

Domestic

By Maureen

Spinach a Valuable Food.

Spinach is the reliable standby from the garden. Most of us know that spinach is a valuable food, and particularly so in the diet of the child. The reason for this is that spinach is an important source of iron and one of the important vitamins.

The simplest methods of preparation of spinach are best. First of all, it must be thoroughly cleansed, and this takes a good deal of time, water, and patience. Any food is distasteful if you crunch sand between your teeth when you eat it. To clean spinach, cut off the roots, break the leaves apart and drop them into a large pan of water. Rinse them well, and then lift them into a second pan of fresh, clean water. Do not pour the water off over the spinach, or the grit that has been washed off will get back on the leaves. Continue washing in clean waters until there is no trace of sand on the bottom of the pan. If the spinach is at all wilted, let it stand in cold water until it becomes fresh and crisp. Drain from this water and blanch as follows:

For half-a-peck of spinach put in a casserole, add enough water to the pan to cover the bottom. Then cover the pan closely and let cook slowly, so that the leaves at the bottom will not burn. With the application of this slow heat the juices of the spinach come out and the spinach cooks in its own juices. Continue cooking until the spinach is tender and then pour the spinach into a colander and let it drain well. Chop finely and add butter and seasoning to taste. Reheat and serve. For a peck of spinach you should allow three tablespoonsful of butter and a teaspoonful of salt. This is the best method to use in cooking young, tender spinach when the flavor is not strong; but if the spinach is overgrown, the flavor is strong and somewhat acrid and should then be cooked in boiling water until tender, and then drain well in the colander before chopping and adding the seasoning.

Whenever possible, vegetables should be cooked whole and without peeling. This applies particularly to the root and tuber kinds. When cut, the true starch and other nutriment materials enclosed in little cell walls are exposed and fall out into the water during cooking. Much of the food value of the vegetable is lost by this process of preparation. If they must be cut, they lose less of their nutritious substances when cut lengthwise rather than crosswise.

The water should be boiling before vegetables are put into it. This helps to set the color and shortens the time of cooking, so that a smaller proportion of minerals is extracted than when cold water is used. As soon as the vegetables are cooked and tender, remove them from the fire to prevent over-cooking, and drain at once.

Spinach Souffle.

1 peck spinach, 1 egg, 1 tablespoonful butter, 2 tablespoonsful cream, ½ teaspoonful salt, ¼ teaspoonful sugar, speck of pepper, 2 egg whites. Cook and chop finely the spinach, add a well-beaten egg, 1 tablespoonful butter, the salt, sugar, and pepper to season. Cool, add the cream, mix thoroughly, and fold in the stiffly-beaten whites of eggs. Put into a buttered baking dish, sprinkle with sugar, and bake, covered for fifteen minutes, or covered ten minutes and uncovered five minutes. Serve at once.

Time-table for Cooking Vegetables.

The following table may be used as a general guide for the length of time to cook fresh vegetables in boiling water:

Asparagus	15-20 minutes
Beans	45-60 minutes
Old beets	3-4 hours
Young beets	15-60 minutes
Cabbage	20-30 minutes
Carrots	30-60 minutes
Cauliflower	20-30 minutes
Onions	20-30 minutes
Parsnips	30-45 minutes
Green peas	20-30 minutes
Potatoes	30-40 minutes
Spinach	15-30 minutes
Turnips	30-45 minutes

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