

RECIPE for health

MARCH 2008

In partnership with Health4U and University Housing

Featured Food:

SPINACH



Spinach, with its jade green color and year-round availability, is the perfect choice for March's Featured Food. Like other dark-leafy greens, it packs a wallop nutritionally, providing more value, ounce for ounce, than any other food.

But is fresh spinach safe to eat? For those who remember the warnings of bacterial contamination and product recalls, a lingering uncertainty may make the salad bowl seem scary. To keep your spinach salad as safe as possible, follow these recommendations:

- Read labels carefully. If the package says "washed," "triple washed," or "ready-to-eat," it's good to go.

- Spinach that is not ready-to-eat should be cleaned very well since the leaves and stems tend to collect sand and soil. Begin by washing your hands. Place the spinach in a large bowl of plain tap water and swish the leaves around to dislodge the dirt. Remove the leaves and empty the bowl. Wash your hands; rinse the bowl and refill it with clean water. Add the spinach and swish, repeating this process until the water remains clear. Usually, two or three washings are sufficient. Dry it in a salad spinner or by shaking it in a colander.

- Once spinach is washed, place it in a plastic container or bag and store it in the refrigerator.

Helpful tips:

- Vegetable wash products, despite advertisements, are no more effective in removing microbes than plain tap water.
- Organically grown spinach needs to be handled in the same manner as conventionally grown spinach.

If you are still apprehensive, cooking the spinach leaves is a sure-fired way of killing microbes. Place clean spinach in boiling water for 1 minute. The boiling water has the added benefit of reducing the oxalic acid in the leaves resulting in a sweeter taste. Serve with a splash of lemon juice or vinegar. Enjoy!

Pompadour Salad

from the kitchen of the MSU Residence Halls

Serves 6

Shallot Sherry Vinaigrette

- ¼ cup shallots, finely minced
- 7 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons sherry wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dark molasses
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- pepper to taste

Salad

- 3 cups Romaine lettuce, chopped
- 3 cups fresh baby spinach leaves
- 1 large D'anjou or Barlett pear, thinly sliced
- 1 cup red seedless grapes
- ¾ cup pistachio nuts, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup gorgonzola cheese
- ½ cup dried cranberries or cherries

Make shallot sherry vinaigrette (or substitute ½ c bottled vinaigrette): Over medium heat, caramelize shallots in 2 tablespoons oil for 7–10 minutes. Stir frequently to prevent burning. Let cool. Add shallots, vinegars, remaining oil, molasses, salt and pepper to blender container. Blend well.

Combine romaine and spinach. Toss with other ingredients including the vinaigrette.

Pompadour Salad will be featured in the MSU Residence Hall Dining Rooms at lunch on Tuesday, March 18. Enjoy. For meal hours and complete menus, visit eatatstate.com.

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