



## Greek Spanakopita Cups

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time 40 / Cook Time 13 / Serves 6 - 12**

## Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**layer:** to arrange foods in layers, such as sliced fruit in a pie or tart, or sliced potatoes in a potato gratin; or to build flavors by adding seasonings or foods that may be dissimilar but complement the overall dish.

**sauté:** to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

**squeeze:** to firmly press or twist a food with fingers, hands, or a device to remove its liquid, like shredded potatoes, frozen and thawed spinach, or tofu.

## Equipment

- Oven
- Muffin pan
- Pastry brush (optional)
- Large mixing bowl
- Small mixing owl
- Cutting board + kid-safe knife
- Measuring spoons
- Sauté pan
- Whisk
- Dry measuring cups

## Ingredients

Greek Spanakopita Cups

- 5 oz frozen spinach, thawed
- 2 green onions
- 1 garlic clove or 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 T olive oil + more to grease muffin pan
- 1 egg \*\*(for EGG ALLERGY sub ricotta cheese for egg or omit egg if dairy allergy also present)\*\*
- 4 oz (1 C) crumbled feta cheese \*\*(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub firm tofu + lemon juice + salt—more info below)\*\*
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 pinch ground black pepper
- 1 tsp brown sugar or honey
- 2 T plain Greek yogurt \*\*(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free plain Greek yogurt)\*\*
- 24 wonton wrappers \*\*(for EGG/GLUTEN ALLERGY sub rice paper wrappers—more info below)\*\*

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Greek Spanakopita Cups

**Gluten/Wheat:** Substitute rice paper wrappers (dipped in water for 5 to 10 seconds) for wonton wrappers.

**Egg:** Substitute rice paper wrappers (dipped in water for 5 to 10 seconds) for wonton wrappers. Substitute 1/4 C ricotta cheese for egg or omit egg if dairy allergy also present.

**Dairy:** For 4 oz feta cheese, substitute 1/4 C firm tofu (squeezed) + 1 tsp lemon juice + 1/2 tsp salt. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free plain Greek yogurt.

## Instructions

### Greek Spanakopita Cups

preheat + squeeze + chop

Preheat your oven to 400 F. With a pastry brush, brush the insides of the wells of a muffin pan with oil. Place **5 ounces of spinach** in a large mixing bowl and squeeze to remove the excess water. Discard the liquid and set the spinach aside in the large bowl. Then chop **2 green onions** and **1 garlic clove**.

sauté + crack + whisk

Heat **1 tablespoon olive oil** in a sauté pan and cook onions and garlic until soft, about 2 to 3 minutes. Meanwhile, crack **1 egg** in a small bowl and whisk.

#### add + measure + mix

Add the sautéed onions and garlic to the spinach. Add the egg and **1 cup of feta cheese**. Measure **1 teaspoon dried oregano, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1 pinch of black pepper, 1 teaspoons brown sugar**, and **2 tablespoons Greek yogurt**. Mix well.

#### layer + bake

Take 2 of the **24 wonton wrappers** and layer 1 teaspoon of the spinach mixture in the middle of the first wrapper. Then layer the second wonton wrapper over that. Place 1 more teaspoon of spinach filling on the second wonton wrapper. Repeat with remaining wonton wrappers. Then place spanakopita cups in greased muffin pan wells and press them down, using a spoon, so they form to the wells. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the spinach mixture has set and wonton wrappers are golden and crispy!

## 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.