

Canning Greens



Cooked greens have been popular for more than 4,000 years. Our ancestors knew that a “mess of greens” was good eating, but they had no idea what a nutritional gold mine greens really are!

A wide variety of plants can be 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, although spinach contains oxalic acid, which ties up much of the calcium, and makes it unavailable for use by the body.

Selection

Use freshly picked, tender greens. Discard any discolored, diseased or insect-damaged greens.

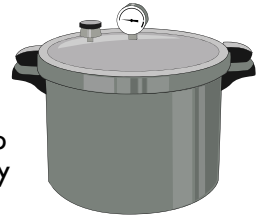
Preparation

Wash only small amounts of greens at one time. Drain water and continue rinsing until water is clear and free of grit. Cut out tough stems and midribs.

Blanch 1 pound of greens at a time by placing in a blancher basket and steaming 3 to 5 minutes or until well wilted.



Steps in Canning Greens



- Use hot pack only.
- Check jars for nicks, cracks and sharp edges. Wash jars and lids in hot soapy water. Then 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 about using lids. Generally, however, boiling water is poured over them and they are left in hot water until used – at least 3 minutes.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon salt for pints or 1 teaspoon for quarts, if desired.
- Fill hot jars loosely with greens and add fresh boiling water, leaving 1-inch head space.
- Run a plastic spatula down jar between greens and sides to push out air bubbles. Adjust head space if needed.
- Wipe rims of jars with a clean, dampened paper towel. Place lid on with sealing compound next to jar. Screw band firmly.
- Process in a pressure canner.

Processing time

- Pints – 70 minutes at 11 pounds pressure in a dial gauge pressure canner or 70 minutes at 10 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge pressure canner.
- Quarts – 90 minutes at 11 pounds pressure in a dial gauge pressure canner or 90 minutes at 10 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge pressure canner.

When processing time is up, remove canner from heat. Let pressure fall naturally to 0; then wait at least 10 minutes. Slowly open vent or remove weighted control to let remaining steam escape. Open canner, tilting lid away from you to prevent 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 letting jars cool for 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 full jars in a dry, dark, cool place.

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