

Spinach History

Origin and Spread of Spinach

SPINACH
to WIN it!

- Spinach first originated in the region of Central Asia, likely Persia (modern-day Iran), and then likely spread to India and Nepal.
- From there it was introduced to China through trade in the 7th century.
- It is believed Muslims may have brought spinach to Sicily in the 9th century and that the Moors introduced spinach to Spain around the 11th century.
- Spinach spread to the rest of Europe around the 12th century, reaching Germany by the 13th century.
- Spinach was first cultivated in the United States in the 18th century.
- Spinach is now grown around the world, and the top producers are China, the United States, and Japan.



Spinach in the United States



- Spinach was brought to the United States by European colonizers in the 18th century and was a popular vegetable by the early 1800's.
- Spinach consumption per person in the United States is highest in the Northeastern and Western regions.
- The cartoon character "Popeye the Sailor Man" is known for eating spinach to be stronger. It is believed that this was a major contributor to the 33% increase in spinach consumption in the U.S. during the Great Depression.
- Spinach became a major crop in Texas, and Crystal City, TX installed a statue of Popeye in 1937.
- Spinach sales continued to rise in the United States after the Great Depression.

Fun Facts

- The first written record of spinach is from the 4th century in Mesopotamia.
- The word "spinach" comes from the Spanish word "Hispania."
- Spinach began to be a staple in Mediterranean cuisine during the 1400s.
- Catherine de' Medici is thought to be the person who started using the term "a la Florentine" when she brought Italian cooks with her to France. When a dish is prepared "a la Florentine", it includes the main protein (including eggs, chicken, or fish), served on top of spinach that has been cooked in butter, with sauce and grated cheese on top. A common dish prepared in this way is Eggs Florentine.

