

## Collard Greens

Collard greens are tasty any time of year. However during the colder months of the year, they are in their prime texture and flavor. Colder weather produces a sweet and tender green.

Greens are usually the simplest and fastest dish in your menu to prepare. They don't store well after cooking and are best prepared fresh each time. They may keep for the following meal, but tend to lose their flavor and energy much faster than cooked grains or longer cooked vegetable dishes. If you add a dressing to your greens, add it only to the greens you are serving and eating at that meal.

1. Trim the stem ends of all the collard green leaves before you unbundle them.
2. Wash the collards by plunging them into a bowl or basin of water. Check the crease for soil, especially at the base of the leaf where the stem branches into the leafy part. Lift the greens out of the water and drain.
3. Bring about 2-3 inches of water to a high boil in one of your wider cooking pots.
4. Place an amount of leaves in the pot that allows the boiling water to circulate through the leaves. Don't pack the leaves in too tightly or it takes a longer amount of time for the water to return to a high boil. In that time the greens tend to lose freshness and brightness of color. Put the stem ends in the water first and then push the leafy part into the boiling water.
4. Cook the leaves for 3-5 minutes on one side, then flip over and cook 2 minutes or so on the other side. The end result is that the greens are tender but still maintain their bright green color.
5. Remove from the boiling water. Drain on a flat basket with a bowl underneath to catch the water. If you don't have a flat basket, spread them out on a plate. As the water drains off and settles onto the plate, tip the plate and pour the water back into the pot. Spread the greens out so the steam can escape.
6. As soon as the greens are cool enough, gather them up by the stem ends and gently squeeze off some of the extra water.
7. Place the squeezed bundles on the cutting board and slice into 1 inch sections. To avoid long strips and save time cutting, cut the greens in the following manner: Starting at the leaf tip end, make a diagonal cut. Make a second diagonal cut in the opposite direction to form a triangular tip. Next make a straight cut that cuts the triangle off the end. Continue cutting in the manner until you get to the stem portion. Cut the stems into ¼ inch diagonal slices.