Swiss Chard

Background:
Swiss chard has a mildly bitter flavor and pairs well with most foods, especially lemon, tomatoes, eggs, bell peppers, and pasta.
Part of the spinach and beet family
Young and tender leaves can be eaten raw
Mature leaves taste better cooked by sautéing, boiling, steaming, or stir-frying
Swiss chard is originally used in Mediterranean cuisine

Nutritional Value:
Swiss chard is rich in several vitamins:

- *Vitamin A*—Good for vision
- *Vitamin K*—Helps in blood clotting and bone health
- *Vitamin C*—Essential for tissue health

Magnesium, calcium, potassium, and iron are minerals that are essential for bone health, metabolism, and electrolyte balance.
Swiss chard is a good source of fiber, which helps with bowel function, lowers cholesterol, and keeps you full longer.
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How to SHOP:
Find Swiss chard near other leafy greens in the chilled display of your grocery store produce section.
Stalks should be crisp. Leaves should not be wilted or blemished.
Chard is available in stores year-round but grows locally during the fall season.

How to GROW:
Plant Swiss chard at the end of summer. It can be planted with other winter vegetables.
Harvest in 50-70 days, when leaves reach 9-12 inches in length and repeat until the first frost.
Swiss chard is not frost tolerant but can also become bitter if grown when the temperature is high.

How to STORE:
Swiss chard cannot be frozen
Do not wash before refrigerating
It can be stored for 5 days in the refrigerator if wrapped tightly in plastic
Swiss Chard and Lentil Soup

INGREDIENTS:

1 Tbsp Olive oil
1 Onion, chopped
2/3 cup Swiss chard stalks, chopped
1 Red bell pepper, seeded & chopped
1/3 cup Celery, chopped
1 tsp each of salt, pepper, cumin, garam masala

1 clove Garlic, minced
2 cups Chicken broth, low-sodium
3 cups Water
1 (14.5 oz) can Diced tomatoes
1 cup Green lentils
2 cups Swiss chard leaves, de-stalked & chopped

DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil in large pot over medium heat.

Add onions and chard stalks to pot and cook until they start to caramelize.

Add bell pepper and celery, and sauté until tender. Add spices and garlic, continuing to sauté 1 minute.

Add water, chicken stock, tomatoes, and lentils, and bring to a boil.

Reduce to a simmer and cook 20 minutes.

Add chard leaves and cook 5 more minutes to wilt the leaves before serving.

HELPFUL TIPS:

To reduce cooking time, substitute split red lentils, which cook much faster than the green variety.

When serving, cilantro is a garnish that complements this soup well.
Swiss Chard Sauté

INGREDIENTS:

1 Tbsp Olive oil  
1 cup Baby potatoes, quartered  
1/2 tsp each Salt and pepper  
1 Tbsp Red pepper flakes  
1/2 tsp Cayenne  
1/2 tsp Paprika  
1 Tbsp Fresh thyme  
3 cups Swiss chard leaves, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil in large pot over medium heat.

Add potatoes and seasonings. Cook until potatoes are tender, stirring frequently, about 15 minutes.

Add chard leaves and cook until tender, about 3 minutes.

HELPFUL TIPS:

Any kind of potato works well in this dish.

This is a great dish to add extra spice to, whether with more seasoning or roasted peppers.
Swiss Chard Frittata

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 Tbsp Olive oil
- 1/2 cup Onion, diced
- 1/2 cup Mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 cups Young Swiss chard leaves, chopped
- 12 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 tsp each, Salt & pepper
- 1 Tbsp Fresh oregano

DIRECTIONS:
Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a muffin pan with liners.
Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook until they start to caramelize.
Add mushrooms and cook until softened, then add chard leaves and cook until soft.
In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and seasonings.
Scoop equal amounts of the vegetables into each well of the muffin tin. Then evenly pour about 1/3 cup of beaten eggs into each well, over the vegetables.
Place pan in oven and cook until the edges start to become golden brown, about 20 minutes.

HELPFUL TIPS:
You can add a dash of salt and milk to the eggs before beating them to make them fluffier.
To make this dish more savory, add 1/2 cup cheese to the egg mixture or sprinkle it on top before baking.
You can also cook and bake this recipe in a large oven-proof skillet.