

General Guidelines for Safety

Vinegar is the key ingredient in a pickled asparagus recipe. There must be at least as much vinegar as water. If a recipe calls for less vinegar than water, increase the quantity of vinegar to equal the water. Any vinegar can be used as long as it is 5% acidity. Apple cider vinegar makes a milder brine than white vinegar. You can also add sugar to the brine or to each jar individually to offset the acidic taste. Do not reduce the amount of vinegar.



Customizing

Spices in these recipes can be adjusted to suit personal taste. You can increase the amount of spices called for or add additional spices not listed. Suggested additions: mustard seed, celery seed, dried red pepper flakes, cumin seed, and lemon pepper. Do not alter other ingredients.

**For further information call WSU Benton
County Extension Office at (509) 735-3551**

Common Questions

When I took my jars out of the canner, the asparagus was wrinkled. Is it okay?

Yes. The acidic brine sometimes pulls liquid out of the asparagus spears. It will probably plump up after setting for about two weeks. It is perfectly safe to eat as long as it was prepared and processed correctly.

My recipe calls for blanching asparagus before pickling it. Is this necessary?

No. Blanching is necessary to prepare asparagus for freezing, but not for water bath canning. You can skip this step.

There are little flakes on my pickled asparagus. What are they? Is the asparagus safe?

These flakes are called rutin and occur naturally in canned asparagus. The asparagus is perfectly safe to eat as long as it was prepared and processed correctly.

Why is my brine pink?

Pink brine is from the anthocyanin pigment. This is the pigment that gives beets their color. Certain growing conditions increase the amount of the pigment—generally cold nights. Since it is water soluble, it comes in out the brine.

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Pickling Asparagus



Pickled Asparagus with Pickling Spice

Yield: 4-5 quarts/8 pints

16 cups asparagus spears or pieces (about 8 pounds raw)

Brine:

2 quarts white vinegar (5% acid)

2 quarts water

¼—½ cup pickling salt

1 tablespoon pickling spice (remove cloves)

Per jar add:

1-2 cloves garlic

Wash asparagus thoroughly in cool water. Cut spears to fit jar allowing for one inch head space.

Combine water, vinegar, salt, and pickling spices (tied into a clean cheesecloth sack) to make brine. Heat to boiling. Remove bag containing spices.

Add garlic to hot jar. Pack asparagus into hot jars with the tip ends down. Cover with boiling brine to within ½ inch from top of jar. Adjust lids and process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes for pints or quarts. 15 minutes if 1,000-6,000 feet elevation.



Washington Pickled Asparagus

Yield: 4-5 quarts/8 pints

16 cups asparagus spears (approximately 8-10 pounds raw)

Brine:

2 quarts white or cider vinegar (5% acid)

2 quarts water

4 teaspoons sugar

1 teaspoon pepper

3 tablespoons pickling salt

Per jar add:

1-2 cloves garlic

½ to 1 teaspoon dill seed or a few springs of fresh dill

Wash asparagus thoroughly in cool water. Cut spears to fit jar allowing for one inch head space.

Combine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and pepper. Heat to boiling.

Add garlic and dill to each jar. Pack asparagus into hot jar with tip ends down. Cover with boiling brine to within ½ inch from top of jar. Adjust lids and process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes for pints or quarts. 15 minutes if 1,000-6,000 feet elevation.



Spicy Cajun Asparagus

Yield: 5-6 quarts

10 pounds asparagus

Brine:

2 ¾ quarts cider vinegar (5% acid)

2 ½ quarts water

¾ cup brown sugar

¼ cup pickling salt

Per jar add:

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper (more or less according to taste)

1-2 large cloves garlic (sliced)

1 teaspoon cumin seed

Wash asparagus in cool water. Cut spears to fit jar allowing for one inch head space.

Combine salt, vinegar, water, and brown sugar. Heat to boiling.

Add red pepper, cumin seed, and garlic to hot jars. Pack asparagus into jars with tip ends down. Cover with boiling brine to within ½ inch from top of jar. Adjust lids and process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes for pints or quarts. 15 minutes if 1,000-6,000 feet elevation.