



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Want a tasty, nutritious treat? Try spinach

*By Kay Blakley,  
DeCA home economist*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Poor pitiful spinach and other dark leafy greens have long been the brunt of derogatory comments like, “Yuck!” from a certain segment of commissary shoppers. If you’re among that group, just listen to what you’re missing.

Spinach is considered one of the world’s healthiest foods by some nutrition experts. It’s loaded with vitamins K and A, it’s a super source for manganese and folate and cooked spinach is an excellent source of iron – all that and more, for only 41 calories per cup!

While spinach is available all year round, twice a year it’s in-season and at its best – right now during the cool months of spring, and again during the cool months of fall. Choose loose spinach that has vibrant, deep green leaves and stems that appear crisp and unblemished – no soft spots, wet places, wilting or yellowing. For bagged spinach or spinach blends, choose the freshest looking bag of the bunch, and pay close attention to the use-by date.

Store loose spinach, unwashed, in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper, where it should keep well for 3 to 4 days. To prepare, snap off the stems at the base of the leaves, place the leaves in a large bowl of cool water and swish with your hands to loosen any dirt and sand. Remove the leaves from the water, empty the bowl, and repeat this process until no dirt remains in the water. If using the spinach in a salad, dry it in a salad spinner or by blotting with paper towels. No need to dry the leaves if they are going to be cooked.

**To prepare:** Either use leaves whole or stack and cut crosswise into thin ribbons, or tear into small pieces. The following are instructions for specific modes of cooking spinach:

- **To boil** – place spinach in a saucepan with the water from washing clinging to the leaves. Season with salt, cover and cook over medium heat just until wilted, about 5 minutes.
- **To steam** – place whole leaves in a steamer basket placed over 1 to 2 inches of boiling water. Cover and steam just until wilted, about 3 to 4 minutes.
- **To microwave** – place 1 pound rinsed leaves in a 3-quart baking dish. Cover and cook on high until tender, 5 to 7 minutes, stirring after 3 minutes. Let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Remember, you can find the ingredients for all these recipes at your local commissary at significant savings. Below are a few recipes to help spinach become a requested dish at your house. To check out more recipes, come to Kay's Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com>.

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### **Spinach Casserole (Serves 4-6)**

#### Ingredients

1 (10 oz) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed  
 1/2 cup sour cream  
 1 tablespoon flour  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 1 cup Parmesan cheese  
 1 tablespoon minced onion  
 Dash of salt and pepper

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Squeeze excess moisture from thawed spinach and set aside.
3. Stir all remaining ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Add spinach.
4. Turn mixture into 2-quart casserole dish and bake uncovered for 30 minutes, or until knife inserted off center comes out clean.

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### **Wilted Spinach Salad (Serves 4-6)**

#### Ingredients

3 large eggs, hard boiled and quartered lengthwise  
 1 (6 oz) package prewashed ready-to-use Baby Spinach (about 8 cups)  
 3 tablespoons cider vinegar  
 1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar  
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
 8 slices thick-cut bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
 1/2 cup chopped red onion  
 1/2 teaspoon finely minced garlic

#### Directions

1. Prepare the boiled eggs and set aside.
2. Fry bacon in a medium skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and crisp, about 10 minutes.
3. While bacon cooks, place spinach in a large salad bowl and set aside.
4. In a small bowl, whisk together the cider vinegar, granulated sugar and pepper until the sugar is dissolved, and set aside.
5. When bacon is crisp and browned, use a slotted spoon to transfer it to a paper towel lined plate and drain well.
6. Pour the bacon drippings into a heatproof container, then return 3 tablespoons of drippings to the skillet.
7. Add the onion to the skillet and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until slightly softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the minced garlic and cook until fragrant, about 15 seconds.
8. Add the vinegar mixture, remove the skillet from the heat, and stir to thoroughly combine, scraping up browned bits from the bottom of the skillet.
9. Pour the hot dressing over the spinach, add the browned bacon, and toss gently until spinach is slightly wilted.
10. Divide among individual plates, arrange egg quarters over each, and serve immediately.

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### **Spinach Dip in a Bread Bowl**

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 package dry vegetable soup mix
- 1 (10 oz) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed
- 1 (4 oz) can water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 1 (1 pound) round loaf sourdough bread

#### Directions

1. Thaw spinach and squeeze out moisture.
2. Stir the sour cream and mayonnaise together until combined. Stir in the soup mix, water chestnuts and chopped spinach.
3. Refrigerate 4 to 6 hours or overnight.
4. Remove top and interior of sourdough bread. Fill with the dip mixture. Tear removed bread chunks into bite-size pieces for dipping.

### **-DeCA-**

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their*

*families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*