

Popeye's right – there's so much good in spinach

As the weather has not decided if we are truly entering spring just yet and the evenings still have a chill about them, I have opted for another comforting dish. This time showcasing swede and spinach. Perhaps an unlikely pairing, but one worth trying I assume you.

Spinach has long been renowned as a nutritional powerhouse, historically believed to increase energy and vitality, and improve the quality of the blood. It is well known as a great source of iron, and while plant sources of iron are less efficiently absorbed than meat sources, its absorption is boosted by vitamin C, of which spinach is also a great source. A great example of nature solving a problem, as it so frequently does. Spinach is also a good source of vitamin K, B2, B6, B1, E, carotenes, manganese, and magnesium.

Swede is a good source of vitamins E and C as well as calcium, magnesium, potassium and of course fibre. Swede makes a great mash and is frequently added to stews, but this recipe uses it a little differently.

Swede and spinach gratin (serves 4-6)

1 medium swede

100g fresh spinach

300ml pot crème fraiche

60g cheese of your choice (grated)

2 garlic cloves (finely grated)

Few sprigs fresh thyme

Pinch of black pepper



Heat the oven to 180 and set a small pan on the hob on a medium-low heat.

Mix the crème fraiche, cheese, garlic, thyme, and black pepper in the pan and let it gently warm through.

Meanwhile peel the swede, cut in half and slice into approximately 1/2 cm thick half circles (easiest on a thick mandolin setting). Wash and dry the spinach.

In an oven proof dish, layer the spinach and swede, adding a little of the crème fraiche mix between each set.

Grate a little cheese over the top and pop in the oven for 20-30 minutes until the swede is soft when tested with a knife or skewer and the top is golden.

This is lovely as a side to your Sunday roast or a delicate fish dish.

Rebecca Vincent BSc
BANT registered nutritionist
rebeccavincentnutrition.co.uk

