

Okra



Selecting

Look for bright green pods without brown spots or blemishes. The greener the okra, the fresher it is. Select pods that under 4 inches long. Long pods tend to be over-mature and tough.

Storing

Store okra in the crisper of your fridge in a paper bag for up to four days. Keep okra fresh by keeping them dry. When you are ready to cook them, bring them up to room temperature first. This will reduce the amount of moisture released from cooking.

You can also freeze okra. Simply wash and trim the stem ends, blanch in boiling water for a few minutes, then immerse in an ice water bath. You can freeze the whole pods or chop them and freeze in freezer bags.

Preparing

Rinse and pat okra dry. Cut off the stems. You can leave okra whole, cut into rounds, or slice lengthwise. When you cut into fresh okra, the edible seeds release a thick, sticky liquid called mucilage - more on this in the section below. Okra can be eaten raw or can be cooked in a various way - roasted, grilled, or sautéed.

Eating

Okra has a mild, earthy, and fresh flavour. The slippery texture of okra is unique. This is because it has a naturally occurring substance called mucilage. Mucilage acts as a natural thickener when heated so it is perfect when preparing soups and stews. To achieve a not-so-slippery texture, the best way to cook okra is to roast or fry it or combine it with something acidic such as lemon juice, vinegar, or tomatoes.

Seasonality

Okra is in season from May through September.

Nutrition

Okra (140 g portion) is high in fibre, magnesium, potassium, vitamin C, vitamin B6 and folate, and a source of calcium, iron, phosphorus and zinc.



Fun Fact Okra is a fruit, though it is commonly cooked and eaten as a vegetable.

