

# Microwave Cooked Spinach & Apple Salad



## TIPS:

1. A quick warming in the microwave oven brings out the full flavor in the all the ingredients in this very easy to make salad.
2. **Fresh or Frozen Spinach:** I'm a big fan of fresh spinach, but when fresh isn't available, frozen works great - I used frozen spinach to make this recipe. Regarding preparation, I'd plan on cooking the salad you see here for less

time if you use fresh spinach instead of frozen spinach (see the NOTE in step 8). As a general rule, when cooking vegetables, you can always cook them longer if they are undercooked. You just can't un-cook them if they're overcooked.

**Preparation Time:** about 5 minutes

**Cooking Time:** about 2 minutes

### **Ingredients** (per person)

**1 Big Handful of Fresh or Frozen Spinach**

**1/2 Apple**

**1-2 Garlic Cloves or 1/2 Teaspoon Garlic Powder**

**1 Teaspoon Mustard**

**Balsamic (or any) Vinegar**

**Grated Parmesan (or any) Cheese**

**Raisins (or any other dried fruit)**

**Ground Black Pepper (optional)**



## Equipment

Microwave Safe Bowl

Teaspoon

Short Sharp (Paring) Knife

Large Sharp (Chef's) Knife (only needed if you're using fresh garlic)

Cutting Board

Strainer (only if you're using fresh spinach)



1. If you're not using **fresh spinach**, skip to step 2. If you're using **fresh spinach**, put **1 big handful of fresh spinach** in a strainer, rinse it well under cold running water, and put the **cleaned spinach** in a microwave safe bowl. (**Spinach** grows in sandy soil, and **spinach leaves** usually retain some of the gritty sand when harvested. I therefore recommend rinsing the **spinach** rigorously with cold water in a strainer as shown below even if the **spinach** is packaged and the label says that the **spinach leaves** have been double or triple washed and are ready to use.)





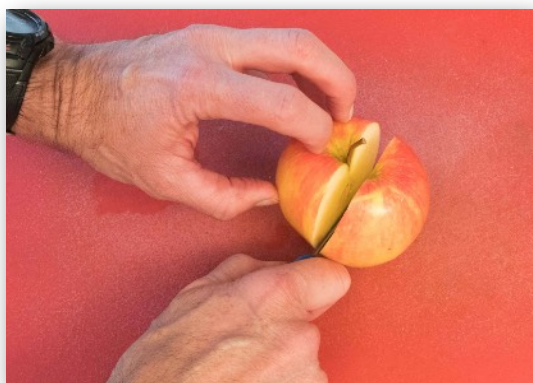
2. If you're using **fresh spinach**, skip to step 3.  
3. If you're using **frozen spinach**, put a **big handful of frozen spinach** in a microwave safe bowl.



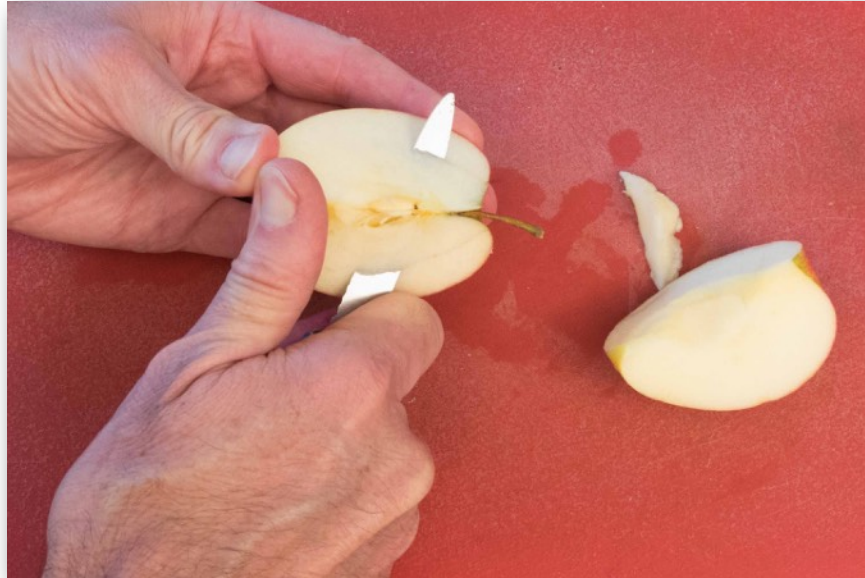
3. Give an **apple** a good hand scrubbing rinse under cold running water.



