



# Using, Storing and Preserving Greens



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*Michigan Fresh: Using, Storing and Preserving Greens* was first published in March 2015 and revised in July 2023

Greens are cool-season vegetables, quick to mature and easy to grow.

## Food Safety and Storage

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Store unwashed greens in moist paper towels and place in sealed plastic bags in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator. They will keep about three to four days.
- When ready to use, wash under cool running water. Greens tend to have dirt and grit on the leaves, so wash thoroughly in several changes of water.
- To prevent cross-contamination, keep greens away from raw meat and meat juices.
- For best quality and nutritional value, do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

## How to Preserve

### Canning

Pressure canning is the *only* safe method of canning greens. Greens *must* be pressure canned to avoid the potential of the foodborne illness botulism.

Although you may can greens, freezing them results in a better product. Choose fresh, tender leaves.

**Hot pack** – Wash thoroughly in several changes of water. Cut out tough, woody stems. Blanch 1 pound of greens at a time until well wilted (about 3 to 5 minutes). Pack hot greens loosely into hot jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt to pints,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon to quarts, if desired. Fill jars to 1 inch from the top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles, and wipe jar rims with a clean paper towel and adjust headspace if needed. Adjust lids and process (see tables that follow for recommended processing times).

**Lawn or garden questions?**

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Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

## Using, Storing and Preserving Greens

Recommended process time (in minutes) for greens in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of:			
		0 – 2,000 ft	2,001 – 4,000 ft	4,001 – 6,000 ft	6,001 – 8,000 ft
Pints	70	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.
Quarts	90	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.

Recommended process time (in minutes) for greens in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of:	
		0 – 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Pints	70	10 lb.	15 lb.
Quarts	90	10 lb.	15 lb.

Let jars stand undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours, remove rings, wash jars, label, date and store. Food in jars that did not seal must be reprocessed within 24 hours in a clean jar with a new lid, refrigerated or frozen.

Tables were adapted from the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP), *Selecting, Preparing and Canning Vegetables: Spinach and Other Greens*, reviewed February 2018 ([https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_04/spinach\\_greens.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/spinach_greens.html)). The NCHFP adapted them from the *Complete Guide to Home Canning* (Agriculture Information Bulletin, No. 539). USDA, 2015.

### Freezing

**Preparation** – Select young, tender green leaves. Wash thoroughly and cut off woody stems.

Water blanch\* collard greens 3 minutes; all other greens, 2 minutes.

\***Water blanching** – Use 1 gallon of water per pound of prepared greens. Put the greens in a blanching basket or metal strainer and lower into a large pot of rapidly boiling water. Cover. Wait for water to return to boiling. Start counting blanching time when water returns to a full boil. It should take only a minute to come back to a boil. If it takes longer, too many greens have been added to the boiling water.

**Cooling** – As soon as the water blanching is complete, greens should be placed in ice-cold water. Cooling greens should take the same amount of time as blanching. Drain greens very well and carefully pat dry, then pack into containers or freezer bags, removing as much air as possible, and allowing for ½-inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

### References

Andress, E., & Harrison, J. A. (2014). *So easy to preserve* (Bulletin 989). (6th ed.). University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

National Center for Home Food Preservation. (2018, February). *Selecting, preparing and canning vegetables: Spinach and other greens*. [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_04/spinach\\_greens.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/spinach_greens.html)

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