

Berry Spinach Salad with Poppy Seed Dressing: Your Perfect Summer Side

Berry Spinach Salad with Poppy Seed Dressing: A Burst of Summer Freshness!



TIME
10-15 min

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INGREDIENTS

- 12 cups baby spinach (or other mixed greens like spring mix or arugula)
- 2 cups strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup raspberries
- 3/4 cup roasted cashews, chopped (or pecans, walnuts, or almonds)
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced or finely chopped
- 1/2 cup oil (a neutral oil like canola, vegetable, or a light olive oil)
- 1/4 cup vinegar (white, apple cider, or raspberry vinegar)
- 1 tbsp vegan mayo (optional, adds creaminess without egg)
- 3 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 tsp poppy seeds
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp salt

Swaps and Notes:

Greens: While baby spinach is fantastic, feel free to use a mix of your favorite greens like spring mix, arugula for a peppery kick, or even romaine for more crunch.

Berries: Use any combination of fresh berries that you love or have on hand. Blackberries would also be a great addition.

Nuts: Roasted cashews provide a lovely buttery crunch, but roasted pecans, walnuts, or almonds would be equally delicious. For an extra touch, lightly toast them yourself for enhanced flavor.

Cheese: Feta adds a salty, tangy counterpoint to the sweet berries. Goat cheese would also be excellent for a creamier texture. You can omit cheese for a dairy-free option.

Red Onion: Thinly slicing or finely chopping the red onion helps distribute its flavor without overpowering the salad. If you find raw onion too strong, soak it in ice water for 10-15 minutes, then drain before adding.

Vegan Mayo: The vegan mayo in the dressing is optional, but I highly recommend it if you want a slightly creamier and more emulsified dressing. Regular mayo can be used if you don't need it to be vegan.

Sugar in Dressing: Adjust the sugar in the dressing to your sweetness preference. For a less sweet dressing, start with 1-2 tablespoons.

Step-by-Step Directions:

Combine Dressing Ingredients: Add all the dressing ingredients - oil, vinegar, vegan mayo (if using), sugar, poppy seeds, mustard, and salt - to a jar with a tight-fitting lid.

Shake Well: Secure the lid and shake vigorously until all ingredients are well combined and the dressing is emulsified.

Refrigerate: Refrigerate the dressing until you're ready to use it. This allows the flavors to meld and thickens it slightly.

Prepare Greens: Place the baby spinach (or other greens) in a large serving bowl.

Add Toppings: Top the spinach with the sliced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, chopped roasted cashews, crumbled feta cheese, and chopped red onion.

Dress and Serve: When you're ready to serve, shake the dressing again, then either toss the salad with the poppy seed dressing or drizzle it generously over the top just before serving. Enjoy immediately!

Tips for Success:

Freshness is Key: Use the freshest ingredients possible for the best flavor and texture.

Dress Just Before Serving: To prevent the spinach from wilting and ensure a crisp salad, always dress it right before serving.

Adjust Sweetness/Tanginess: Taste the dressing and adjust the sugar or vinegar to your preference.

Meal Prep: You can prepare the dressing and chop the fruits and vegetables ahead of time. Store them separately in the refrigerator, and then assemble and dress just before eating.

DIRECTIONS

1. This salad comes together in a flash, making it perfect for last-minute gatherings!
2. For the : Dressing:
3. Combine : Dressing Ingredients: Add all the dressing ingredients - oil, vinegar, vegan mayo (if using), sugar, poppy seeds, mustard, and salt - to a jar with a tight-fitting lid.
4. Shake : Well: Secure the lid and shake vigorously until all ingredients are well combined and the dressing is emulsified.
5. Refrigerate: Refrigerate the dressing until you're ready to use it. This allows the flavors to meld and thickens it slightly.
6. For the : Salad:
7. Prepare : Greens: Place the baby spinach (or other greens) in a large serving bowl.
8. Add : Toppings: Top the spinach with the sliced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, chopped roasted cashews, crumbled feta cheese, and chopped red onion.
9. Dress and : Serve: When you're ready to serve, shake the dressing again, then either toss the salad with the poppy seed dressing or drizzle it generously over the top just before serving. Enjoy immediately!
10. Tips for Success: Freshness is Key: Use the freshest ingredients possible for the best flavor and texture.
11. Dress : Just Before Serving: To prevent the spinach from wilting and ensure a crisp salad, always dress it right before serving.
12. Adjust : Sweetness/Tanginess: Taste the dressing and adjust the sugar or vinegar to your preference.

13. **Meal : Prep:** You can prepare the dressing and chop the fruits and vegetables ahead of time. Store them separately in the refrigerator, and then assemble and dress just before eating.
14. **Serving Suggestions and Pairings:** This Berry Spinach Salad is incredibly versatile. It's a fantastic side dish for grilled chicken, fish, or pork. It can also be a light and satisfying lunch on its own, especially if you add some grilled chicken or salmon for extra protein. Pair it with a refreshing drink like my [This Blueberry Lemonade Is My Favorite Refreshing Drink for Sunny Days](#). For a complete summer meal, consider serving it alongside lighter fare such as my [This Tomato Skillet with Okra and Sausage Is My Favorite Quick Dinner Packed with Southern Flavor](#) or even as a fresh counterpoint to a fun spread like my [This Walking Taco Bar Is My Favorite No-Fuss Way to Feed a Crowd](#).
15. **Storage and Leftover Tips:** Store the poppy seed dressing in a sealed jar in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. If it separates, simply shake well before using. Un-dressed salad ingredients can be stored separately in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. Once dressed, the salad is best eaten immediately, as the greens can become soggy over time.
16. **More Recipes You Will Love:** If you appreciate fresh, healthy, and flavorful dishes like this, be sure to check out some of my other favorites:
17. For another fantastic no-mayo salad option, try my [A Light, Tangy Chicken Salad I Actually Crave \(and There's No Mayo in Sight!\)](#).
18. If you love using fresh fruit in your recipes, my [This Chocolate Chip Banana Bread Is My Favorite Way to Use Up Overripe Bananas](#) is a must-try.
19. And for a fun and easy meal that keeps things fresh, consider my [This Walking Taco Bar Is My Favorite No-Fuss Way to Feed a Crowd](#), where this salad could even be a great topping!
20. **Final Thoughts:** This Berry Spinach Salad with Poppy Seed Dressing is more than just a salad; it's a celebration of summer's bounty. It's quick, easy, and absolutely bursting with fresh flavors that will brighten any meal. Give it a try, and let me know how it becomes a staple in your kitchen!
21. What are your go-to fresh salads for the summer? Share your ideas in the comments below, and don't forget to follow [Chef Maniac](#) for more delicious and wholesome recipes!

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More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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