



FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES

Asparagus

Michigan-grown asparagus is available between May and June.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

Rust resistant strains such as Mary Washington and Waltham Washington are recommended for fresh use, freezing and canning. Broch's Imperial and Paradise varieties are best served fresh.

TRIM LOSS

Cut asparagus - 47 percent (range 12-69 percent). Snapped asparagus - 7 percent (range 1- 17 percent).

YIELD

1 pound (snapped)	2 cups, cut up
1 - 1 ½ pounds	1 pint frozen
2 ½ - 4 pounds	1 quart canned
10-pound box	7- 10 pints frozen
24 ½ pounds	canner load of 7 quarts
16 pounds	canner load of 9 pints
1 crate (31 pounds)	7-12 quarts canned (average 3 ½ pounds/quart)
1 bushel (45 pounds)	30-45 pints frozen 11 - 18 quarts canned

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Keep asparagus in the refrigerator away from meat, poultry and seafood products.

Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

Wash asparagus using cool running water. Do not use soap or detergent.

Use a separate cutting board for vegetables; cut away any damaged or bruised areas, and keep away from raw meat, poultry and seafood.

Follow standardized procedures recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture for home canning.

HOW TO STORE

Store in the refrigerator at 40 F - in the crisper drawer to help retain moisture.

Store processed canned products in a cool, dry area.

Asparagus is best if consumed within a year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

QUICK AND EASY SERVING TIPS

Steam or water blanch, season with salt and pepper, and serve as a vegetarian wrap with cheese and/or onions.

Season with salt and pepper and top with quick-melt cheese. Microwave.

RECIPE

Spring Vegetable Saute
(4 servings)

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup sliced sweet onion
- 1 finely chopped garlic clove
- 3-4 tiny quartered new potatoes
- 3/4 cup sliced carrots

3/4 cup asparagus pieces
3/4 cup sugar snap peas, or green beans
1/2 cup quartered radishes
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon dried dill

1. Heat the oil in a skillet. Cook the onion 2 minutes, add the garlic and cook another minute.
2. Stir in the potatoes and carrots. Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook until almost tender, about 4 minutes.
3. If the vegetables start to brown, add a Tablespoon or 2 of water.
4. Now add the asparagus, peas, radishes, salt, pepper, and dill. Cook, stirring often, until just tender - about 4 minutes more.
5. Serve immediately

*Serving Size: 1/4 of recipe
Nutritional Analysis per serving: 80 calories; 1.5 g fat; 9 mg cholesterol; 200 mg sodium; 3 g Dietary fiber*

HOW TO PRESERVE

FREEZING ASPARAGUS

Frozen asparagus retains both color and flavor better than canned asparagus.

Prepare Stalks. Select young, tender stalks with compact tips. Wash thoroughly and sort according to thickness of stalk. Cut off and discard any tough portions of stalks. Leave spears in lengths to fit the package or cut into 2-inch lengths.

Blanch. In boiling water, place small spears and 2-inch asparagus lengths for 2 minutes, medium spears for 3 minutes, and large spears for 4 minutes. Cool promptly in several changes of cold water and drain. One can also steam blanch.

Pack. Pack into airtight freezer containers or bag, leaving no headspace. When packing spears, alternate tips and stem ends. In containers that are wider at the top than at the bottom, pack asparagus with tips down. Seal, label and freeze. Alternatively, freeze individual spears on a cookie sheet or tray. When frozen, pack spears in freezer containers or bags and remove as much air as possible. Seal, label and freeze.

Freeze no more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. One cubic foot will hold 7.4 gallons.

CANNING ASPARAGUS

Prepare Stalks. Select young, tender, tight-tipped spears, 4 to 6 inches long. Wash asparagus and trim off tough scales. Break off tough stems and wash again. Leave asparagus in spears or cut into 1 -inch pieces.

Raw Pack. Wash jars. Pack raw asparagus into jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. If desired, add 1/2 teaspoon salt per pint, 1 teaspoon salt per quart. Fill jars to within 1 inch of top with boiling water. Remove air bubbles. Adjust lids. Process in a pressure canner.

Hot Pack. Wash jars. Cover asparagus with boiling water; boil 2 or 3 minutes. Loosely fill hot jars with hot asparagus, leaving 1 inch headspace. If desired, add 1/2 teaspoon salt to pints, 1 teaspoon to quarts. Fill jars to within 1 inch of top with boiling hot cooking liquid or water (if cooking liquid contains grit). Remove air bubbles. Adjust lids. Process in a pressure canner.

Pressure Canning

Pressure canning is the ONLY safe method for canning asparagus because it is a low-acid food. Place jar rack, about 2 inches of water, and sealed jars in the canner. Fasten lid and heat canner on high heat. After exhausting a steady stream of steam for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing when the desired pressure is reached. 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. 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, dry place.

Reprocessing CANS

If after 12 to 24 hours the lid is still unsealed, replace jar if defective, use a new lid and a screw

band. Dump out asparagus and liquid into a pan, reheat until boiling, fill hot jars with asparagus and liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Seal and reprocess following the recommended time.

Table 1. Recommended process time for Asparagus in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI*) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot and Raw	Pints	30 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
	Quarts	40	11	12	13	14

Table 2. Recommended process time for Asparagus in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI*) at Altitudes of	
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot and raw	Pints	30 min	10 lb	15 lb
	Quarts	40	10	15

*PSI – pounds per square inch

Source: National Center for Home Preservation
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Food Domain Website
www.Fooddomain.msu.edu

National Center for Home Preservation
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

“So Easy to Preserve” 5th ed. 2006. Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, Athens.
<http://www.uga.edu/setp/>

Safe Handling of Raw Produce and Fresh-Squeezed Fruit and Vegetable Juices
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>

This bulletin replaces E-1884 Food Preservation Series-Asparagus (Michigan State University Extension, 1990)

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