

Grilled Cheese with Spinach & Tomato

Serves 2

Ingredients

- Olive oil – 20 ml (about 1 T + 1 tsp, divided)
- Garlic – 3 cloves (≈15 g), thinly sliced
- Crushed red pepper flakes – ¼ tsp (adjust to taste)
- Spinach (leaves only) – 150 g (from regular bunch spinach, washed and drained)
- Mozzarella cheese – 100 g, thinly sliced or torn ([see Notes](#))
- Kirkland bread – 4 slices (≈440 g total)
- Tomato – 1 large (≈150 g), sliced into 4 slices 6 mm thick
- Salt + MSG blend – 1.0 g salt + 0.25 g MSG (≈⅛ tsp total)
- Balsamic reduction – see below (≈2 tsp per sandwich)



Quick Balsamic Reduction (Glaze Substitute)

Combine in a small saucepan:

- Balsamic vinegar – 2 T (30 ml)
- Honey or sugar – ½ tsp (optional, balances acidity)

Simmer gently over low heat 4–6 minutes until thickened and syrupy. Yields ≈ 1 Tbsp.

Instructions

Prepare spinach:

1. Heat **1 tsp olive oil** in a skillet over **medium heat**.
2. Add **garlic** and **red pepper**; **cook ≈ 1½ minutes** until fragrant.
3. Add **spinach** and toss just until wilted (**2–3 minutes**). Transfer to a small bowl.

Assemble sandwiches:

4. Layer **50 g mozzarella** on one slice of bread.
5. Add **tomato slices**, sprinkle with **salt + MSG**, top with **half the spinach**, and drizzle with **1 tsp balsamic** reduction. Top with another bread slice.

Grill:

6. Heat **2 tsp olive oil** in a skillet over **medium-low**.
7. Cook sandwiches covered ≈ **2–3 minutes per side** until golden brown and cheese melts. Add a bit more oil if needed.

Serve:

8. Let **rest 1 minute**, then cut diagonally.
9. Drizzle lightly with extra balsamic reduction if desired.

Notes

- Mozzarella – Pat dry if soft; tear by hand if difficult to slice.
- Spinach – Regular leaves are fine; discard stems and tough ribs.
- Cheese alternatives – Provolone, mild gouda, or shredded pizza blend (よつ葉 / 雪印).
- Optional add-ins – 1 tsp Dijon mustard or a sprinkle of dried basil / oregano.
- Equipment tip – Use a nonstick skillet or sandwich press; torch lightly if extra browning desired.

Nutrition

Per Serving: Kcal 420 | Protein 18 g | Fat 23 g | Sat Fat 7 g | Carbs 34 g | Sugars 5 g | Fiber 3 g | Sodium 600 mg (incl. MSG)

Total Dish: Kcal 840 | Protein 36 g | Fat 46 g | Sat Fat 14 g | Carbs 68 g | Sugars 10 g | Fiber 6 g | Sodium 1200 mg (incl. MSG)

Suggested Side — Simple Tomato Soup

Serves 2

Ingredients

- Olive oil – 1 tsp (5 ml)
- Garlic – 1 small clove (3 g), minced
- Onion – ½ small (50 g), finely chopped
- Canned crushed tomatoes – 200 g (about ½ of 400g can)
- Water – 150 ml
- Kevala coconut aminos or low-sodium soy sauce – ½ tsp (2.5 ml)
- Salt + MSG blend – 1.0 g salt + 0.25 g MSG
- Black pepper – pinch
- Dried basil – ¼ tsp (optional)
- Greek yogurt (Oikos plain nonfat) – 1 Tbsp (15 g), for swirl



Instructions

1. Heat **olive oil** in a small saucepan over **medium heat**.
2. Add **onion** and **garlic**; sauté **3–4 minutes** until translucent.
3. Add **tomatoes**, **water**, **soy sauce**, and **seasonings**.
4. **Simmer 10–12 minutes** until slightly thickened.
5. Taste, adjust **salt**, ladle into bowls, and swirl in **yogurt** before serving.

Nutrition (per serving): Kcal 95 | Protein 3 g | Fat 4 g | Sat Fat 0.5 g | Carbs 11 g | Sugars 7 g | Fiber 2 g | Sodium 330 mg (incl. MSG)



Notes

- This soup balances the rich grilled cheese perfectly and uses pantry items commonly available in Japan.
- Leftovers keep 2–3 days in the refrigerator and reheat well in a microwave or small saucepan.