

Spinach as a Party Food for High School Students

By Kim Nguyen Wunderlich
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When you think of delicious snack or party food, spinach is not usually the first thing that comes to mind – unless you’ve attended a Nurture cooking class. Highland Park High School Students were hesitant at first “What’s in it?” and “Why is it green?”, but once they tasted the [Green Smoothies](#) the comments became “It’s delicious”, “It tastes like banana”, and “Can I have another one?”

Nurture held a food demo and shared nutrition and cooking tips at the Highland Park High School Health Fair on April 20th. Similar enthusiasm was expressed for the [Lentil Tostadas](#) and [Banana Soft Serve](#). “I knew the food was a hit when I heard students persuading other students to try the dishes and when they were grabbing seconds and the recipes as they headed off to their next class,” said Lisa Brewer, Executive Director for Nurture.



Lentils are a wonderful food. As one student said, they have a great ‘meatiness’ to them. They are also full of fiber so they keep you satisfied and full for a long time, help slow the absorption of sugar into the blood stream, and “they help you poop” as another student put it. They have none of the saturated fats found in most meats and many nutrients. This makes them a great food for heart health.

One student did want to add some meat so another student suggested using 93% or 95% lean ground beef. Brainstorming alternatives and ways of altering recipes to suit individual tastes is the key. “No recipe will appeal to every palette. Nurture helps participants build confidence in adapting recipes while maintaining a strong nutrition profile,” according to Lisa. Miss the meat? Try half lean ground beef and half lentils. If you like things spicy, add hot sauce. Like creaminess? Add guacamole. The possibilities are only limited by the cook’s imagination.

When asked if these recipes would make good party food, the students gave an enthusiastic yes. That sounds like success to me.

Nurture is a grassroots, volunteer, non-profit organization. Nurture’s mission is to empower family members of all ages (children, teens and adults) with the tools and resources needed to prepare healthy, delicious meals even when faced with limited time and budget. Nurture was founded in 2008 to address hunger, childhood obesity, wellness, and an increasingly unhealthy food chain. It focuses on low-income families with children at high risk for nutritional and health problems. Learn more about Nurture at www.nurtureyourfamily.org.