



Using, Storing and Preserving

Garlic

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Garlic (*Allium sativum* L.), a member of the onion family, has been cultivated for thousands of years and is widely used for both its culinary and medicinal attributes.

Food Safety and Storage

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Select bulbs that are completely dry.
- Choose garlic bulbs with plump and firm cloves.
- Look for plenty of papery sheath.
- Avoid soft or crumbly cloves, spongy or shriveled cloves, and bulbs or cloves with green shoots (they are past their prime).
- Store fresh garlic in either an uncovered or a loosely covered container in a cool, dark place away from exposure to heat and sunlight.

- Depending on its age and variety, whole garlic bulbs will keep fresh for about a month if stored properly. Inspect the bulb frequently, and remove any cloves that appear to be dried out or moldy. Breaking the bulb reduces its shelf life to just a few days.
- Keep garlic away from raw meat and juices to prevent cross-contamination.

How to Preserve

Canning is not recommended for garlic.

Garlic used in pickling may react to the iron, tin or aluminum in your cooking pot, water or water pipes, turning green or bluish green. Some garlic may naturally have more bluish pigment, which is even more evident after pickling. This discoloration is not a safety concern.

Lawn or garden questions?

Visit migtarden.msu.edu.
Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

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Freezing

Garlic tends to get strong and bitter when frozen.

Research performed by the National Center for Home Food Preservation confirmed that mixtures of garlic in oil stored at room temperature are at risk for the development of botulism. Therefore, garlic in oil should be made fresh and stored in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or lower for no more than four days. It may be frozen for long-term storage — up to several months. Freeze garlic in oil in glass freezer jars or plastic freezer boxes, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

Drying

Peel and finely chop garlic cloves. No other pretreatment is needed. Odor is pungent. The estimated drying time in a dehydrator is 6 to 8 hours.

References

Andress, E., & Harrison, J. A. (2014). *So easy to preserve* (Bulletin 989). (6th ed.). University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu/)

Producing Garlic in Michigan. Extension Bulletin E-2722.
https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/producing_garlic_in_michigan

Find out more about Michigan Fresh at
canr.msu.edu/mi_fresh/.