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ASPARAGUS

Select asparagus with closed, compact tips; smooth, round spears; and a fresh appearance. A rich green color should cover most of the spear. Stalks should be tender.

Avoid excessively sandy asparagus as it is difficult to remove all of the sand from beneath the scales and in the tips.

Wash asparagus thoroughly. Cut or break off tough portions of the stalks; discard or package separately.

Allow 2½ to 3½ pounds fresh asparagus as purchased for each quart of canned or frozen food.

FREEZING ASPARAGUS

Leave spears in lengths to fit the package, or cut in pieces. Sort according to thickness of stalk.

Heat stalks in boiling water according to thickness of stalk.

Small stalks	2 minutes
Medium stalks	3 minutes
Large stalks	4 minutes

Lift out of boiling water and immerse in cold water to stop cooking.

Drain.

Package for the freezer. Alternate tip and stem ends for a more compact pack. Seal. Freeze; store at 0° F. or below.

CANNING ASPARAGUS

Cut asparagus into 1-inch pieces.

RAW PACK Pack raw asparagus pieces in jars as tightly as possible without crushing. Leave 1/2-inch space at top of jars. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt to pint jars; 1 teaspoon to quarts. Cover with boiling water, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles by running spatula between jar and food. Adjust jar lids.

Process in pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure (240° F.).

Pint jars	25 minutes
Quart jars	30 minutes

HOT PACK Cover pieces of asparagus with boiling water. Bring to a boil and boil 2 or 3 minutes.

Pack hot asparagus loosely to 1/2-inch of top of jars. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt to pint jars; 1 teaspoon to quarts. Cover with boiling-hot cooking liquid or boiling water. Leave 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles by running spatula between jar and food. Adjust jar lids.

Process in pressure canner at 10 pounds pressure (240° F.).

Pint jars	25 minutes
Quart jars	30 minutes

MF-132 has information about processing in a pressure canner.

The small amount of salt used is for flavor only and can be omitted.

Information adapted from USDA Home and Garden Bulletins by Jo Anne Barton,
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