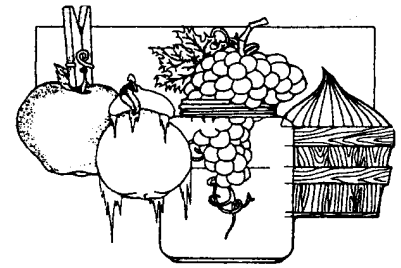


Quality for Keeps



Information for those who produce and preserve food

Simmer tomato sauce and salsa

When facing bushels of fresh tomatoes this growing season, turn the abundance into salsa, tomato sauce, or store for later use.

Select only disease-free, firm fruit for canning; vine-ripened is best. Use a pressure canner for higher-quality, more nutritious tomato products.

Yellow tomatoes are canned by the same method as red tomatoes. This holds true for pink, orange, and other rainbow colors of ripe tomatoes. Varieties can be mixed and matched for salsa or canned tomato products.

Caution: Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely with any of the following recommendations.

Tomatoes used to be considered an acid food, but some of today's varieties are low-acid. To safely can tomato sauce or whole, crushed or juiced tomatoes, add acid when using a boiling water canner or a pressure canner. Add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice, or a 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid.

In a pinch, substitute vinegar (4 tablespoons of 5 percent vinegar per quart) instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes. Add sugar, if desired, to offset an acid taste.

Plain Tomato Sauce

Quantities of fresh tomatoes needed for thick tomato sauce

- 46 pounds of fresh tomatoes needed for canner load of seven quarts
- 28 pounds of fresh tomatoes needed for canner load of nine pints

Quantities of fresh tomatoes needed for thin tomato sauce

- 35 pounds of fresh tomatoes needed for canner load of seven quarts
- 21 pounds of fresh tomatoes needed for canner load of nine pints

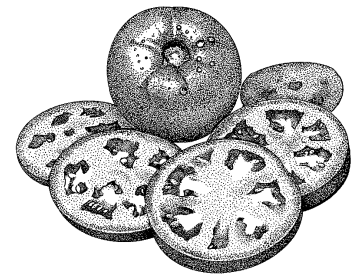
Carefully follow the directions when canning tomatoes to prevent the growth of *Clostridium Botulinum*, the bacterium that causes botulism.

Procedure. Wash, remove stems and trim off discolored portions. If

bruised, set these tomatoes aside for freezer products.

To prevent sauce from separating, quickly cut about 1 pound of tomatoes into quarters and put directly into saucepan. Heat immediately to boiling while crushing. Continue to slowly add and crush freshly cut tomato quarters to the boiling mixture. Make sure the mixture boils constantly and vigorously while adding remaining tomatoes. Lower heat and simmer five minutes after all tomatoes are added.

If separation of sauce is not a concern, simply slice or quarter tomatoes into a large saucepan. Crush, heat and simmer for five minutes before pressing.



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Press either type of heated tomatoes through a sieve or food mill to remove skins and seeds. Heat tomatoes again to boiling. Lower heat and simmer in a large saucepan until sauce reaches desired consistency. Simmer until volume is reduced by one-third for thin sauce, or by one-half for thick sauce.

Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to jars as mentioned previously. Add 1 teaspoon canning salt to each quart jar if desired. Fill hot jars with hot tomato sauce; leave 1/4-inch headspace. **Adjust lids.**

Process in a boiling water bath

canner: Process tomato sauce pints for 35 minutes and quarts for 40 minutes. At altitudes between 1000 feet to 3000 feet, process pints for 40 minutes, and quarts for 45 minutes.

Or process in a dial-gauge pressure canner: Process pint jars for 20 minutes at 6 pounds of pressure at 0 to 2,000 feet altitude. Process quart jars for 15 minutes at 11 pounds of pressure at 0 to 2,000 feet altitude.

Or process in weighted-gauge pressure canner: Process pints for 20 minutes at 5 pounds of pressure

at 0 to 1,000 feet altitude. (At 10 pounds of pressure in a weighted-gauge canner above 1,000 feet altitude).

Process quart jars for 15 minutes at 10 pounds of pressure at 0 to 1,000 feet altitude. (At 15 pounds of pressure in a weighted-gauge canner above 1,000 feet altitude)

For best quality and nutritional value, use home-canned tomato products within one year.

Source: Quality for Keeps: Tantalizing Tomatoes, University of Missouri Extension guide sheet gh1456 (<http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/hesguide/foodnut/gh1456.pdf>)

Ingredient selection essential for safe salsas

Tomatoes. The variety of tomato chosen affects the quality of salsas.

Paste tomatoes, such as Roma, have firmer flesh and produce thicker salsas than large slicing tomatoes. Although both types make good salsas, slicing tomatoes usually yield a thinner, more watery salsa than paste tomatoes. Salsa can be thickened by adding tomato paste.

Where recipes call for peeled or skinned tomatoes, remove the skin by dipping tomatoes into boiling water for 30-60 seconds or until skins split. Dip in cold water, then slip off skins and remove cores and seeds

Tomatillos. Tomatillos are also known as Mexican husk tomatoes. They do not need to be peeled or seeded, but the dry outer husk must be removed.

Acids. The acid ingredients used

in salsa help preserve it. Use either commercial vinegar of at least 5% acidity, or bottled lemon juice. Follow recipes exactly.

Do not substitute vinegar for lemon juice. This substitution will result in a less acid and potentially unsafe salsa.



