

Spinach Dinner Salad

The early harvest of spinach is beginning. Tonight's dinner salad pairs new spinach with a variety of textures including fresh fennel, shredded carrots and chopped smoky tempeh. It's topped with toasted sliced almonds, savory hard-boiled eggs and buttery avocado slices. The salad is served with an easy honey mustard dressing and an artisan roll of your choice.

Preparation time: 30 minutes - Servings: 2

Organize Your Ingredients!

Notes on Organizing

Prep and organize ingredients on small plates. When using baby spinach, remove the longer stems before assembling the salad. Be sure to brown the tempeh and toast almonds as part of your prep.

Hard-boiled Eggs

2 eggs
1 quart water
pinch of salt

Honey Mustard Dressing

3 T. olive oil
1-1/2 T. rice wine vinegar
1 tsp. honey
1 tsp. prepared mustard
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. onion powder
1/3 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

Spinach Salad Ingredients

2 bunches fresh spinach (double washed and dried)
- or -
one 4 oz. bag baby spinach (washed and dried)
1/2 C. fresh fennel (thin sliced)
3 green onions (washed and chopped)
2/3 C. red bell pepper (thin sliced)
16 cherry tomatoes (halved)
16 slices cucumber (peeled, cut into 1/8" rounds)
2 slices smoky tempeh (browned and chopped)
(If needed, see Tips and Time Savers.)
2/3 C. carrot (shredded)
1 avocado (sliced)

Garnish and Bread

3 T. sliced almonds (toasted)
4 tsp. crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

1 loaf of artisan bread or rolls of choice

Let's Prepare, Cook, and Plate This!

Basic Assembly Instructions

Fresh spinach may require a little extra preparation time, but it's vibrant flavor is worth it. When working with fresh spinach, it's important to double wash it. I swish the bunches in cold water and then rinse the leaves carefully to remove all of the sandy soil the plants retain. Spin or pat it dry before making your salad.

Hard-boiled Eggs

Start by cooking hard-boiled eggs. Bring salted water to a boil and lower eggs into the boiling water with a perforated spoon. Return to a boil, cover, and cook over medium-low heat for 11 minutes. Use a timer. Drain and cover with cold water until ready to use. Peel them under cold running water.

(Wrap bread or rolls in foil and warm in a 220° oven to warm.)

Spinach Salad Ingredients

Make salads in large flat salad bowls or on individual dinner plates.

1. Break up large spinach leaves, or remove stems from baby spinach, and divide between dinner plates.
2. Divide fennel, green onions, red pepper slices and tomatoes between plates.
3. Divide cucumber slices between salads by lining edge of the bowl or plate with rounds.
4. Sprinkle browned tempeh pieces over salads.
5. Top with carrot, sliced egg and avocado slices.

Make Dressing, Finish Salad/Serve the Meal

1. Combine dressing ingredients in a small jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well.
2. Garnish each salad with toasted almonds and crumbled Gorgonzola cheese.
3. Present dressing in a small pitcher on the side and allow diners to serve themselves.
4. Serve with warmed bread or rolls.

What I've Learned from this Recipe

Supermarkets and farmers markets should be offering seasonal spinach now. If you can't find it, bagged baby spinach is an excellent alternative.

Let us know what you think, and ask any questions you may have! chezdon@plate6.com