

# DEBBIE MACOMBER

## Happy National Spinach Day!

Salads are wonderful on so many levels: fresh, nutritious, easy to prepare, and infinite in combination possibilities. A little chopping here, a little grilling there, and voilà! The recipes that follow are some of my favorite combinations and each features some or another variation on a vinaigrette dressing. The basic ingredients are listed for each salad, simply adjust amounts of each to your preference and unleash your creativity. Ready, set... get your salad spinners ready!



### Spinach Salad w/ Almonds and Dried Cranberries

#### Ingredients:

Fresh spinach  
Dried Cranberries  
Almonds  
Diced pears  
Champagne vinaigrette  
Fresh ground pepper and salt to taste

Optional ingredients: diced avocado, diced red onion

#### Preparation:

Add ingredients to the bowl, toss, taste, enjoy!



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**Spinach Salad with Grilled Radicchio and Apricots**

**Ingredients:**

Fresh Spinach  
Fresh Radicchio  
Fresh Endive  
Chopped fresh or dried apricot  
Jumbo golden raisins  
Chopped hazelnuts  
Hint of lemon zest  
Diced red onion  
Balsamic vinaigrette  
Fresh ground pepper and salt to taste

Optional ingredients: Crumbled feta cheese, chopped mint

**Preparation:**

Lightly grill the radicchio, endive, and red onion; transfer to bowl and lightly dress with the balsamic vinaigrette; add the fresh spinach and toss immediately which will ever so slightly wilt the spinach. Toss with the remaining ingredients. Toss in the mint, if you like. Crumble feta cheese on top for the cheese lovers. Enjoy!



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## Spinach Salad w/ Bacon and Eggs

### Ingredients:

Fresh Spinach  
Fresh Parsley  
Hard-boiled egg(s)  
Bacon (cooked to perfect crispness)  
Red wine vinaigrette (maybe whisk-in a touch of Dijon)  
Fresh ground pepper and salt to taste

### Optional Ingredients:

Crumbled blue cheese (or sharp cheddar, if you prefer)  
Chopped walnuts (candied walnuts are another option)  
Chopped red onion

### Preparation:

Since we've already started with hard-boiled eggs and perfectly crisped bacon in the ingredients list, we'll just proceed directly to toss all the ingredients together, lightly dress, and enjoy!



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### Spinach Salad on Rustic Puff Pastry Cheese Tart

#### Ingredients:

Fresh Spinach  
Fresh Chard  
Fresh Lavender  
Fresh Thyme  
Chèvre (French for goat's  
cheese)  
Balsamic vinaigrette  
Fresh ground pepper and  
salt to taste

#### Optional ingredients:

lightly sautéed  
mushrooms and garlic



#### Preparation:

Those of you, who are wizards with puff pastry, will opt to start your version of this one from scratch. If you are like me, you have a favorite bakery that will happily provide you with a lovely rustic puff pastry cheese tart to serve as the base. So let's start from there...

- 1) Warm puff pastry cheese tart so the crust is lightly golden brown and the cheese filling is warm (not all the way because it is going back into the oven).
  - 2) Remove from oven; though keep it on the baking sheet.
  - 3) Optional: cover the tart center with the sautéed mushrooms and garlic.
  - 4) Top the tart center with the greens and fresh herbs that have been very lightly dressed with a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
  - 5) Place small dollops of the chèvre atop the greens and return the pan to the oven under a low broiler... watch carefully! We just want to lightly melt and brown the chèvre which will happen quickly; you'll also see a bit more browning to the puff pastry (perfect!).
  - 6) Remove from the oven, let stand at least ten minutes.
  - 7) Cut into squares and serve warm.
- Enjoy!