Spices. Spices add flavoring to salsas. This is the only ingredient which may be adjusted to personal taste, without affecting safety. Cilantro and cumin, which are often used in spicy salsas, may be

omitted for a milder taste. For a stronger cilantro flavor, add fresh cilantro just before serving the salsa.

Source: "So Easy to Preserve", fifth edition, Elizabeth Andress, PhD, Judy A. Harrison, PhD, Cooperative Extension/ The University of Georgia/Athens.

IMPORTANT: Follow the directions carefully for each recipe. Use the amounts of each vegetable listed in the recipe. Add the amount of vinegar or lemon juice listed. Do not can salsas that do not follow these or other research tested recipes. (They may be frozen or stored in the refrigerator.) Do not thicken salsas with flour or cornstarch before canning. Store in the refrigerator once opened.

Open kettle canning is open to food spoilage

If home-canned foods or community canned foods are to be stored on the shelf, heat processing is essential to kill bacteria in the head space of the jar, in the food itself, and provide a strong seal.

Even acidic foods like jams and jelly, apple butter, and tomato sauce must be heat processed in a boiling water bath canner to be safe. Low acid foods like green beans, corn and spaghetti sauce with meat must be processed in a pressure canner.

Many older canning or cook-books from the 1930's and earlier often recommended open kettle cooking and canning without heat processing. These instructions are out-of-date and should not be used for home food preservation.

Why is open kettle canning not recommended? In open kettle canning, food is cooked in an ordinary kettle, then packed into hot jars and sealed without processing. The temperatures obtained in open kettle canning are not high enough to destroy all spoilage and food poisoning organisms that may be in the food. Also, microorganisms can enter the food when it is transferred from the kettle to jar and cause spoilage.

Current research shows the open kettle method results in more spoilage and mold growth on the

surface of the canned food and results in a weaker seal. In addition, live bacteria can survive this canning process and cause deadly illness.

All current canning recipes are tested to ensure that the processing method and processing time are correct and safe for each jarred food. All pints and half-pints of jams and jellies are processed in a water bath canner for 5 to 10 minutes. Pints of apple butter are processed for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the recipe and size

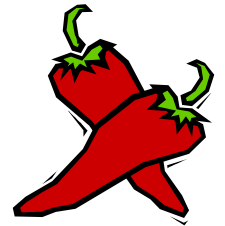


of jar. Pints of plain tomato sauce are processed for 35 minutes, quarts for 40 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Tomato sauce may also be processed in a pressure canner if desire.

Current canning recipes can be obtained from the University of Missouri Extension <http://extension.missouri.edu/xplor/hesguide/foodnut/gh1451.htm>, Ball Blue Book, dated 1989 or more recent, or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>

Apple butter that is not heat processed should be stored in the refrigerator even if unopened. Mold grows easily on home canned foods that are not heat processed since both the humidity and mold spore counts are very high in Missouri.

Spice up salsa with peppers



Chile peppers range from mild to fiery in taste. Very hot peppers are usually small (1 to 3 inches long); mild peppers are usually bigger (4 to 10 inches long).

Anaheim, Ancho, College, Colorado and Hungarian Yellow Wax are mild pepper varieties. Choose a mild pepper when the recipe calls for long green chiles.

Small, very hot peppers provide a distinct taste to salsas. Jalapeño is the most popular hot pepper. Other varieties include Serrano, Cayenne, Habanero and Tabasco.

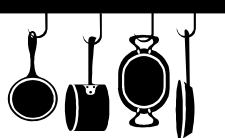
Use rubber gloves when cutting or dicing these peppers because they cause extreme irritation to the skin. Do not touch any part of the face or eyes when working with hot chiles.

Bell peppers may be substituted for some or all of the long green chiles. Canned chiles may be used in place of fresh.

Do not increase the total amount of peppers in any recipe. However, one type of pepper may be substituted for another.

Hot peppers, such as the jalapeño, do not need to be peeled, but seeds are often removed.

THE RECIPE BOX



Tomato Taco Sauce

- 8 quarts peeled, cored, finely chopped paste tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 5 cups chopped onions
- 4 jalapeno peppers (seeded, chopped)
- 4 long green chiles (seeded, chopped)
- 2-1/2 cups vinegar (5 percent)
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1-1/2 tablespoons black pepper
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons oregano leaves (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)

Yield: About 16 to 18 pints

Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers.

Preparing Peppers: The jalapeño peppers do not need to be peeled. The skin of long green chiles may be tough and can be removed by heating the peppers. Usually when peppers are finely chopped, they do not need to be peeled.

Hot Pack: Combine all ingredients in a large saucepot and heat, stirring frequently, until mixture boils. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently until thick (about 1 hour). Ladle hot into clean, hot pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids.

Process pints in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes at 1 to 1,000 ft. in altitude, Or for 20 minutes at 1,001 to 6,000 ft. in altitude. Do not alter the proportions of vegetables to acid and tomatoes, as this can make the salsa unsafe.

Source: Salsa Recipes for Canning, PNW0395, Washington State University. Pullman, WA: Pacific Northwest Extension Publications, 2000 rev.

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Mary Schroepfer

Mary Schroepfer
Nutrition & Health Specialist
116 W. Main
Union, MO 63084
Ph: (636) 583-5141
Fax: (636) 583-5145
Email: SchroepferM@missouri.edu

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Judith Lueders

Judith Lueders
Nutrition & Health Specialist
321 N. Main, Suite 1
Perryville, MO 63775
Ph: (573) 547-4504
Fax: (573) 547-4535
Email: LuedersJ@missouri.edu

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