

Prep Time	15 minutes
Cook Time	12 minutes
Resting Time	3 minutes
Total Time	30 minutes
Servings	4 portions
Cooking Intensity Level	Medium (Requires accurate temperature management during searing)
Primary Technique	Cast-Iron Pan-Searing & Basting

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Ingredients Breakdown

For the Homemade Blackening Seasoning

- 1 tbsp Smoked paprika
- 1 tsp Onion powder
- 1 tsp Garlic powder

- 1 tsp Dried oregano
- 1 tsp Dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp Cayenne pepper (*adjust intensity to preference*)
- 1/2 tsp Kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp Freshly cracked black pepper

For the Spinach & Parmesan Filling

- 5 oz (140g) Fresh baby spinach, wilted and thoroughly squeezed dry
- 1/3 cup (75g) Plain 0% Greek yogurt
- 2 oz (55g) Light cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup (45g) Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves Fresh garlic, finely minced
- 1/4 tsp Red pepper flakes

- Pinch Nutmeg (*optional, enhances spinach flavor*)

For the Stuffed Salmon

- 4 large Center-cut salmon fillets (*6 oz / 170g each, skin-on or skinless*)
- 1 tbsp Extra virgin olive oil or avocado oil
- 1 tbsp Unsalted butter (*for pan basting*)
- 1 Fresh lemon, cut into wedges for serving

Step-by-Step Cooking Instructions

1.Prepare the Blackening Spice Blend:Heat Level: Low.

In a small bowl, whisk together smoked paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, oregano, thyme, cayenne pepper, kosher salt, and black pepper. Set aside.

2.Make the High-Protein Filling:Heat Level: Medium-Low.

1. Heat a dry skillet over medium heat and add the fresh baby spinach. Stir for 1-2 minutes until completely wilted. Transfer to a clean kitchen towel and squeeze out all excess moisture thoroughly.
2. Chop the drained spinach finely.

3. In a medium bowl, combine the chopped spinach, Greek yogurt, light cream cheese, grated Parmesan cheese, minced garlic, red pepper flakes, and a pinch of nutmeg. Mix until completely smooth and cohesive.

3. Prep and Stuff the Salmon Fillets: Precision Knife Work.

1. Pat the salmon fillets completely dry using paper towels. Moisture prevents proper searing.
2. Place a fillet flat on your cutting board. Using a sharp chef's or boning knife, cut a horizontal pocket into the side of each fillet, starting at the thickest side. Cut about 3/4 of the way through, careful not to pierce all the way to the other end.
3. Generously coat the outside of all four fillets with the blackening spice blend.
4. Spoon approximately 2 to 3 tablespoons of the spinach-Parmesan mixture into each pocket. Press lightly to seal the edges.

4. Pan-Sear to Perfection: Heat Level: High to Medium-High.

1. Place a heavy cast-iron skillet over high heat for 2-3 minutes until smoking hot. Add the avocado oil.
2. Carefully place the stuffed salmon fillets into the hot pan. You should hear an immediate sizzle.
3. Sear undisturbed for 3 to 4 minutes until a dark, flavorful crust forms.

4. Reduce heat to medium, carefully flip each fillet using a wide spatula, and add the butter to the skillet.
5. Cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, occasionally basting the top of the salmon with the melted butter, until the internal temperature reaches 140°F–145°F (60°C–63°C) and the filling is hot and melted.

5. Rest and Serve: Heat Level: Off.

Transfer the salmon to a warm plate and let rest for 3 minutes before serving. Squeeze fresh lemon juice over the top just before serving.

Pro Tips for Culinary Success

1. Dry the Spinach Thoroughly: Excess water in the spinach will dilute the filling and cause the stuffed salmon to leak liquid into the pan, ruining your sear. Squeeze it thoroughly.
2. Control Heat Intensities: Blackening requires high heat to char the spices without burning them to ash. Watch your stove temperature closely; drop from high to medium immediately after flipping.
3. Use Cast Iron: A heavy cast-iron pan holds heat evenly, providing the ideal surface for an authentic blackened crust.

Complete Nutritional Information

Values are calculated per serving (1 stuffed fillet, approx. 210g cooked weight).

Nutrient	Amount per Serving	% Daily Value*
Calories	395 kcal	—
Protein	46 g	92%
Total Fat	21 g	27%
<i>Saturated Fat</i>	7 g	35%
<i>Trans Fat</i>	0 g	—
<i>Omega-3 Fatty Acids</i>	2.2 g	137%
Cholesterol	115 mg	38%
Sodium	580 mg	25%
Total Carbohydrates	5 g	2%
<i>Dietary Fiber</i>	1.5 g	5%
<i>Total Sugars</i>	2 g	—
Vitamin D	14.2 mcg	71%
Calcium	210 mg	16%
Iron	2.8 mg	15%
Potassium	780 mg	17%