

BUSYCOOK



Just desserts off the shelf

APPLE crumble that takes five minutes? Well, or just about as long as it takes you to peel the wrapper off the pot and pop it into the oven to brown. I found this easy dessert at Carrefour (\$5.90 for two servings). It has its own streusel topping packed in a separate bag. (See above) Or try the healthy semolina pudding (\$6.90 for a pack of four). It's really creamy and would go down well with a dollop of cream. Or ice cream. If you prefer savoury snacks, go for the Henaff French sandwich spreads currently on offer. I really like the Nicoise flavour (below) which has turkey, carrots, olives and mayonnaise. Really elegant little spread. Pots of two in a pack at \$2.85. Check prices as offers may apply.



Quick savoury spinach

Go green with a tasty meal straight out of the store cupboard

HAVE you ever contemplated those bags and boxes of frozen spinach on the supermarket shelves and wondered how to cook it? We all know it's good for you, spinach being full of the right vitamins and minerals and all that. But how do you cook the stuff and make it tasty enough to tempt the chlorophyll wary?

Spinach is a good stand-by for me. I almost always have a bag or two in the freezer. Some of my favourite green recipes are spinach and water chestnut party dip, spinach and potato soup, spinach in masala sauce and this one I'm sharing with you – a spinach quiche.

The last recipe, especially, is always a clean-out. The wonderful thing about it is that almost all the ingredients come out of a store cupboard. Even the mascarpone cheese I use can be substituted with any soft cheese you have languishing

in the chiller after a party. Just don't use blue cheeses. The smell will be overpowering.

Frozen spinach have a strong green smell, so the secret is to sweeten it with some sauteed onions, add a pinch of cinnamon, or even a little five-spice powder.

I really like the albacore tuna I found at Carrefour for both its taste and texture. It's packed tight in light brine and needs no further seasoning. It also holds its shape enough not to get totally lost in the spinach mixture.

Keep a couple of cans in the cupboard, it'll be equally good in a sandwich, moistened with a little mayonnaise.

Finally, I added sweet biscuit crumbs and almonds for the topping. Again, it was to sweeten the dish ever so slightly and also to provide some contrast in texture.

The beaten egg helps the spinach hold its shape. If you are counting cholesterol, skip the egg yolks and just use the eggwhites. They'll do the job just as well.

My sign off as usual: e-mail me if you have questions.



by Pauline D Loh

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Store Cupboard Tuna and Spinach Tart

Ingredients:

- 1 bag frozen spinach (1kg)
- 2 cans Albacore Tuna
- 1 250 g tub mascarpone cheese
- A pinch of cinnamon and nutmeg
- 2 large onions
- 3 small or 2 large eggs
- 1 cup sweet biscuit crumbs
- 50 g whole almonds, slivered

Method:

1. Put frozen spinach into a colander or sieve and let the extra liquid drain off. While spinach drains, peel and chop up the onions. Open the two cans of tuna, drain and break up the chunks.
2. Start a large frying pan and drizzle a little oil in. Fry the onions until they turn transparent, but not browned. Add the drained spinach, and stir till well mixed. Add the tuna. Take pan off heat.
3. Preheat oven to 180 deg C/Gasmark 4. Beat up the eggs and season with cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Stir the eggs into the spinach mixture. Add the whole tub of mascarpone cheese.
4. Butter one large and two small tart tins or two pyrex pie plates. Spoon spinach mixture in, levelling the top with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle biscuit crumbs on top of spinach. Top with almonds.

5. Bake for about 20 minutes until the spinach mixture sets firm and pulls away slightly from edges of the pans. Serve warm. (Or freeze extra quiches)

Shopping Guide:

- Frozen spinach (\$2.90/1kg bag)
- 2 cans Albacore Tuna (\$4.90)
- 1 250 g tub mascarpone cheese (\$5.90)
- 2 large onions (\$0.80)
- 3 small or 2 large eggs (\$0.40)
- 50 g whole almonds (\$1.20)

Notes:

Items available at Carrefour. The spinach and the albacore tuna are their house brands. They often have special offers, so do check the prices.

