



Food Preservation

CANNING TIPS

Home canning is an excellent way to store and preserve home grown produce and other foods. However, it can be risky and even deadly if it's not done correctly. Be aware that food improperly canned can cause botulism. Botulism is a rare, but extremely serious, form of food poisoning that can lead to paralysis and even death.

SAFE CANNING TIPS:

- 1. Select the right canner:** Selecting the right canner is an important step in safe home canning. Use a pressure canner made for canning and not just pressure cooking.
 - Make sure your pressure canner is the right size; canners that are too small can lead to under cooking.
 - When you select your pressure canner, be sure that all parts are in good condition.
 - If your canner has a rubber gasket, make sure it is flexible and soft, not brittle, sticky, or cracked.
 - Clean and remove any debris from the openings on small pipes or vents.
 - Check with your pressure canner's manufacturer manual

for safety guidelines.

- Vent (*open*) the air from your canner for 10 minutes before you pressurize the canner.
 - Canning low-acid vegetables (like *green beans and corn*), requires the use of a pressure canner. Avoid using boiling water canners for low-acid foods because they will not protect against botulism poisoning.
- 2. Follow up-to-date canning instructions:** Canning instructions (*recipes*) and equipment have changed over the years. Make sure your information contains up-to-date, scientifically-tested guidelines. Avoid canning instructions in outdated cookbooks, even if they were handed down from trustworthy family cooks. If there are any questions or doubts in your mind, consult the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Complete Guide to Home Canning.
 - 3. When in doubt, throw it out!** Home-canned foods could be contaminated even if they look, smell, and taste normal. If you have any doubt about the safety of a home-canned food, do not eat it.

Never taste home-canned food to determine if it is safe. When you open a jar of home-canned food, be sure to inspect it thoroughly. It might be contaminated if:

- The container is leaking, bulging, or swollen.
- The container looks damaged, cracked, or abnormal.
- The container spurts liquid or foam when opened.
- The food is discolored, moldy, or smells bad.

Keeping the family safe is a priority in any household. Botulism is a medical emergency and its symptoms are different from other kinds of foodborne illness, so if you or a family member show any of the symptoms listed below, see your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately. Symptoms may include the following:

- Double vision
- Blurred vision
- Drooping eyelids
- Slurred speech
- Difficulty swallowing
- Dry mouth
- Muscle weakness

Developed by Sarah Sims, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator – Madison/Richland Parish | References: "So Easy to Preserve", 6th ed. 2014. "Complete Guide to Home Canning," Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539, USDA, revised 2015.

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Tomatoes to Enjoy Year-Round!

Summer is not summer without fresh tomatoes from the garden. Tomatoes are bountiful all summer and well into the fall, but it's a task to keep up with them. By canning your tomatoes you can enjoy your harvest year round. Tomatoes can be canned, frozen and even dried at home.

There are many tomato varieties grown in home gardens and at the market today, they are also sweeter and less acidic than in the past. The acidity helps to preserve foods. To ensure the safety of whole tomatoes, crushed or canned juice tomatoes, regardless of the variety, always add:

- Quart jars: 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or ½ teaspoon of citric acid per jar.
- Pint jars: 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid per jar.

Adding acid, using research tested recipes, and following instructions for processing procedures and times, will keep you and your family safe. Acid

can be added directly to the jars before filling with tomatoes. Sugar may be added to offset the acidic taste. There are several tested recipes for canning tomatoes, including ketchup, spaghetti sauces, and salsa, as well as whole, crushed or tomato juice.

Freezing tomatoes is a quick and easy way to enjoy them year round. Tomatoes can be frozen raw, as juice or stewed. All tomatoes should be washed first. Head-space should be left in the container before sealing and freezing. This allows room for the tomatoes to expand when freezing. To freeze raw, core and peel them. Then freeze tomatoes whole or in pieces in properly sealed containers.

For stewed tomatoes, remove stem ends, peel and quarter ripe tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender (10-20) minutes. Place pan containing tomatoes in cold water to cool. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Spaghetti Sauce without Meat

Cooking Time: Pint Jars, 20 Mins. • Quart Jars, 25 Mins.

INGREDIENTS

- 30 lbs. tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup chopped celery or green pepper
- 1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced (optional)
- 4 ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbsp. oregano
- 4 tbsp. minced parsley
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Caution: Do not increase the proportion of onions, peppers, or mushrooms.

1. Wash tomatoes and dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds or until skins split. Dip in cold water and slip off skins.
2. Remove cores and quarter tomatoes.
3. Boil 20 minutes, uncovered, in large saucepan. Put



through food mill or sieve.

4. Sauté onions, garlic, celery or peppers, and mushrooms (if desired) in vegetable oil until tender.
5. Combine sautéed vegetables and tomatoes and add remainder of spices, salt, and sugar. Bring to a boil.
6. Simmer uncovered, until thick enough

for serving. At this time the initial volume will have been reduced by nearly one-half. Stir frequently to avoid burning.

7. Fill jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process according to the recommendation depending on the method of canning used.



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