

Pickled Asparagus

For six wide-mouth pint jars

10 pounds asparagus

6 large garlic cloves

4½ cups water

4½ cups white distilled vinegar (5%)

6 small hot peppers (optional)

½ cup canning salt

3 teaspoons dill seed

Procedure:

1. Wash and rinse canning jars; keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions.
2. Wash asparagus well, but gently, under running water. Cut stems from the bottom to leave spears with tips that fit into the canning jar with a little less than ½-inch headspace. Peel and wash garlic cloves. Place a garlic clove at the bottom of each jar, and tightly pack asparagus into jars with the blunt ends down.
3. In an 8-quart Dutch oven or saucepot, combine water, vinegar, hot peppers (optional), salt and dill seed. Bring to a boil. Place one hot pepper (if used) in each jar over asparagus spears. Pour boiling hot pickling brine over spears, leaving ½-inch headspace.
4. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids.
5. Process in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes. Let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check for seals.

Allow pickled asparagus to sit in processed jars for 3 to 5 days before consumption for best flavor development.