



Canning Greens

Cooked greens have been popular for more than 4,000 years. Our forefathers knew that a “mess of greens” was good eating, but they had no idea what a nutritional gold mine they really are! A wide variety of plants are used for greens. Mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens, spinach, kale and chard are the most popular. Dandelion and beet greens also are eaten in some areas. Certain wild plants, such as pokeberry, also are eaten to some extent.

Greens freeze well, and most of them may be canned successfully at home if special precautions are taken to ensure adequate processing in a pressure canner.

Nutritive Value

Greens are important, inexpensive sources of vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals and dietary fiber. They are low in calories, too. Dark green leafy vegetables are rich in carotene, which becomes vitamin A inside the body. Canned greens are a fair source of ascorbic acid or vitamin C. They are good sources of iron and calcium, but spinach contains oxalic acid, which ties up much of the calcium, making it unavailable for body use.

Selection

Select greens that are young and tender, free of blemishes and are a fresh, green color. Avoid those with large tough stems, a yellowish-green color, softness or those that are wilted. Discard leaves badly damaged by insects.

Preparation

Greens must be cleaned and washed carefully. Look for insects while washing; they are sometimes hard to see, especially aphids. Cut or tear out tough stems and midribs and discard. Wash several times in cold water, lifting greens from water to allow soil and grit to settle to the bottom. Tear or chop as desired, and heat to shrink before packing in jars. Home-canned greens are safe, nutritious and good to eat if canned properly. Use the right canning equipment, and follow recommended procedures. When using home-canned greens, boil 10 minutes before tasting. Boiling will destroy any harmful food poisoning toxin.

Steps in Canning Greens

- ☪ Check jars for nicks, cracks and sharp edges. Wash jars and lids in hot soapy water; rinse. Leave jars in hot water until ready for use. Use new lids and good rings that are not rusty or bent. Read directions on box for using lids. Generally, however, boiling water is poured over them and they are left in hot water until used – at least 3 minutes.
- ☪ Place prepared greens in a large saucepan with just enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Heat to boiling. Turn greens over. Heat until thoroughly wilted.
- ☪ Cut through greens several times with a sharp knife before packing.
- ☪ Fill hot jars with hot greens to within 1/2 inch of top. Do not pack tightly.





- 🌿 Add 1 teaspoon salt to each quart, or 1/2 teaspoon per pint, if desired.
- 🌿 Fill jar with boiling water to within 1/2 inch of top.
- 🌿 Run a table knife or spatula down jar between greens and sides to push out air bubbles.
- 🌿 Wipe sealing edge and threads with a clean, damp cloth. Place lid on with sealing compound next to jar. Screw band firmly.
- 🌿 Put jars on rack in steam pressure canner containing about 3 inches of hot water.
- 🌿 Place canner over heat, fasten cover securely, and process according to manufacturer's instructions for the type of canner...

The canner with a dial gauge: Usually the petcock is left open until steam escapes steadily for 10 minutes. Close the petcock, and, when the pressure reaches 10 pounds, begin counting processing time. Adjust heat to keep pressure constant.

The canner with the weighted control: Leave petcock open until steam escapes steadily for 10 minutes. Place the weighted control on the cooker in the 10-pounds position. When the control "jiggles" vigorously, air has been released and the pressure is 10 pounds. Adjust heat so that control jiggles one to three times per minute.

- 🌿 Keep pressure steady.
Process pint jars.....1 hour and 10 minutes
Process quart jars.....1 hour and 30 minutes
- 🌿 When processing time is up, remove canner from heat. Let pressure fall naturally to zero, then wait at least 2 minutes. Slowly open vent or remove weighted control to let remaining steam escape. Open canner, tilting lid away from you. This keeps the steam from burning you.
- 🌿 Remove jars. Do not tighten bands. Set jars on a rack or folded towels several inches apart, away from drafts. Do not cover.
- 🌿 After cooling 12-24 hours, test for a good seal. Press center of lid. If dome is down, the jar is sealed. Remove rings, wash, dry and store for reuse. Store jars in a dry, dark, cool place.



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Pub. 1946 (2.5M) 9/00 Rev.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service offers equal opportunities in programs and employment.

