



Emerald Isle Salad + Shamrock Ranch Dressing

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 15 / **Cook Time** / **Serves** 4 - 6

Equipment

- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Dry measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Medium mixing bowl
- Blender (or pitcher + immersion blender)
- Grater

Ingredients

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- 1/2 green onion
- 2 1/4 C spinach leaves
- 3 T mayonnaise **** (for EGG ALLERGY sub egg-free vegan mayonnaise) ****
- 3 T whole milk **** (for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free milk) ****
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp sugar/honey
- 1 carrot
- 2 to 4 T grated cheddar, Monterey jack, or Parmesan cheese **** (Omit for DAIRY ALLERGY or sub dairy-free/nut-free cheese) ****

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Dairy: Substitute dairy-free/nut-free milk and cheese (or omit cheese) in Ranch Dressing.

Egg: Substitute egg-free vegan mayonnaise in Ranch Dressing.

Instructions

Emerald Isle Salad + Shamrock Ranch Dressing

mince + measure

Mince **1/2 green onion** and **1/4 cup spinach** and add to a bowl. Measure and add **3 tablespoons mayonnaise, 3 tablespoons milk, 1 teaspoon vinegar, **3/4 teaspoon salt*, and 1/2 teaspoon sugar** into the bowl.

blend + adjust

Blend everything up in your bowl with an immersion blender, or add to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Taste and adjust—does it need more vinegar? Salt? Mayonnaise? Honey?

chop + grate + toss

Chop up **2 cups of spinach**, grate **1 carrot**, and combine in a bowl. Pour your Shamrock Ranch Dressing over the salad, divide onto plates, and sprinkle with **2 to 4 tablespoons of grated cheddar cheese**.

Featured Ingredient: Spinach!

Hi! I'm Spinach!

"I'm Popeye the sailor man ... Oh, excuse me. I like to sing that song because Popeye loved me! Yep! I'm Spinach! I'm a dark green, leafy vegetable, the kind that's so good for you! I may not make you as strong as Popeye, but I'll definitely make your body healthier and stronger. Plus, I'm delicious in so many dishes, including salads, sandwiches, soups, spanakopita, and even lasagna! Don't tell anyone, but sometimes I even get sneaked into muffins and cakes."

History & Etymology

Spinach is a native plant of Persia (modern-day Iran). China produces the most spinach anywhere in the world, and in China, spinach is still known as The Persian Green.

Spinach was grown in Spain during the 8th century, and Spaniards eventually brought it to the United States.

Medieval artists extracted green pigment from spinach to use as ink or paint.

China is the world's largest spinach producer, with 85 percent of global production, and California produces 74 percent of the fresh spinach grown in the United States.

In the mid-1900s, a cartoon character named Popeye the Sailor Man caused the popularity of spinach to explode! This is because he would turn strong and powerful immediately after eating a can of spinach. The English word "spinach" came from the 14th century French "espinache," through Latin and Arabic, originally from the Persian "aspanak."

Anatomy

Spinach is a member of the amaranth family, making it a close relation to beets and chard.

Spinach plants are hardy and annual (meaning they need to be replanted each year). They can grow up to one foot tall.

Larger leaves grow at the base of the plant, while smaller leaves are at the top (like basil). Spinach has dark green leaves that, depending on the variety, can be either curled or smooth.

How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

When buying fresh spinach, choose leaves that are crisp and dark green with a nice fresh fragrance. Avoid those that are limp, damaged, or have yellow spots.

Refrigerate spinach in a plastic bag for up to three days.

Spinach, which is usually very gritty because it is grown in sand, must be thoroughly rinsed.

Spinach can be eaten raw in salads and added raw to smoothies. Spinach doesn't have a strong taste, so it's a wonderful fuss-free addition when you want to pack in more nutrition to whatever you're cooking. It can be chopped and added to soups and stir-fries, baked into gratins, quiches, and pies, or pureed and added to dips. Spinach is super versatile. Frozen spinach is an easy substitute and works brilliantly in many recipes that call for fresh spinach.

Nutrition

Dark leafy green vegetables are some of the best foods to feed our bodies. Specifically, dark greens like spinach keep our hearts, blood, and brains healthy.

Just half a cup of raw spinach counts as one of the five servings of fruits and vegetables you should eat daily.

Spinach is another source of vitamin K1. Do you remember that K1 helps with blood clotting? How's this for interesting: French soldiers consumed wine mixed with spinach juice during the First World War to recuperate from excessive bleeding!

Spinach is high in chlorophyll! In fact, all green vegetables (and plants) contain chlorophyll. Chlorophyll's

job is to absorb sunlight and use it for energy—a process called photosynthesis. In addition, chlorophyll helps the body make red blood cells. These cells carry oxygen through the blood to our organs.