



SPINACH TALKING POINTS

2. A Leaf of History about Spinach

- Spinach is a native plant of Persia, modern day Iran. It was introduced to China in the 7th century and was most probably brought to Europe in about the 12th century and to the US in 1806.
- Long ago people named it “the prince of vegetables” because it is loaded with vitamins and minerals. When it was introduced in Italy, it became the favorite vegetable of a famous Italian family. When the daughter, whose name was Catherine de Medici left her home in Florence, Italy to marry King Henry II of France, she brought along her own cooks who could prepare spinach in the many different ways that she liked.

Spinach Popularity

- Popeye, a cartoon, was introduced in 1929 and US spinach growers credited him with a 33% increase in domestic spinach consumption. It was a welcome boost especially during the depression era. Popeye was very strong because he ate spinach every day—that was the message he delivered in each cartoon. For many years, spinach was the third most popular children’s food after turkey and ice cream.
- In the 10 years from 1992-2002, the annual consumption of spinach jumped 66% mostly due to the availability of pre-cut bagged spinach. In a survey conducted by Bon Appetit magazine in 2005, 56% respondents toted spinach as their favorite vegetable.



3. & 4. How does Spinach Grow?

- Spinach is one of the few vegetables that is available year-round. It grows best in cool, not freezing, moist condition especially during spring and autumn. It grows well in sandy soils.
- Once harvested, spinach perishes quickly so rapid cooling is essential.

Where do we get it?

- California is the US #1 grower/supplier of fresh and processed spinach accounting for almost 75% of national production. Processed spinach can be canned, frozen, or pureed for baby food. Fresh, leafy spinach is in the produce section of the supermarket.
- The US is the second largest producer of spinach and China is first. US produces 3% of global consumption and China produces 85%.

5. Why should we eat Spinach?

- It is labeled as the Prince of Vegetables because these are all the Vitamins it totes:
- Vitamin K, Vitamin A (spinach contains beta carotene which intestines and liver convert to Vit. A), Vitamin C, Calcium, Folate, Magnesium, Iron, B1, B2, B3., B5, B6.
- Spinach is:
 - good for brain function

- protects against eye disease and vision loss
 - guards against colon, prostate and breast cancers
 - protects against heart disease, stroke, and dementia
 - lowers blood pressure
 - anti-inflammatory
 - great for bone health
- The list of vitamins goes on and on and actually are better than a multi-vitamin. Spinach, however, is not high in fiber compared to other vegetables. It is only a moderate form. But since it is a complex carbohydrate, it will not give a person gas, flatulence or bowel irritations.

6. How do you pick good Spinach?

- When picking spinach at the grocery store the leaves should be free of defects. The leaves should also be tender and bright green in color.
- The spinach should not be wilted and soft, that means that it is starting to decay.
- Plain cooked spinach is best served steamed or boiled in a minimum amount of water for no more than 5 minutes. The bulk of the leaves reduces enormously in cooking.
- Young leaves can be eaten raw in salad, tacos and on burgers. Frozen spinach goes well on pizza.
- It is also used in main dishes—the term Florentine in a recipe indicates the presence of spinach.
- Spinach is great in smoothies, lasagna, dips and also eaten fresh.