

Super Speedy Spinach Saag Paneer + Incredible Indian Fried Rice + Mighty Mango Lassi



super speedy spinach saag paneer

dice+tear

Have your kids **5 oz Indian Paneer cheese, Queso Fresco, or extra firm tofu** into cubes and set to the side. Then have them tear **6 cups of fresh, spinach leaves** into little bits, or if using frozen and thawed spinach, wring out and dry as much as possible

grate+chop+purée

Grate (yes, grate!) **1 tomato** and set the juice and tomato bits to the side. Peel and chop **2 cloves garlic** and **½-inch piece of ginger**. Place ginger, garlic, and **2 T water** into a bowl, for use with an immersion blender, or small food processor and purée into a smooth paste.

heat+wilt+thicken

Heat a skillet on your stovetop over medium-high heat. Add the ginger-garlic paste and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the spinach, **salt (to taste)**, and cook, stirring often, until spinach starts to wilt, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring often, until spinach is very soft and wilted, about 5 more minutes. Stir in **6 T heavy cream, ½ tsp garam masala, and ¼ tsp sugar** and continue cooking until liquid thickens, about 5 minutes.

warm+adjust

Add the cubed cheese or tofu to the skillet to warm it up. *(If using tofu, also add **2 tsp nutritional yeast** at this point, to add some “cheesy” flavor!)* Taste and adjust seasonings and enjoy with fried rice!

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shopping list

Spinach Saag Paneer

- 5 oz Indian Paneer cheese, Queso Fresco, or extra firm tofu
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tomato
- 6 C fresh spinach (or 2-3 packs whole leaf frozen spinach, thawed)
- 6 T heavy cream
- ½ tsp garam masala
- ¼ tsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½" piece of ginger
- 3 T oil or butter
- 2 tsp nutritional yeast (if using tofu)

Incredible Indian Fried Rice

- 2 C cooked rice (⅔ C dry)
- 1 carrot
- 1-2 green onion stalks
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp garam masala
- 1 T butter or oil

Mighty Mango Lassi

- 1 C mango juice (or 1 fresh/frozen mango)
- ½ C heavy cream or whole milk yogurt
- 2 T sugar or honey
- 2 C ice

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What is Saag Paneer?

Saag Paneer and Palak Paneer are Indian curries made with greens/spinach and cheese. The words saag and palak mean spinach and paneer is a type of Indian cheese. Palak paneer originated in the Punjabi region, although variations on this dish are popular throughout India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The dish may be made with greens other than spinach, and the most common substitute for spinach are mustard greens. Indian paneer is a fresh, simple cheese that is available in Indian markets, but often made in home kitchens. Ingredients required for making paneer include only whole milk and an acid, such as lemon juice, vinegar, or citric acid. The acid is added to simmering milk a little at a time until the curds separate from the whey. The mixture is then cooled, strained through cheesecloth and pressed with a weight to remove excess moisture.

The surprise ingredient of the week is: Spinach!

- ★ **Spinach is a native plant of Persia (modern day Iran).** Spinach was being grown in Spain during the 8th century and Spaniards are the ones who eventually brought it to the United States.
- ★ **Spinach is a member of the goose-foot family, making it a close relation to beets and chard.**
- ★ **In the 1930s, U.S. spinach growers credited the character Popeye with a 33% increase in domestic spinach consumption.** Popeye's addiction to this "power-packed" vegetable comes from the fact that it has some iron as well as a good dose of vitamins A & C. The spinach-growing town of Crystal City, TX, erected a statue of Popeye in 1937.
- ★ **China is the world's largest spinach producer, with 85% of global production.** However, of spinach grown in the U.S., California produces 74% of the fresh spinach.
- ★ **Florentine is a common part of names of recipes where spinach is a main ingredient.** This is because Florence, Italy was the hometown of Catherine de Medici, a lover of spinach, who married the King of France in the 16th century.
- ★ **Spinach contains high levels of antioxidants,** which prevent cell death, and folic acid, which reverses memory loss and makes you feel happy!
- ★ **Spinach is best eaten fresh, as it loses its nutritional properties with each passing day.** Try to eat fresh spinach within 3 days of purchasing and store in the refrigerator in plastic bag to keep fresh.

Time for a laugh!

What is a dancer's favorite kind of vegetable? Spin-ach!

What is a dog's favorite drink? Mango Lassie!

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