

# Okra

HORT-PU-239  
October 2023

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Okra is a warm-season vegetable that grows well in most Texas soils. A fair source of vitamin A, it can be eaten in many ways, including boiled, fried, and cooked in soups, gumbos, and casseroles.

## 🌱 Grow it

### Varieties

- The best okra varieties to grow in Texas are 'Cajun Delight,' 'Clemson Spineless,' 'Emerald,' and 'Lee Dwarf.'

### Soil Preparation

- Work the soil when it is dry enough not to stick to garden tools.
- Spade or turn the soil 8 to 10 inches deep.
- Apply ½ cup of 15-5-10 for every 10 feet of row and mix into the top 3 to 4 inches of soil.

### Planting

- Plant okra in the spring 2 to 3 weeks after all danger of frost has passed.
- For a good fall crop, plant at least 3 months before the first fall frost.
- Plant the okra seeds about 1 inch deep and 2 inches apart in each row. Space the rows at least 3 feet apart.



### Fertilizing

- After the first harvest, apply 1 cup of 21-0-0 for every 10 feet of row.
- Water the plants after fertilizing.

### Watering

- Water the plants every 7 to 10 days.

### Care During the Season

- Pull weeds by hand from around okra plants.
- When the okra is up and growing, thin out the plants to about 1 foot apart.

### Insects and Diseases

- Aphids and stink bugs are common insect pests on okra.
- If something does not look right with your plant, contact your county Extension agent for more information.

### Harvesting

- Okra pods will be ready for harvest about 2 months after planting.
- Harvest the pods when they are 3 to 4 inches long. If the okra gets too large, it will be tough and stringy.
- Pick the okra every 1 to 2 days.



Sun:  
Full



Soil:  
Well-  
drained



Planting:  
Warm



Harvest:  
Summer-Fall



Life Cycle:  
Annual



## Buy it

- Okra pods should be firm and brightly colored.

## Use it

### Okra Simple Roasted

Course: Side Dish  
Serves: 4

#### Ingredients:

- 1 lb fresh okra
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp chili powder
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp cumin

#### Instructions:

Wash your hands and clean the preparation area. Rinse okra under cool running water to remove dirt.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Remove the tough stem end of the okra pod and slice the okra pod in half, lengthwise.

Sprinkle seasonings on the okra pods and stir to coat evenly.

Spread seasoned okra pods in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, depending on personal preference of vegetable doneness.

## Store it

- Okra can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.
- For canning and preservation instructions, visit [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

### Chicken Gumbo

Course: Main Dish  
Serves: 8

#### Ingredients:

- 12 ounces chicken breast
- 2 tsp canola oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 4 cups tomatoes, chopped
- 4 cups reduced sodium chicken broth
- 2½ cups of frozen okra, chopped
- 4 cups brown rice (cooked)

#### Instructions:

Wash your hands and clean your preparation area. Rinse any fresh vegetables under cool running water before using.

Cook chicken in a skillet over medium-high heat. Cutting the chicken up into bite-size pieces until cooked through, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl.

Heat the skillet to medium-high heat and add oil. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until translucent, about 2 minutes.

Add garlic, celery, and Cajun seasoning and cook, stirring often, for about 30 seconds.

Add flour and cook, stirring to coat the vegetables, until the flour browns, about 1 minute.

Add tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to release their juices, about 2 minutes.

Stir in broth, cover, increase heat to high and bring to boil.

Return the chicken to the skillet, along with okra and brown rice; reduce the heat to a simmer.

Cook until the okra is heated through, about 10 minutes.

## Learn about it

- Okra is free of fat and cholesterol.
- It is low in sodium and calories.
- Okra is a good source of folate, magnesium, and fiber and is an excellent source of vitamin C.

Information gathered by Aggie Horticulture

