
Spinach Goma-ae

This is my favorite childhood spinach dish! I never understood why spinach was disliked, even ridiculed by mainstream American media until I went to college and the dorm cafeteria served up a greasy gray blob of what they called 'spinach' (ughh).

Japanese -style spinach is quickly blanched to preserve not only its vibrant green color, but many of the nutrients as well! Make this version your next family veggie favorite!

Ingredients:

16 ounces fresh spinach, washed & drained
3 Tbsp raw white sesame seeds
1 Tbsp low-sodium tamari, or soy sauce
1 -2 tsp white sugar

How to make:

Set up a large pot of boiling water, a pinch of salt will slightly lower the boiling point, and make it boil faster.

Set up a colander with some ice cubes in your sink.

Traditional version:

Toast sesame seeds over low heat in a shallow saute pan, flipping/ or stirring frequently to avoid burning, about 90 seconds. You will get a lovely sesame aroma wafting to your nose! Transfer toasted seeds immediately to a 'suribachi' (Japanese grinding bowl), or mortar and pestle. Hand-grind the sesame until it is mostly a meal, leaving some seeds intact.

Add tamari /soy sauce and sugar directly to the sesame and mix together. Set aside.



Once water is boiling, add spinach leaves to the pot, submerging them with tongs to blanch them- FOR ONLY 1 -2 MINUTES. Once they have turned vibrant green and slightly wilted, remove pot from stove.

Immediately pluck spinach leaves with tongs out of the hot water and into iced colander, rinse with cool water. Add more ice if needed to quickly cool down. Grab bunches of spinach with your hands, and gently squeeze excess water out of spinach.

In a separate, medium-sized bowl, gently toss freshly cooked, squeezed spinach with the sesame topping and enjoy!

Notes:

Sure, not everyone has a suribachi, or mortar & pestle on hand... Easy topping versions:

- Make a quick paste using 3 tbsp tahini instead of sesame seeds, add soy sauce + sugar.
- Top spinach simply with a sprinkle of gomasio