

SPINACH

Hawaiian Name: *Lū'au haole*

Common Name: Spinach

Scientific Name: *Spinacia oleracea*

Plant Part Eaten: Leaves

Origin: Persia



Nutrition Info...



- Excellent source of Vitamin A, for healthy eyes.
- Good source of potassium and folate.
- Excellent source of Vitamin K, for healthy blood vessels and faster clotting time, starting the healing process.
- Spinach contains oxalic acid, which blocks the calcium absorption. Cooking spinach allows our bodies to absorb more calcium, aiding bone and tooth health.
- Raw spinach provides more Vitamin C, which is vital for growth and repair of all tissues in the body.

Locally Grown...

- Spinach can be challenging to grow in Hawai'i due to our warm weather.
- Sissoo spinach, Okinawan spinach, New Zealand Spinach, and Malabar spinach are other plant species that grow well in Hawai'i and can be used as substitutes for common spinach.
- Some use spinach as a lū'au leaf replacement.



Where else it's grown in the world...

China is the world's leading spinach producer (85%). America comes in a distant second at 3%. In the US, California, Arizona, New Jersey, Texas, Colorado, Maryland, and Arkansas are the largest producers.

Meet a Farmer...

Farm: Otsuji Farms

Farmers: Edwin Otsuji and family

Location: Hawai'i Kai, O'ahu

Website: otsujifarm.com



Otsuji Farm was founded in 1954 by Kajuki and Fumie Otsuji. Edwin, the youngest of three children, now has responsibility for the farm and his youngest son, Chef Jonas Otsuji, will take over the farm when his father retires. The family sells their produce boxes at several O'ahu farmers markets and also provides tours and farm to table lunches and dinners. A few of the crops they grow are lettuce, daikon, choy sum, bok choy, green onions, beets, kale, komatsuna (Japanese mustard spinach), spinach, cherry tomatoes, shingiku, squash, papayas, and mizuna.

In the Garden...

- Spinach grows well in nitrogen rich soil and does best in cooler weather. Plant in November through January.
- Soak seeds overnight before planting.
- Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep and 2 inches apart. After seedlings have 2-3 true leaves, thin to 4-6 inches apart.
- Water regularly, keeping soil moist but not too wet.



- Add mulch around plants to maintain soil moisture and keep weeds down.
- In warm areas, harvest the entire plant when the leaves are about 4 inches long. Gardeners in cooler areas may harvest just the outside leaves for a longer harvest period. Harvest the whole plant before it goes to seed.
- Sissoo, Okinawan, and Malabar spinach are hearty perennials that also make good additions to an edible landscape. Grow from seed or place a cutting in water until it develops roots, then plant in soil.

Let's Get Cooking... Spinach-Strawberry Salad

Ingredients

- 6 cups local baby spinach
- 1 pint local strawberries, sliced
- 1-2 local avocado(s), cut in chunks
- 5 oz. Big Island Goat Dairy feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup chopped Hawaiian macadamia nuts
- half a small red onion, thinly sliced (optional)
- balsamic or papaya seed dressing

Directions

1. Wash all produce before cutting.
2. Combine all ingredients and drizzle your choice of dressing over the salad.



Recipe by Amanda Corby, Under My Umbrella, and Chef Mark Noguchi, Pili Group



Reminder: Please compost your food waste.



Did you know?

1. During medieval times, spinach was combined with eggs, honey, nuts, and spices to make a sweet tart.
2. Spinach can also be used as a green dye.
3. Spinach was the first frozen vegetable sold commercially in the US.
4. It takes 600,000 seeds to plant an acre of spinach.
5. In 1929, spinach was the 3rd most popular food in the US after turkey and ice cream.
6. The iconic cartoon character Popeye the Sailor Man is well known for gaining his super strength from eating spinach. In times of trouble, Popeye would pop open a can of spinach with his bare hands for strength and energy.

What can you make with spinach?

Spinach tastes great freshly picked and tossed in a salad with berries and orange slices. It can be cooked into in soups, sauces, pastas, quiche, and stir fries. Spanakopita is a traditional Greek dish made with spinach, cheese, eggs, eggs, spices, and flaky pastry dough. It's delicious sauteed with chopped garlic and olive oil. Try it as a topping on a pizza or blend it with fruits and other veggies for a nutritious smoothie! You can even puree it to create a green cake!



Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest celebrates the diverse, nutritious, and delicious bounty grown in Hawai'i, encouraging children and their families to eat more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Fresh Choice Hawaiian Harvest Toolkit includes educational resource sheets, family take-home letters, produce preparation sheets, and a poster showcasing Hawai'i-grown crops. For downloads and more information, visit www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/HawaiianHarvest.

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