

**Collard Greens
Asparagus
Peas**

Seasonal Eating

April

What to do with Greens

Most of us know how to cook down greens and serve with cornbread in the Southern tradition. However, greens can be incorporated into many dishes to add more nutritional value. You may need to cook or blanch the leaves before using. With the collard greens, make sure you strip out the inedible, tough stem and center rib.



- Use chopped greens in stuffing for summer squash or bell peppers.
- Add them to bread or grain based stuffing for poultry or fish.
- Add torn greens to broth or hearty bean, lentil or barley soups.
- Blanch or steam whole large leaves and use them to wrap fillings—like cabbage roll recipes.
- Layer greens into baked pasta casseroles such as lasagna.
- Mix chopped greens with brown rice that has been cooked in stock.
- Toss garlicky sautéed flavorful greens with pasta.

Cooked greens are delicious when topped with a crunchy garnish like toasted croutons, toasted pine nuts, slivered almonds or sesame seeds.

THIS MONTH I USED THE FEATURED PRODUCE ON THESE DAYS:

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Two Peas in a Pod: Salads and English Peas

Honey Mustard Pasta Salad	Combine peas, cooked pasta bowties, cooked chicken, green onions, cashews and honey mustard dressing
Layered Green Salad	Layer lettuce, celery, water chestnuts, green peppers, green onions, peas, frost with mayonnaise and sprinkle with a little sugar, salt and garlic powder. Refrigerate and top with crumbled bacon before serving.
Ham Salad	Combine finely cubed ham, peas, green onion, celery, pickle relish and mayonnaise
Crunchy Pea Salad	Combine peas, celery, water chestnuts and green onion with a dressing of equal parts sour cream, mayonnaise and ranch dressing. Stir in pecans and crumbled bacon before serving.
Tangy Pea Salad	Combine peas, onion and pimiento peppers and toss with poppy seed dressing

Did You Know?

- Eating asparagus can cause a funny odor in your urine. This is caused by a derivative of an amino acid in the asparagus.
- Under ideal conditions, an asparagus spear can grow 10" in a 24 hour period.
- Greens cook down considerably from their raw volume: 1 pound of raw greens will yield about 1/2 cup cooked.
- A southern tradition, collards are eaten on New Year's Day to ensure wealth in the coming year because their leaves resemble folded money.

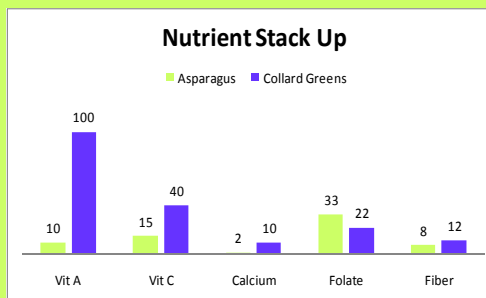
Asparagus Tips

- Asparagus starts to lose its sweetness as soon as it is picked so cook as soon as possible after purchasing.
- Look for asparagus with tightly closed heads. As they age they will open up.
- To store asparagus for a day or two, treat it like a bouquet of flowers. Snip off the ends and stand up right in a glass of water. Cover the tops loosely with a plastic bag and place in refrigerator. This method will also help to perk up slightly wilted asparagus.
- Be careful not to overcook your asparagus as this will deplete the flavor. It should be tender to the fork but still retain its bright green color.
- Don't cook asparagus in iron as it will react and can discolor the asparagus and the pot.
- If your asparagus is stringy or tough you may want to peel the outside of the stalk. Start below the head and turn the asparagus as you go to take just the outer layer off.
- Bend the stem end of the asparagus until it snaps off at the point where it gets tender. You can also just cut off the bottom inch or so.
- When grilling asparagus use two skewers to push through the stalks creating a raft of asparagus. This makes it easy to turn over and remove from the grill without falling through the rack.

Roasted Asparagus with Dijon Vinaigrette

- 1 bunch fresh asparagus
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon Dijon style mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 clove garlic, finely minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons feta cheese, crumbled

Cut the bottom couple of inches off the asparagus spears and discard. Pour olive oil over the spears of asparagus and toss to coat. Lay in a single layer on a baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in a 400 degree oven for about 15—20 minutes or until the spears are tender and slightly brown. In the meantime whisk together the vinegar, mustard, thyme, oregano, garlic and salt and pepper. Pour over roasted asparagus and toss. Sprinkle with feta cheese.



Collards are a powerhouse of nutrients as an excellent source of vitamins A and C, and folate and a good source of calcium and fiber. Asparagus is an excellent source of folate and a good source of vitamins A and C. So stock up on these nutritious veggies!

Braised Collard Greens

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 4 cups water
- 2 packets Goya powdered ham seasoning
- 1 bunch collard greens, washed, stemmed and sliced thinly
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar

In a large saucepan, heat the vegetable oil and sauté onion, garlic and red pepper flakes until tender, about 5 minutes. Add water and ham seasoning and bring to a boil. Add collard greens and reduce to a simmer, cooking until greens are tender and liquid has evaporated, about 1 hour. Add cider vinegar. Serve with cooked grits.

Does Asparagus Size Matter?

The size of asparagus stalks can range from small to colossal. Thicker stalks are not necessarily older or tougher. Asparagus is harvested everyday. Thicker stalks generally come from younger, more vigorous plants while the thinner stalks come from older plants or ones that are planted close together. So try different sizes to find your favorite or fit the size to how you are using it.