

## Farmers' Markets are a beautiful thing!

At 7 am the farmers arrive; Carts, tables and bushels of produce appear from the back of dusty vans and pick-up trucks. Slowly the grassy area transforms into a small city of tents with heaps of goods underneath. At 8 am the customers come with coffee in hand, out to get the freshest choice produce before the thousands of customers pick over it. They know that the bread vendor sells out by 10am and a week without his multigrain spelt loaf is a significant loss. The vendors start to work their charms, chanting their deals and their expertise to the customers. Friends meet between tents and discuss their news and make plans to have breakfast at a diner near the market. People are smiling and excited to buy here. Shopping is enjoyable, a pleasure of life not drudgery. Thankfully the number of farmers markets are on the rise in Toronto and this is a very good thing.

Markets are reemerging because they add a certain quality to our lives that the efficiencies of large supermarkets do not. Those of us who wish to support sustainable food systems, a system that supports local growers and produces, free range or organic techniques, and fair labour practices, find the supermarket a very confusing and complicating place where making these decisions requires a lot of research about brands, ingredients and geography. At farmers markets, on the other hand, we can connect with vendors who share our concern for sustainable food system and feel confident that the products we are buying are helping to make the food system better.

Farmers also benefit by selling directly to consumer instead of selling at base prices to grocery chains or retailers. It allows farmers to keep more of the profits for themselves, rather than "sharing" it with the grocery chains.

Farmers' markets also offer a place for new entrepreneurs or new farmers. Few other places offer the opportunity to enter retailing with so little risk or capital. The need for start up capital is reduced because market vendors do not need to rent a storefront and pay a security deposit nor are they required to make large investment in outfitting the space.

FoodShare is currently working on two farmers' market-related projects. The first is the Toronto Farmers' Market Network that will develop strategies to address some of the big questions: How can we improve the viability of current markets - both for farmers and for organizers? What is the most sustainable way for new markets to get started? How can markets contribute to the viability of farming and farm-

land preservation? What are workable models that bridge the needs of diverse low-income communities and farmers?

For more info on the TFMN:

<http://www.foodshare.net/farmersmarkets01.htm>

The second related project is called the Good Food Markets. This project being modeled in low-income or isolated neighborhoods in Toronto where Farmers' Markets would not be financially sustainable yet. Instead of a Farmers' Market, FoodShare works with a community organization to set up a one-vendor stall of local and imported produce that is then sold by the community organization right in the neighbourhood. The hope is these one stall markets will eventually attract farmers. (For information on setting up a Good Food Market in your neighbourhood, contact Mark-Jan Daalderop at 416. 392. 1670 or email: [mark-jan@foodshare.net](mailto:mark-jan@foodshare.net))

- Mark-Jan Daalderop

Farmers' Markets helps to build community, create employment opportunities and helps to create a more sustainable food system. **For a complete list of all of Toronto's markets, visit FoodShare's website:**

<http://www.foodshare.net/farmersmarkets02.htm>

Below are Toronto's newest markets.

- **Brick Works:** 550 Bayview Ave (Bloor/Danforth and Pottery Road, between the Prince Edward Viaduct)  
Saturdays, 8 am - 2 pm.  
opening Saturday May 26 to October 27
- **Liberty Village:** (Liberty St - Atlantic Ave)  
Sundays, 9 am - 2 pm,  
opening Sunday May 27 to October 28
- **Trinity Bellwoods:**  
Northwest corner of Trinity Bellwoods Park, 1053 Dundas St West (Dundas and Shaw)  
Tuesdays, 3 - 7 pm, opening June 5 to October 30
- **Withrow Park:** 725 Logan Ave (in Withrow Park)  
Saturdays, 9 am - 1 pm,  
opening Saturday May 26 to October 27
- **Woodbine Centre:** 500 Rexdale Blvd. (at Hwy 427)  
Fridays, 12 - 6 pm,  
opening June 1 to October 26
- **Wychwood:** Church of St. Michael and All Angels, 611 St. Clair Ave W (at Wychwood)  
Saturdays, 2 - 5 pm, opening August 18 to October 6

Food  Share

Field to Table Centre



# recipes

## Spring Spinach and Strawberry Salad

- 1 bunch spinach, rinsed
- 10 large strawberries, sliced
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 TBS poppy seeds

