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That Sneaky Little Thing Called Spinach

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Ah, spinach.

Like all dark, leafy greens, spinach is packed with vitamins and anti-oxidants. It's got potassium that promotes heart health and guards against dry skin and muscle weakness, it's replete with iron and lutein, which helps your eyes in their old age, and a whole slew of other natural goodies to make for strong bodies and strong minds.

But as much as I love spinach and can eat it just about all the time, my kids detest it. Or so they say if I present it to them as just "spinach." But if I package it in clever ways – well, they're as much on board as I am. Here are a couple of ideas for anyone else looking to sneak some spinach into their kids' diet...

SPINACH QUESADILLA

Spinach will lose a good deal of its nutritional value if it's overcooked but I go with the rationale that some spinach is better than none at all. For my spinach quesadilla, I take a couple handfuls of baby spinach leaves and sautee them in a smidge of olive oil. I lay them out on a low-carb, whole wheat tortilla and sprinkle grated Gruyere over them, sandwich another tortilla on top and brown both sides of the quesadilla in the same pan in which I sautéed the spinach. Yum!

VEGGIE BURGERS WITH SPINACH

Making veggies burgers from scratch is easier than it sounds and an amazing way to squeeze in extra vegetables! Simply steam up a couple of potatoes and carrots and smash them with a good handful or

two of shredded, raw baby spinach leaves and whole wheat breadcrumbs. I also add in flaxseed meal, almond meal, grated Parmesan and salt to taste, form the mass into patties and shallow fry them in canola oil until they're browned on either side. P.S. My daughter likes hers "Indianized," so I add in a teaspoon of Tandoori Masala.

SPINACH AND FRUIT SMOOTHIE

My kids were suspicious of its green color, but when I poured this fruit-based spinach smoothie in a funky glass and stuck a straw in it, they were on board. I blend raw spinach leaves with pineapple slices, a cut-up apple, an orange or two and some orange juice, and strain it into the glass. Hint: Berries of any kind change the smoothie's color to purpley-red, which the kids love.

What are your favorite spinach recipes? xoSavita

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