

Let's Preserve Leafy Greens

- Recommended varieties** Spinach: Bloomsdale, Melody, and Viking are good varieties when grown in early spring or late fall.
- Quantity** A bushel weighs 18 pounds and makes 5 to 7 quarts. An average of 28 pounds makes a 7-quart canner load; 18 pounds makes 9 pints. An average of 1-1/4 pound makes 1 pint of frozen greens.
- Quality** Preserve only freshly harvested greens. Leaves should be mature, attractive in color, and tender. Discard wilted, discolored, diseased, or insect-damaged leaves.
- Preparation** Wash only small amounts of greens at one time. Drain and continue rinsing until water is clear and free of grit. Don't soak greens. Cut out tough stems and midribs. Place 1 pound of greens at a time in a cheesecloth bag or blancher basket and steam 3 to 5 minutes or until well wilted. Or place 6 cups of raw greens at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water and blanch for 2 to 3 minutes after the water returns to a boil. Cool greens in several changes of cold water and drain.
- Freezing procedure** Don't freeze more than 2 pounds food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. Fill pint or quart size freezer bags to a level of 3 to 4 inches from their tops and squeeze out air. Leave 1-inch headspace, seal, label, and freeze. Before freezing, bags may be inserted into reusable rigid plastic freezer containers for added protection against punctures and freezer burn.
- Canning procedure** Wash jars. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. If desired, add 1 teaspoon of canning or pickling salt per quart. Fill jars loosely with drained, not-blanching greens, leaving 1-inch headspace. Add fresh boiling water, leaving 1-inch headspace. Wipe jar sealing edge with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process jars in a pressure canner. To process in a pressure canner, place jar rack, 2 inches of water, and sealed jars in canner. Fasten lids and heat canner on high setting. After exhausting steam 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing the recommended process when the desired pressure is reached.

Process times

Recommended hotpack process times in a pressure canner at different altitudes

Jar Size	Process time (minutes)	Canner gauge pressure at altitudes of			
		Dial gauge canner		Weighted gauge canner	
		0-2000 ft (lbs)	2001-4000 ft (lbs)	0-1000 ft (lbs)	Above 1000 ft (lbs)
Pints	70	11	12	10	15
Quarts	90	11	12	10	15

Regulate heat to maintain a uniform pressure. When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective; otherwise, use new lid and reprocess as before. Wash bands and store separately. Greens are best if consumed within a year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

Nutritional information

Average content of a 1/2 cup serving (4 to 4.4 oz) of leafy greens

	Raw		Cooked		Frozen		Canned
	Mustard greens	Spinach	Mustard greens	Spinach	Mustard greens	Spinach	Spinach (liquids & solids)
Calories	7	22	21	16	23	15	22
Carbohydrates	1	3	3	2	3	2	3.5
Fats, g	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Protein, g	0.9	2.1	2.7	2.5	2.8	1.7	2.3
Sodium, mg	19.5	22	29.5	12.5	19.5	7.5	19.5
Vitamin A*	40	100	100	80	100	90	100
Vitamin C*	20	100	100	40	55	40	20

*U.S. Recommended Daily Allowances (US RDA). These greens are an insignificant source of other vitamins.

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