or canned; it can be easily incorporated into many dishes. Its versatility makes it easy to serve raw in salads, sandwiches, or slaw.

Not only is spinach low in calories, it is also a good source of essential nutrients such as vitamins A and C. Other nutritional benefits include being fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium, high in potassium, and a good source of iron, fiber, and vegetable protein.

When making your selection, select leaves that are green and crisp, with a nice fresh fragrance for the

best quality. Avoid leaves that are limp, damaged, or spotted. After purchasing your spinach make sure to wash, dry and pack loosely in a cellophane or plastic bag and store in the refrigerator crisper. If stored properly, it should last 3 or 4 days. Fresh spinach is available all year!

Spinach is also very easy to grow. It is a quick-maturing, cool-season crop of high nutritional value. It can be grown early in spring and from late fall into winter. For spring, sow seeds around March 1 in rows spaced 12 to 18 inches apart. Start fall seed between August 15 and September 1. Spinach grows best with ample moisture and fertile, well-drained soil.

Health benefits of eating spinach and other green vegetables like cabbage and lettuce (plus broccoli, asparagus, green beans, cucumbers, peas, and other leafy greens) help build a strong immune system, strong bones and teeth, good vision and promotes heart health. They also lower the risk of developing some cancers, cataracts, rheumatoid arthritis, and other chronic diseases.

Please consider visiting your local farmers market or planting a small container garden using vegetables. If you need any help with these two ideas or have any questions feel free to contact your county Cooperative Extension Service.

Spinach Slaw

2 cups chopped iceberg lettuce
2 cups chopped red cabbage
2 cups chopped green cabbage
1½ cups fresh spinach
¼ cup canola mayonnaise

¼ cup hummus, original flavor
2 tablespoon local honey
½ teaspoon garlic powder
⅛ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper

Directions:

- 1. Wash, quarter, and core** lettuce, red cabbage and green cabbage.
- 2. Thinly slice** lettuce and cabbage quarters; chop slices into small pieces.
- 3. Wash and tear** spinach leaves into small pieces.
- 4. Whisk** together mayonnaise, hummus, honey, garlic powder, salt and pepper until ingredients are mixed well. **Toss** dressing with vegetables until coated thoroughly. **Refrigerate** for 30 minutes before serving.

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings.

Nutritional Analysis: *70 calories, 3.5 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 135 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 6 g sugar, 2 g protein.*

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Publication – ID-128, Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, 2011.

For more delicious recipes and information on preserving spinach or other “Kentucky Proud” fruits and vegetables, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit: www.kentuckyproud.com

April 2012

Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud Project

-30-

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Nutrition and Food Science students