



TENDER GREENS

What is It?

- Tender greens are delicate leafy green vegetables with mild to slightly spicy flavor.
- Tender greens are often eaten raw but sometimes they are heated just enough to make them soft, a process called “wilting.”
- Tender greens include baby spinach, arugula, watercress, mizuna, and mache (also called lamb’s lettuce or corn salad), among others.
- Arugula is called “rocket” in many other parts of the world. It is believed that both words “arugula” and “rocket” are derived from the same Latin name, “eruca.” Over time the names evolved differently across northern Europe and southern Europe, forming two completely different words.
- The name spinach came from the Persian word “ispanai” which means “green hand.”
- While it originated in Europe and China, watercress has become naturalized in the United States and can often be found growing around cold spring water.
- Mizuna was successfully grown on the international space station in 2019.



Tender greens growing, credit: WSDA

Grow It

Tender greens are typically fast growers and thrive in cool temperatures. They can be planted as a mix or individually.

Greens are perfect for growing in school gardens! Growing greens in the fall is ideal because harvesting fits well with the academic calendar, but greens can be grown in the spring as well. Greens grown in the heat of summer can taste bitter. Most tender greens are quick growing, frost-tolerant, and easy to grow. Plant a variety of spinach, mizuna, watercress, arugula, and mache, or look for a tender green, mesclun, or spring salad seed mix. These mixes may also include lettuce. Plant seeds directly in the garden.

Harvest tender greens whenever the leaves are large enough to use, about three to six inches. Young leaves generally have a milder flavor. Cut just the leaves and let roots stay in place. They will regrow to allow for multiple harvests. Continue harvesting until plants begin to seed or become too spicy to eat.





Make It

Recipe: Roasted Root Vegetable Salad with Tender Greens
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 medium carrots, chopped• 2 medium potatoes, cubed• 1 cup beets, cubed or brussels sprouts, halved, or other hearty vegetable of choice• 1 large red onion, sliced• 2 tablespoons olive oil• 2 garlic cloves, minced• 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves• 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled• 1/3 cup pomegranate seeds• 4 cups mixed tender greens (e.g., arugula, baby spinach, baby kale, mizuna, etc.)• 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar• Salt and black pepper, to taste	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F and line a baking tray with parchment paper.2. In a large bowl, toss vegetables with olive oil, garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper.3. Spread the seasoned vegetables in a single layer on the baking tray.4. Roast for 35–40 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden brown and tender.5. While the vegetables roast, prepare a serving bowl with mixed greens.6. Remove the vegetables from the oven and let them cool for about 5 minutes.7. Layer the roasted vegetables over the greens.8. Sprinkle with crumbled feta and pomegranate seeds.9. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar just before serving and toss lightly if desired.

This recipe was adapted from [Recipe Maestro](#).



Tender greens growing, credit: WSDA



Make It

Recipe: Spring Green Salad
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients	Directions
<p>Salad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 ounces fresh spinach (about 7 cups)• 3 oranges (any type)• 1 1/2 cups strawberries, halved• 1 cup walnut pieces (toasted, if desired) <p>Dressing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 teaspoon sugar• 1/4 teaspoon paprika• 2 tablespoons orange juice• 1 tablespoon lemon juice• 1 1/2 teaspoons vinegar (any type)• 1 teaspoon finely chopped onion• 2 tablespoons vegetable oil	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wash and dry spinach, tear into pieces, and chill.2. To prepare oranges: Cut off peel and membrane of outer part of the sections. Using a paring knife, gently cut out sections from membrane edges. This will make orange sections with no outer membrane.3. In a small bowl or a jar with a tight-fitting lid, add all dressing ingredients. Mix or shake well and set aside.4. Right before serving, toss orange sections and strawberries with walnuts and spinach. Add dressing and toss to coat salad. Serve immediately.

This recipe was adapted from [Oregon Food Hero](#).



Tender greens growing, credit: WSDA

Eat It

Tender greens, like other leafy green vegetables, are packed with nutrients. Each type has its own unique nutrition makeup, but generally tender greens are great sources of vitamin A, which is important for eyesight, skin, and cell growth, and vitamin K, which supports healthy blood clotting helps bodies heal quickly. They are also generally good sources of vitamin B9 (folate), magnesium, iron, and calcium. Together, these nutrients support growth and healing throughout the body

Read It

- Sylvia's Spinach, by Katherine Pryor
- Oliver's Vegetables, by Vivian French
- Watercress, by Andrea Wang

Play It

Enjoy the coloring activity on the next page from Oregon Food Hero!