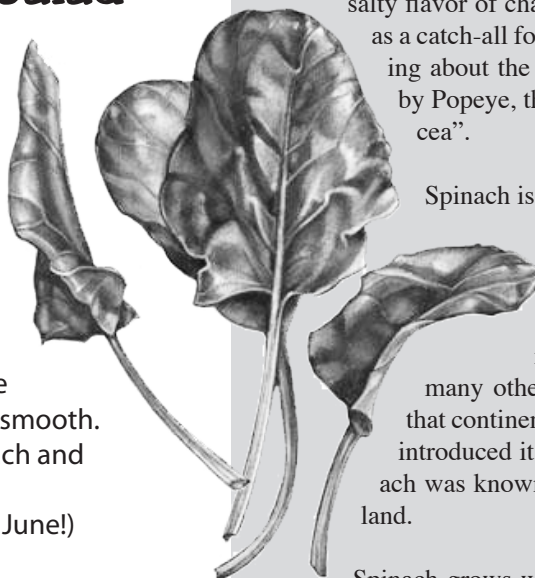
In a large bowl, mix the spinach and strawberries. In a blender or jar with lid, place the sugar, salt, vinegar, and oil, and blend until smooth. Stir in the poppy seeds. Pour over the spinach and strawberries, and toss to coat.

(Note: Ontario strawberries are due in mid- June!)

## Spinach and Potato Curry

- 1 1/2 lb. (700g) potatoes
- 1lb. (450g) fresh spinach
- 1 medium onion
- 1 tsp grated fresh ginger root
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp cumin seeds or ground cumin
- 1 tsp red chili powder --or to taste
- 2 medium tomatoes

Scrub potatoes and boil them in their skins until almost, but not quite, done. Leave to cool, then cut into small cubes. Meanwhile, if using fresh spinach or kale, remove the coarse stalks then rinse and cook gently for 10 minutes, in just the water clinging to the leaves in a covered pan. Cool and chop (reserve any remaining liquid). For frozen spinach, just defrost and chop. Chop the onion finely, crush or finely chop the garlic and finely chop the tomatoes (keep them all separate). Measure the spices out into a little bowl. Now brown the onion in a little vegetable stock or water until golden brown - about 10 minutes perhaps, topping up with hot water as necessary. Let it stick slightly from time to time to get that fried smell. Alternatively, brown in a little sunflower oil. Add the ginger and garlic to the pan and stir for a moment. Add the spices, and a little more water if necessary. Cook for a few minutes, then add the tomato. Cook gently 3-5 minutes. Add the potatoes and spinach, mix well then cover and simmer gently until ready, stirring once or twice to prevent sticking. It's done whenever the potatoes are cooked to your liking and the spices have permeated the vegetables.



## featured this week: SPINACH

Spinach belongs to the same family (Chenopodiaceae) as chard and beets. It shares a similar taste profile with these two other vegetables-it has the bitterness of beet greens and the slightly salty flavor of chard. The term "spinach" is often used as a catch-all for any leafy green but here we are talking about the one made popular in North America by Popeye, the cartoon character, "Spinacia oleracea".

Spinach is thought to have originated in ancient Persia (Iran). Spinach made its way to China in the 7th century when the king of Nepal sent it as a gift to this country. Spinach has a much more recent history in Europe than many other vegetables. It was only brought to that continent in the 11th century, when the Moors introduced it into Spain. In fact, for a while, spinach was known as "the Spanish vegetable" in England.

Spinach grows well in temperate climates and likes a bit of cool weather so can be seeded in spring and again in the fall. Choose spinach that has vibrant deep green leaves and stems with no signs of yellowing. The leaves should look fresh and tender, and not be wilted or bruised. Avoid those that have a slimy coating as this is an indication of decay.

Store fresh spinach loosely packed in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper where it will keep fresh for about five days. Do not wash it before storing as the moisture will cause it to spoil. Avoid storing cooked spinach as it will not keep very well.

Spinach, whether bunched or prepackaged, should be washed very well since the leaves and stems tend to collect sand and soil. Before washing, trim off the roots and separate the leaves. Place the spinach in a large bowl of tepid water and swish the leaves around with your hands as this will allow any dirt to become dislodged. Remove the leaves from the water, empty the bowl, refill with clean water and repeat this process until no dirt remains in the water (usually two to three times will do the trick). Cut away any overly thick stems to ensure for more even cooking. If you are going to use the spinach in a salad, you can dry it in either a salad spinner or by shaking it in a colander. Spinach is one of the few vegetables we suggest quick boiling (for one minute).

## DELIVERIES

for the week of: June 5th  
orders are due 5 pm Tues. May 29th

for the week of June 12th  
orders are due 5pm Tues. June 5th



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( at temporary location)