



Helping Mississippians live happier, healthier lives!

OKRA

Okra is a staple vegetable in Mississippi cooking. Originally brought to the United States from Africa, okra became popular in



Mississippi due to its ability to thrive in the warm climate. It has been used in Southern kitchens for generations in dishes like gumbo, fried okra, and stews.

STORE

- Store fresh okra in the refrigerator. Keep it in a paper bag or wrapped in a paper towel inside a plastic bag. This keeps moisture from forming, helping okra stay fresher, longer.
- For the best taste and texture, use fresh okra within a few days.
- To freeze okra, wash then blanch it in small batches in boiling water for about 30 seconds, then cover it in ice water. Drain away water and allow to dry before freezing it in airtight bags.



GROW

- Purchase okra plant starts from your local garden center, or use dried seeds from last year's crop.
- Harvest okra when pods are between two and four inches long.

PREPARE

- Try roasting, sauteing, stewing, or grilling your okra.
- If you want to avoid the slimy texture that okra can sometimes have, try cooking it at a high heat or adding an acidic ingredient like tomatoes or vinegar.
- Okra can be found year-round in the freezer section at most grocery stores.

BENEFITS

- Okra is rich in fiber, which helps with digestion and feeling full.
- Okra is a good source of vitamins, which are important for your overall health.

FUN WITH FOOD

CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Wash okra and remove stems.
- Cut okra into slices under the supervision of an adult.
- Select and measure the seasoning used for cooking the okra.



ENJOY



OVEN-FRIED OKRA

- Vegetable oil cooking spray or vegetable oil
- 12-ounce package frozen cut okra, thawed
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ½ cup flour
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
3. Line a baking pan with aluminum foil and coat with vegetable oil cooking spray or oil.
4. Leave frozen okra in the package and store in the refrigerator overnight to thaw. Right before cooking, drain the thawed okra on paper towels and gently pat to remove any moisture.
5. In a large plastic storage bag add cornmeal, flour, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and pepper.
6. Mix the dry ingredients together.
7. Toss okra in a bowl with oil then add okra to the dry ingredients and shake until coated.
8. Spread the coated okra on the baking pan. Place baking pan in the oven and bake until okra is golden brown and has reached desired crispness, about 20 minutes.
9. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



CORN, LIMA BEANS, OKRA, AND TOMATOES

- ½ medium onion
 - 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 12 ounces frozen whole kernel corn
 - 12 ounces frozen lima beans
 - 12 ounces frozen cut okra
 - 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, no salt added
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - ½ teaspoon garlic powder
 - ½ teaspoon pepper
1. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 2. Peel and cut ½ onion into small pieces
 3. Heat oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook until soft.
 4. Add corn, lima beans, okra, diced tomatoes, and water to pot and stir to combine.
 5. Season vegetables with salt, garlic powder, and pepper, stir and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 30-45 minutes.
 6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



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EXTENSION**

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