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## Spinach-Mandarin Power Salad

Spinach is an amazing powerhouse of vitamins and minerals: Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, C, E, and K, plus folic acid, calcium, potassium, and zinc. Mandarin oranges contain vitamin C. Both mandarin oranges and spinach are fat-free, and pecans are high in fiber and protein. This colorful salad is not only nutritious, it's also beautiful, and the complex dressing provides a wonderful burst of flavor!

1/4 cup pecans, toasted  
2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar  
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tsp. agave nectar  
1/2 tsp. brown mustard  
2 Tbs. orange juice  
Dash of salt  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
5 oz. baby spinach leaves, washed  
11-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained

1. Toast pecans in a pan over medium heat for a few minutes, watching them carefully. When they start to brown and release their oils (about 2 to 3 minutes), remove from pan and place on paper towels to cool.
2. In a large bowl, combine next 7 ingredients with a wire whisk to make the dressing.
3. Add spinach leaves and orange slices; combine with dressing. Arrange salad on serving plates. Top with toasted pecans.

Variations: You can add sliced green onions if you like them, or substitute toasted sliced almonds or pine nuts for the pecans.