Tender greens growing, credit: WSDA

Find It

- Washington tender greens are available at many grocery stores. Check the product label or shelf tag to see where they were grown. They are also commonly found at Washington state's many farmers markets, farm stands, and other local markets throughout the market season, though each type has its own seasonality.
- Salad mixes like "mesclun" or "baby spring mix" often include a combination of tender greens and baby lettuces and make a great stand-alone base for any salad.
- Search for local farms and markets that sell Washington-grown (food name) here: [Washington Farms](#) | [Local Farm Finder](#) | [Washington Food](#)
- Find a farmers market near you here: [Farmers Market in Washington](#). Many farmers markets and vendors accept WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, WIC Fruit and Vegetable Benefit, and SNAP Market Match.



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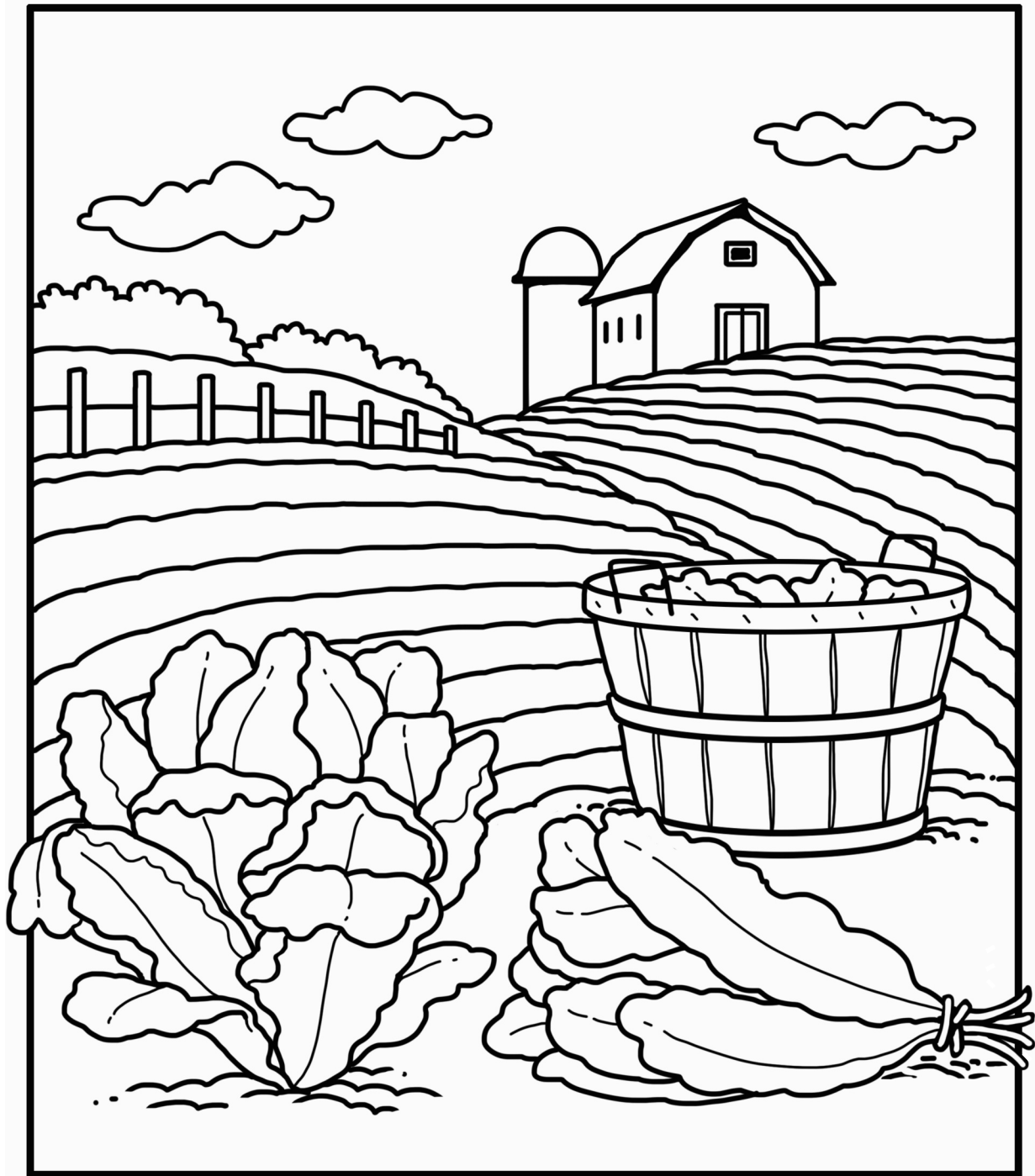
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SNAP-Ed

Name _____

Spinach



I like spinach because



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