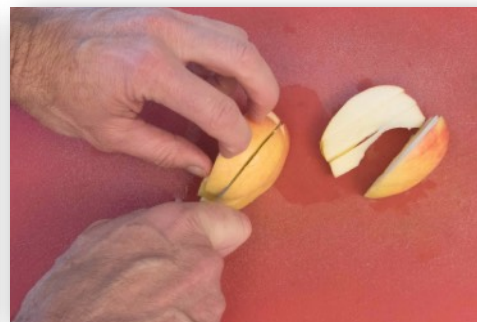
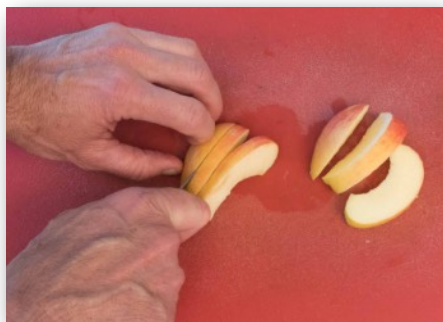
Cut the **apple** in half lengthwise, and cut **one of the apple halves** in half again.



Carefully remove the **core** from the **two apple quarters**.



Cut each **apple quarter** lengthwise into 2-3 slices  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch (1.5 - 2 cm) wide. Roll the **sliced apple quarters** 90 degrees on the cutting board and cut those **slices** in half again lengthwise into strips. Finish by cutting the **apple strips** in cross section into bite sized pieces  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch (1.5 - 2 cm) wide.





4. If you're using **garlic powder**, skip to step
5. If you are using **fresh garlic**, pull **1-2 garlic cloves** from a **fresh garlic bulb**.



Cover one **garlic clove** a time with the flat side of a wide bladed (chef's) knife. Press on the top flat side of the knife with the heel of your hand until you hear and feel the **garlic skins** pop open.



Peel the **garlic skin**.





Hold the **garlic cloves** to the cutting board with curled fingers, and let the side of the knife rub against your knuckles while cutting the **garlic** into thin slices.



Finish by chopping the **garlic slices** in cross section into smaller pieces until they

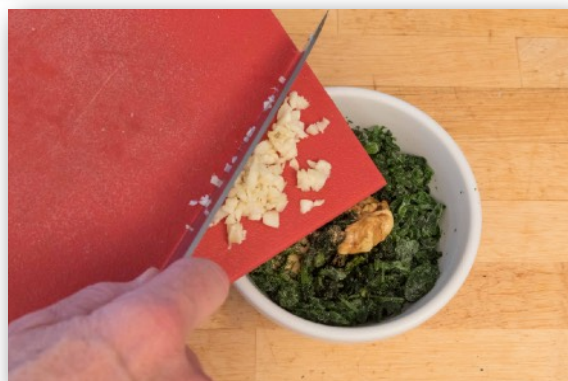
look about as shown below.



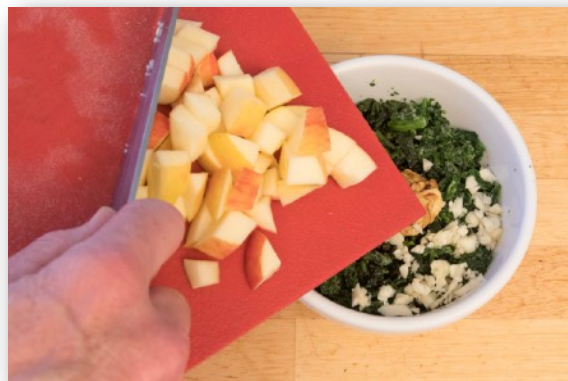
6. Add **1 teaspoon of mustard** and either **1/2 teaspoon of garlic powder** or **chopped fresh garlic** to the **spinach** in the bowl.



or



7. Add a **good shot of balsamic** (or any) **vinegar** and **chopped apple**.



8. Put the bowl in the middle of the microwave oven, and cook using HIGH heat or 100% power for 2 minutes. **NOTE:** *Cooking time will vary depending on the watt power of your microwave oven and whether or not you're using fresh or frozen spinach.* I used a 1200-watt microwave oven and cooked the **spinach and apple salad** you see here for 2 minutes. If you're using **fresh spinach**, start by cooking for 1 minute, check for doneness (spinach leaves just starting to wilt) and cook longer if needed until the **spinach leaves** just start to wilt.





9. After cooking, CAREFULLY remove the bowl from the microwave oven.



10. Give the **ingredients in the bowl** a quick stir until they are well mixed together. Then finish by adding...



**...grated cheese, ground black pepper, and raisins (or any other dried fruit) to taste.**

