



Family Fun Page!!



Sylvia's Spinach!

Sylvia does *not* like spinach. One day, her class plants a garden and Sylvia is in charge of planting — ew! — the spinach seeds. What will Sylvia do? Will she plant them? Will she hide them? Read *Sylvia's Spinach* to see how Sylvia reacts. Or, watch the author read the story: <https://youtu.be/8NojEfvCiSQ>.

Sylvia's Spinach is a fun look into how Sylvia learns about a new food: spinach. Trying new foods isn't always easy for children. Spark your child's interest in trying something new by making it more familiar. Start with fresh spinach. Plant some seeds in your

garden or a pot. Then, talk about spinach as your read the story. Start with these questions:

- ◆ Why doesn't Sylvia like spinach?
- ◆ In what season does the class garden begin?
- ◆ How much time passed before Sylvia's spinach sprouted?
- ◆ Do you notice any changes in Sylvia's attitude as you read?
- ◆ What's the difference between the vegetables that are ready to harvest and those that need more time?



Time to Read

Talk about the book as you read with your child:

The Cover: Have you ever seen a spinach seed? Show your child how the illustrator used the small brown seeds as the border on the cover. What does spinach look like when it's fully grown? What color is it?

The Pictures: How is the first picture of Sylvia in the book different from the cover picture? What emotions do you think Sylvia is feeling in both pictures? Why do you think her emotions might change over the course of the book?

In The Garden: What are some natural resources that are needed for a vegetable like spinach to grow? (water, sun, & soil) What does it take to care for a plant? How does caring for a plant compare to caring for an animal, like a cat or dog?

On The Plate: How does your child feel about spinach? Have your child taste spinach from the garden, the store, farm market, or even frozen. Make our *Kitchen Korner* recipe together.

Kitchen Korner!

PITA PIZZAS WITH CHEESE & SPINACH

- 6 whole-wheat mini pita pockets
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup frozen spinach (1 cup fresh)
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- salt & pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder



- ◆ Preheat the broiler.
- ◆ Cook spinach in the microwave: Put spinach in a microwavable bowl, add 1 tablespoon of water, and cook for about 1 minute. Carefully drain off any leftover water.
- ◆ Brush both sides of the pitas with olive oil, arrange on a baking sheet, and broil for 1 minute. Remove from oven.
- ◆ Flip and sprinkle VERY lightly with salt & pepper. Add spinach and garlic powder (plus any other herbs your kids like). Top with cheese.
- ◆ Broil again for about 2 minutes. Keep your eyes on them because they'll burn quickly! Let cool for a few minutes and serve.

Recipe: www.foodlets.com

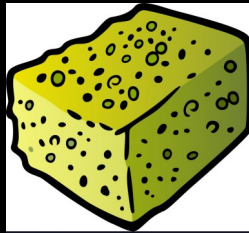
MAKE IT WITH THE KIDS!



Spongey Spinach Sprouts

Materials:

- Sponge
- Spinach seeds
- Spray bottle
- Clear plastic container
- Plate



Instructions:

- ◆ Soak the sponge until it is damp, but not dripping wet.
- ◆ Scatter seeds across the top of the sponge.
- ◆ Gently press seeds into the holes.
- ◆ Place the sponge in a sunny window.
- ◆ Spray the sponge with water daily to keep it moist.
- ◆ If needed, put a clear plastic container over the plate to keep the moisture.
- ◆ Before long, your very own spinach sprouts will start to appear!

LEARN FROM SYLVIA

Here's a great way to learn more about spinach, using *Sylvia's Spinach* as your guide. After reading the story, connect *Sylvia's Spinach* to your child's real life:

- ◆ **Plant spinach just like Sylvia.** Take spinach seeds and plant them in a small container indoors. Wait for them to sprout and then transfer them to an outdoor garden or pot with soil. (Or, transfer your spongey spinach sprouts to a garden/pot.)
- ◆ **Try spinach different ways.** Eat spinach with eggs, in soup, and on a sandwich. Brainstorm other combinations to see which one tastes the best.
- ◆ **Say yes to something new.** Sylvia did not want to try spinach but when she did, she really liked it! Find something new to try together. You might just like it.



Popeye Power Smoothie

Ingredients:

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1 banana, peeled and sliced
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves
- crushed ice



Combine all ingredients in a blender. Puree until completely smooth. Serve immediately. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Yield: Four, 1-cup servings

Recipe: Maine SNAP-Ed

Farm Facts from the NJ Department of Agriculture

- ◆ California, Arizona and New Jersey are the top spinach producing states.
- ◆ NJ ranks 3rd in spinach production in the county.
- ◆ Spinach originated in ancient Persia, which today is known as Iran.
- ◆ Spinach contains phytochemicals (pronounced "fight-o-chemicals"), which help protect themselves from insects and help protect your health too.
- ◆ There are 3 different varieties of spinach: Flat or Smooth Leaf, which has smooth leaves; Savoy, which has curly leaves; and Semi-Savoy, which has slightly curly leaves.

